

Report of the present parish council, 9th January 2011

Your Eminence, Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, I would like, on behalf of the retiring parish council, to give you a brief report on the life of our parish in the year 2010. Each Holy Liturgy in the course of the year was well attended, with an average of 60 to 70 worshippers, and a great many more for great feasts, particularly at Easter, when there were over 300. As you all know, we are not a rich parish, but people are generous and we pay our way. We ended the financial year with a surplus of £5015.01, having paid our numerous bills. The parish possesses all in all a capital of £31810.66.

In 2010 there were 27 christenings, no weddings and 1 funeral. As you see, we have many children in the parish, and we organised a very happy and successful Christmas party. Apart from a nucleus of émigrés and descendants of émigrés, our parish is composed of men and women linked with the University of Manchester, Russian women married to Englishmen, and nowadays many Russians from the Baltic states, as well as Ukrainians and Moldavians. We also welcome with great joy more and more Georgian families. The great event for us in 2010 was to welcome on 28th November our new Rector, His Eminence Archbishop Elisei of Sourozh. We are delighted that Archpriest Gennady Andreev will be with us, living in Manchester. This is really a dream come true. Fr. Evgeny Selensky also serves our parish with great devotion, and we are extremely grateful to him for coming to us from the other end of England.

Vladyko, please forgive me for adding a few minutes to my report by giving a few facts concerning our retiring parish council, because it has had a very long life and has discreetly and humbly achieved such a lot. The parish congregation elected the parish council in 1993; Vasily Ivanovich Kaklugin was elected starosta, and remained starosta until 2009. In the same year, 1993, the parish council approached Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh of blessed memory to ask him to send a priest to celebrate divine services in the parish. Metropolitan Anthony blessed his suffragan bishop, Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in our parish at first once a month, and later more frequently. It is at this time that the parish entered into canonical communion with the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, through the Diocese of Sourozh. In 1995 a parish meeting elected Anthony, my husband, and myself to the parish council. In 1999 Theodore Theodorovich Voronov was co-opted on to the parish council.

The year 1998 was dramatic. By order of the Manchester City Council our church house was demolished, together with two adjoining properties. A block of flats containing 9 apartments was going to be built on our ground. Not only did we have to pay for the demolition of our church, but the Trustees had a gigantic fight to retain this land, this holy ground, where a new church was to be built. What saved us was the fact that the first parishioners were meticulous in their dealings with the civil authorities, and in 1953 had registered 64 Clarence Road as a place of worship. The other fight was against the desecration of the land by drug addicts, and by local people who dumped their refuse. We quickly paid to have the land cleared and protected by a temporary locked fence. In the same year, 1998, the parish council created the Manchester Russian Orthodox Church Building Trust. If you want to build a church you need expertise and determination. The Trust was quickly registered as a charity - otherwise people would not have given us

serious money. The same Trust organised a lot of fund-raising activities, such as concerts and sales of Russian souvenirs. With the help and support of His Eminence Archbishop Anatoly of Kerch by 2002 sufficient funds had been collected, we found a wonderful architect, Natalia Vladimirovna Maximova, and building work started in December 2002. The church was completed and opened in October 2003, just in time for the patronal feast of the Pokrov. Thanks be to God!

Looking after the building and organising the services was an enormous task. We thank our many many helpers for their devotion. In 2007, after years of work, the parish council and the Trustees at long last obtained charitable status for our parish. What a destiny this parish council and the Trustees have had! They have had trials and tribulations as well as great joys. Today our beloved parish starts a new life. May God grant her many years!