

St. George's Church, Wilton
Minutes of the Parochial Church Council

Tuesday 16 November 2021

Present: Nick Griffin (Chair); Michael Yardley (Vice Chair); Peter Joyce; Hilary McKegney; Jenny Norman; Pete McKegney; Chris Michell, Carole Smith; Rachel Neal; John Page; Claire Steel; Rosa Parsloe and Helen Clegg (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Matt Norman

1. Nick opened the meeting with a reading from Matt 7 and a time of open prayer.

Nick advised that Bethan Baigent be co-opted on to the PCC as a member. Previously she was an ex-officio member as the PCC secretary. Now that Helen Clegg is taking the minutes Bethan is needed on the PCC as her knowledge and advice is necessary at meetings.

Proposed Peter McKegney, seconded Jenny Norman, passed unanimously.

Bethan was welcomed onto the PCC.

2. **The minutes of the last meeting** on 24 August 2021 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair.

3. **Action points from the minutes of 24/8/21**

Church speakers

Matt has installed the new speakers but there are still some problems being worked through.

Contactless Payments

The working group of Pete M., Jenny and Matt Norman have decided that SumUp would be the best option. There is an initial payment of £125 for each machine and then 1% of the takings. This is the lowest transaction fee of similar devices.

We would need 2 machines, one in the office to take general payments such as hall booking fees and another in the church for donations. The Diocese has a system of Parish buying so that if it is made clear we are a church when setting this up, there may be cost reductions available for us.

Bethan offered to send some information she had on to the Normans.

Action Matt and Jenny Norman and Pete McKegney

Christian Giving Scheme

Michael Small confirmed that the Christian Giving has dropped. Up to August 2021 we had lost 6 generous donors and gained 9 new ones and since then there have been 4 more. People joining the church take a while to get on to the CGS.

Café Concept

Nick has sent out an article which people have seen.

PCC Church Members Contacts

Hilary McKegney is taking over from Rachel Neal who is leaving Taunton at the end of the year. Following up from people contacting church members who hadn't been seen recently no one had reported any problems to Rachel or Hilary.

Disability Audit

Clare has been busy but frustrated in her efforts to visit other churches, like ours, which have installed toilets within the church. She has found 3 churches which she plans to visit as soon as she has someone to accompany her.

Items for Discussion and Approval

1. Finance Update on third Quarter of 2021. *John Page*

The Unrestricted Reserves stood at £18,339 at the end of the Third Quarter showing a rise of £1,614 since the end of the Second Quarter. However, that was achieved only as a result of receiving a generous £10,000 legacy during this period – without it we would have experienced a loss of £8,386, which is very much in line with the losses experienced in both the First and Second Quarters.

Regrettably, our losses continued with Christian Giving down £2,975 on the same period last year ; Hall Revenue down £5,650 compared to the Third Quarter of 2019 ; and Maintenance costs up £115 on the same period last year.

The Wi-Fi Appeal now stands at £8,410 ;

the Hall Refurbishment Fund stands at £1,021 ;
and the Churchyard Fund stands at £546.

As from 1st of January 2022 Rev'd Jenny Jeffery will be paid directly by Bishop Henderson School, and so instead of being on our payroll we will receive an invoice for the contribution of one third of the total each year. Consequently, this change has had a significant impact on the calculation of our 3-months' Reserves. Whereas the Treasurer reported them as £33,300 at the last meeting, they have now been reduced to £31,500. The PCC agreed unanimously to retain 3-months' Unrestricted Reserves at the end of the year, as obliged by Charity Commission regulations, which would result in withholding around 3-months' worth of Parish Share from the Diocese. The Treasurer stated that to date we had paid 6-month's Parish Share, and the final payment to the Diocese would be adjusted to ensure the 2021 Annual Accounts showed Unrestricted Reserves of £31,500 at the end of the year.

It was proposed that we reserve as much as we need to, at the end of 2021, to have 3 months unrestricted reserves as we are required to do so by the Charity Commissioners. If we do this we will not be able to pay the full amount of the Parish Share for 2021.

Proposed Clare Steel, Seconded Carole Smith. Passed unanimously.

2. Vicar's Update *Nick*

Nick apologised for delaying the Parish Awayday. There were too many key people unable to attend. Suggested new dates 29th Jan 22, 5th Feb, 12th Feb. Already a few people have said that they can't make 5th Feb. Bethan will follow up on this and everyone is asked to let her know which of the 3 dates they can make. It was hoped to open the day up to more people - suggestions as to who else should be invited to Nick or Bethan please.

Action Bethan

The Curate considering the post here accepted the post, with both Nick and the Bishop and then later withdrew as a house was not available yet. Without an address school places for his children could not be acquired. The D.D.O. has told Nick that there is a property available when another curate moves and it will then be held for our future curate.

Café Concept

Clare found that grants were available from the Wessex Water Fund and Nick has made an application to them for £3,000 to buy a Café mobile Loneliness Café.

The suggestion was made that we look for someone within the wider church congregation who would take on the responsibility of applying for grants. Although many grants used to be unavailable for churches things are less restricted now.

Ian Pinder will be our new Interim Treasurer but the plan is to have more of a financial team in future rather than just a treasurer.

The Thursday Prayer and Worship at lunch-time service is really growing. People are coming from various churches and are of mixed ages.

3. **Proposed service pattern** *Nick*

The idea of 2 services on Sunday mornings was well received.

There was discussion around the timing of each service.

The 8am service will not be starting up again as the numbers are small and are unlikely to grow.

The Tuesday 10am weekly Communion service restarted 3 weeks ago but after 2 weeks with no attenders there was only 1 today at the third one.

The Mothers' Union have attended the third Tuesday in each month in the past and need to be informed that it has restarted.

Unless there is a sufficient response the Tuesday Weekly Communion will not continue.

All services will require volunteers to set up etc.

4. Health & Safety *Peter J.*

Draft Health & Safety Policy

This was submitted for approval by the PCC. After discussion as to who would have responsibility for this it was decided that the churchwardens would be inserted on the policy as having responsibility, rather than use individual names which would make the policy out of date when churchwardens resigned.

Hilary Mck agreed to take responsibility for First Aid arrangements, including keeping the First Aid boxes up to date. The First Aid boxes are kept in the Hall kitchen cupboard and under the bell tower in the Church. She also agreed to take responsibility for the Defibrillator, including overseeing arrangements for familiarising the main Hall users with it.

The Policy was approved by the PCC.

Two risk assessments ('Fire Risk in the Church Hall', and 'Bell Ringing and Tower Tours') were received for information and noted.

5. Parish Awayday has been discussed in Vicar's update.

6. Bike racks

Clare has approached Tom Deakin, a District Councillor, regarding grants to provide for this. Pete McK will follow up on this. The racks should be round the front of the church in view of people passing, but not attached to the building.

Action Pete McK

Items for Information

1. Christmas Fayre

Saturday Dec. 4th, 2-5pm

This will be held in the Churchyard, Hall and Tower tours.

Father Christmas will be in the Scout hut, there will be live music, mulled wine and stalls.

The stalls will be open until 4.30pm then the raffle will be drawn and carols will be sung outside. There will be lights in the trees and bales to sit on.

The purpose is fund raising and an entry charge of £1 per adult will be made. The wider community are getting involved which is great. The Scouts are being really helpful volunteers.

2. Arrangements for Vicar's Induction.

As Nick's induction on arrival was only witnessed on Zoom, to comply with Church of England regulations there must be an Induction service, but it will be very low-key.

It will be held on Sunday 19th December 2021 in the 10am service and the Archdeacon will be coming.

3. Hall Cleaning and Hire Charges *Peter J*

The present cleaner does a good job but only comes 2 hours a week on Friday evenings and there have been complaints about the cleanliness by some of the hirers earlier in the week.

The PCC was asked to consider whether, given our financial position, we continue with just 2 hours cleaning a week, or pay a contract cleaning company for early morning cleaning from 7-9am. Ideally, finances permitting we would employ a caretaker who could both clean the Hall and do minor maintenance jobs.

The PCC noted that the Church is only cleaned every 3 weeks at present, as the number of volunteers has reduced. We may need to supplement this by paying for a private cleaner unless more volunteers can be recruited.

At present we pay £1200-1300 per annum on cleaning the Hall. As part of a review of hire charges, the Scouts are going to pay a more realistic rate for hall hire in future. Currently they pay £28/week.

After discussion it was agreed that the Hall cleaning hours should be increased.

4. Patronage Arrangements

The Patron of St George's Church, Mrs Elizabeth Cutbush, wishes to give up the patronage and she has proposed that this should be handed over to the Diocesan Board of Patronage. It was noted that the Patron has the right to a seat on the interview panel for the appointment of an incumbent, and the right to 'present a priest' to a benefice.

In response to a notification from the Registrar of the Diocese’s intention to take over the patronage, it was decided to send a speedy reply stating that the PCC would like up to 6 months to consider possible alternative arrangements. These might include inviting another organisation to become our patron and could give the PCC more control over the choosing of a new Vicar in future. The Diocese already has 3 seats on the interview panel and the PCC only 2.

The motion was passed.

As Mrs Cutbush had written to the Churchwardens to inform them of her decision, they will reply to her and thank her on behalf of the PCC for all the interest she has shown in St George’s over many years.

5. Safeguarding

The Diocese tells us that from January 2022 that people will need to do both Safeguarding Awareness and Safeguarding Foundations training on the C of E Safeguarding training web-site.

At present all the DBS checks are up to date.

There has been a Review meeting concerning the 1 Safeguarding case.

AOB

This was Rachel Neal’s last PCC meeting before she moves away from Taunton and thanks were expressed for all she has done here.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 25th January 2022.

Signed :(Chairman)

Date :