

**Meeting of Birstall & Wanlip Parochial Church Council
at Birstall on 23rd May 2017 at 7:30 pm**

Present: Revd Vince Jupp (Chair), Tony Bloxam, Marjorie Bonshor, Gill Chester, Christine Greaves, Alastair McHugh, Beryl McHugh, Rose Parrott, Andy Proud, Leigh Reid, Sandra Robinson, Debbie Shephard, Bert Tegg, Lynn Van Ristell, Lesley Walton, John Ward, Julie Ward, Janet Waters, Nicki Wills, Doreen Wilson, Sally Dewsbury (Secretary)

Not present: Anne McCann, Elaine Moyers, Paul Tarry

The meeting was opened with a minute's silence and prayer for the victims of the attack at Manchester Arena on 22nd May 2017.

The meeting, the purpose of which was to come to a decision about further finance for the mission work on Hallam Fields, took the form of a debate.

The motion set before the PCC was:

This house commits to spending up to £75000 (plus expenses) to finance the pioneering work on Hallam Fields for a further two years, taking us to February 2020.

Doreen Wilson opened the debate by speaking in favour of the motion. The main points of her argument were:

- The aims of the pioneering work have not yet been fully achieved, mainly due to the lack of a meeting place on Hallam Fields. With the expectation that a meeting room would be available at the new school in September, Nearer will be able to build on the foundations it has already laid down
- A paid pioneer leader is needed to support the three lay pioneer workers, it being unreasonable to expect them to do the same amount of work and offer the same level of commitment as provided by a paid worker.
- Nearer is the start of a 'Fresh Expressions' church, an alternative to the traditional methods of worship. This new way of worship is seen to be the most effective way to reach those people (particularly younger people) who are not comfortable with attending church services. It is vital to maintain continuity by retaining a paid pioneer worker until 2020, by which time lay leaders or a shared peer leadership will be ready to continue the work. Research show that fresh expressions of church take 7-10 years to become established and self-supporting, and so a key person is needed to oversee and support this development over the next two years to ensure sustainability.

Tony Bloxam spoke against the motion. The main points of his argument were:

- Mission is an obligation, so Nearer must continue, but the format of the church's mission and how resources are used after February 2018, need to be explored.
- The hope of a higher numerical growth of the Nearer group in the first three years has not been realised.
- A full-time pioneer worker is not necessary, and is not a responsible use of resources.
- The work could be done on a part-time basis. Employing a part-time worker for one or two more years, together with renting a house on Hallam Fields to provide a fixed presence there, would cost less than a full-time leader.
- Not having a full-time leader would mean mission funds could be used for other work in the parish.

PCC members were then invited to comment and ask questions. There followed a 30 minute discussion during which both sides of the debate were well-represented. Members were asked to vote, with the following result:

Votes for the motion: 8

Votes against the motion: 11

Vince closed the meeting with a reassurance that the work of Nearer would continue to flourish, and that the months leading up to the end of the pioneer worker's contract in February 2018, would be used to decide how the work of Nearer will be sustained.

The meeting ended at 8:45pm.

Meetings to April 2018 are all at 7:30pm at Birstall as follows:

F and S: 13th June, 5th September, 7th November 2017, 23rd January 2018

PCC: 4th July, 26th September, 21st November 2017, 6th February 2018

APCM: 13th March 2018 7:20pm