

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 November 2018 at 7 pm
in the Tiverton Hotel

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), the Revd Robert Gordon, Christopher Burford, David Catchpole, Helen Fensome, Gill Heard, Jean Jenner, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Jennifer Palmer, David Pope, David Ricks, Richard Stenlake, Helen Wakely and Keith White.

Apologies: Rod Hilton, Sally Mundy and Roy Webber.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 13 September 2018 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 The wellbeing of St Peter's

2.1 RG reported on progress with the various plans for the development of the life of St Peter's as set out in the minutes of the PCC meeting in September (cf. minute 7). These plans were taking shape in an encouraging way, the only exception being the start of a house group (cf. 7.5.2), the plan for which would therefore be put on hold until the new year.

2.2 The location envisaged for the house group which RG himself would lead had been 29 Moorlands, but such a plan would in any case be adjusted in the light of his leaving his former home there and taking 7 Beck's Place, Beck's Square, Tiverton EX16 6PJ as his new base. As of 14 November, his home was, with the Bishop's permission, The Rectory, Withleigh, Tiverton EX16 8JQ. The new base had not only ease of access but also a room of such a size as to accommodate small meetings.

3 Pastoral care

The PCC received a request from the Pastoral Care Group for the creation of a display of photographs and names of people holding particular posts within the church, briefly explaining what roles they fulfil. People would only be photographed and included with their permission and the display put up indoors, somewhere near the back of the church. It was hoped that this would be helpful to newcomers as well as regular members of the congregation, some of who may not be certain of people's roles within the St Peter's church community.

The proposal was agreed, subject to the proviso that the photographs should follow a standard form. In the same vein, it was agreed that for such occasions as the Christingle and Remembrance Day services, it would be helpful if 'Steward' badges should be worn by those acting as sidespersons, and it was agreed that GH should order 12 such.

4 Safeguarding

CM reported on recent developments in respect of safeguarding.

- The basic safeguarding training, which is taken on line and lasts for less than hour, is being undertaken by sidespersons, and a few still need encouragement to do this. The choir and

those on the coffee team will then be asked to do the training, in line with advice from the Diocese.

- Work is progressing on draft guidance for lone workers. Some discomfort has been felt by Stewards who find themselves alone in the Church, and when appointed, the new Parish Administrator will also frequently be working alone.
- An audit of safeguarding arrangements will, in line with encouragement from the Diocese, be prepared for discussion at the January meeting of the PCC and for a report to the APCM in April.

The PCC thanked CM for all her work in this sensitive area of concern.

5 Worship

GH presented the minutes of the meeting of the Worship Committee on 1 November, drawing particular attention to the following matters.

- 5.1 *New service books* (minute 2): Gratitude was expressed for all the work RW has done in producing the first set of 140 new 'A' version service books, with three further sets to follow. It was noted with much appreciation that this involved very generous giving of time, expenditure and expertise on his part, a matter of some concern in the minds of all members who however respected Roy's insistence on this service on his part. There was a shared willingness to contribute towards his costs if his permission to do so were to be forthcoming.
- 5.2 *Services held* (minutes 3, 4): There had been widespread appreciation of the Harvest Songs of Praise and of the contribution by Ali Padfield (CHAT) on that occasion; similarly of the Taizé service, including eucharistic celebration, with the choice of appropriate hymns by Andrew Curtis. The Remembrance Day service had been an outstanding occasion, with a completely full church, queues of people waiting to come in, and an excellent sermon by David Lyddon.
- 5.3 *'Hope and Anchor'* (minute 6): After a very encouraging start on Sunday 7 October, at 7.00 for 7.30 pm, when 16 people had attended and the atmosphere had been much appreciated, the second 'Hope & Anchor' had been held on Sunday 4 November. It will continue to be held on the first Sunday of the month, and it is hoped that the use of facebook will enable numbers to increase further.
- 5.4 *Sunday lunch party* (minute 6): SM had reported the result of her enquiries at the Tiverton Golf Club about a possible lunch, and Sundays 10 and 17 February 2019 were available dates: a maximum of 50 persons, at £12.50 per head, for a two course carvery meal.

It was agreed that this would be an excellent plan, especially if it could be used to invite a number of guests if some of us would be prepared to sponsor one or more people in that way. This would prevent the occasion's being simply a reinforcement of the attendance we experience at other enjoyable social events such as the Harvest Supper, and might be used to invite some who had in former times been regular participants in the life of St Peter's but who had recently for whatever reason found this difficult, or some who are currently part of our life but in a sense rather on the fringe of our community, or some who have experienced bereavement recently, or some who are new.

- 5.5 *Times of services* (minute 6): Possible changes to the times of services had been discussed but the matter placed 'on hold' for the time being. It was noted that recent discussion of nationally declining attendances at Sunday worship had highlighted the success in some contexts of holding worship services at other than traditional times, and this would be considered by the Worship Committee.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

6 Finance

DP presented the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee on 1 November.

6.1 *Income and expenditure (minute 2a):*

Income: Following receipt of a tax refund of £491, the figures are close to parity on that item, but general collections are down, as are the figures for *Seedtime to Harvest* (£2.3k, as compared with £3.5k in 2017) and fundraising income. Donations are higher than budget as a result of a gift from the Girdlers Company. All in all, the Committee is concerned about the evidence of a continuing downward trajectory.

Expenditure: (i) The Rector's expenses are different from budget: the £500 towards them from Chevithorne has been received but the September quarter claim from RG is still awaited. (ii) The figure for planned maintenance is running ahead of budget, but most expenditure under this heading comes towards the year-end. (iii) The quinquennial inspection has been undertaken this year, so work and expenditure will be prioritised for the budget next year.

6.2 *Greenway Chapel (minute 2c):* All the expenditure, with the exception of the final invoice from the quantity surveyor, has now been paid. The final overall cost of the project has turned out to be ca. £94k.

6.3 *Parish Giving Recorder's report (minute 3):* HW reported that an aggregate of donations received through the Parish Giving Scheme, weekly envelopes and standing orders showed a reduction of £217.33 for the first nine months of 2018 in comparison with the same period in 2017. She mentioned that the 2019 envelopes for those who give weekly have already been purchased, and these have been distributed with an individual 'thank you' to everyone. While last year each donor had been offered the option of changing to the PGS scheme, this had not been done again in view of the particular profile of those giving by this method. But to those who use one-off gift envelopes an approach would again be made, as thought appropriate, at the year-end in the hope that these donors would change to the PGS.

The PCC received and approved, with RG's agreement, two proposals from the Finance Committee, aimed at encouraging new PGS members: (i) that an article written by HW and approved by the Committee, should be included in the December magazine; and (ii) that a copy of the PGS application form should be put in the pews early in the new year. RG suggested that he and HW should consult on how best to bring to the attention of a 10.15 service congregation the issue of planned giving.

6.4 *Presentation to Sheila Taylor (minute 4):* The sum of £172 had been collected in appreciation of her work as the Rector's PA over the last five years.

6.5 *Statutory and non-statutory fees 2019 (minute 6a):* The proposed statutory fee rates for 2019, determined nationally, had not yet been received. As to non-statutory fees, the levels of which were a matter for local decision, the proposal from the Finance Committee was for an increase in line with inflation for future years. In the exceptional case of the charge for heat and light, it was recognized that the proposed increase from £35 to £50 needed to be justified, and DP undertook to investigate the costs involved with a view to returning to the matter at the next meeting of the PCC.

6.6 *Director of Music and Parish Administrator/Rector's PA (minute 6b):*

6.6.1 It was agreed that the Director of Music's salary would be raised in line with the rate of inflation with effect from 1 April 2019.

6.6.2 In discussion about the successor to Sheila Taylor in the Parish Office, it was agreed that RG's review of the post, its job specification, and working times, informed by some input from Sheila herself in the light of her experience, should feed into a discussion involving RG and a small advisory group (as had been the case five years ago).

6.7 *Website (minute 6c):* The PCC received with gratitude news that responsibility for the website, having hitherto been under the Finance Committee's jurisdiction, would pass to CB as webmaster with Dennis Knowles acting as web updater. They would be approaching Website Development for some initial training. All necessary information had been passed on by RH and HW.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

6.8 *Common Fund assessment 2019:* DP reported that he had been informed that this would be £51,933, a rise of £665 on the 2018 figure, based on a figure of 103.33 participants (2018: 106).

6.9 *Remembrance Sunday collection:* It was agreed that the whole amount collected, £1,463.57, be sent on to the Royal British Legion without any deduction for local costs (since a service would have been held in any case at that time on that day).

7 Fabric

DP presented the minutes of the meeting of the Fabric Committee on 23 October, drawing attention to the following points.

7.1 *Asbestos (minute 3g):* Evidence of asbestos had been found in the boiler room, and a report was awaited, following which remedial action would be necessary.

7.2 *Rodents (minute 4q):* The presence of mice had been detected, and action was being taken by an anti-rodent protection officer, who was generously giving his services without charge.

7.3 *Fire practice:* As already indicated by Mark Heritage, there was a need for a fire practice, concerning which advice would be sought from the Fire Brigade.

7.4 *Carpet covering:* It was agreed that this should again be laid in advance of the Carol and Christingle services, notwithstanding the cost of ca. £200. The need to protect the carpets was not obviated by future re-ordering, since most of the current carpeting would remain in place after that had taken place.

The PCC endorsed the Fabric Committee meeting minutes.

8 Project management

DR reported the following developments, taking into account two meetings in church with the architect to discuss the works in detail. He has now produced draft drawings for the following plans.

8.1 *New toilet block:* The drawings for a planning application having been produced, it will be possible to make an application to the local authority very soon. They have been given priority so that the planning process will be well underway by the time application is made to the DAC. Wet facilities for the flower arrangers have been moved out of this area into the church but storage for them remains.

8.2 *The children's area:* Preliminary proposals from the architect for the children's area were circulated at the meeting. Consultation with the children's helpers on the proposals will now be arranged to obtain their views.

- 8.3 *Servery*: A tall cupboard, facing the door into the toilets is being introduced, to house a flower arrangers' sink and storage. This, together with the retention of three rows of pews by the Norman door, will result in a slightly smaller servery facility, as recommended by the DAC.
- 8.4 *Open west end*: It has been agreed with the architect that four rows of pews will be shown removed to create a generous open space at the west end. Three rows of pews will be retained and result in the two freestanding columns at the west end being central in the new space.
- 8.5 *Library*: The adaption of the present library to form a small meeting room, with a suspended ceiling and independent local heating, has been discussed with the architect and his proposals are being worked up.
- 8.6 *Pew survey as requested by the DAC*: The architect has completed a first site survey and taken record photographs. He is in the course of preparing his first draft document for DAC comment.

9 Deanery Synod

MS introduced her report of the last meeting of the Deanery Synod, supplemented by the draft official minutes of that meeting on 11 October 2018. The main topic of discussion had been matters relating to the Common Fund.

In discussion, note was taken of the disquiet aroused by the Bishop's ruling that parishes in interregnum not paying their common fund would not be allocated a new incumbent until they had paid all their common fund payments, cleared any historic debts to the Diocese, and committed to paying their fund amount for the next four years. This was felt to be inappropriately harsh, unmindful of the high probability that any parish unable to pay its dues had not fallen short intentionally but rather of necessity, and potentially damaging to the life, worship and witness of a local Christian community.

It was agreed that the St Peter's representatives on the Deanery Synod should register at the next meeting the PCC's strength of feeling against this ruling and its hope that the Bishop would withdraw it.

10 Any other business

- 10.1 Annual grand sale and coffee morning: JJ asked PCC members to make every effort, including electronic processes, to advertise the event set for Friday 30 November.
- 10.2 HF informed the PCC of her decision to retire from her ministry as a reader, though not from her other activities and responsibilities in St Peter's. This news was received with great regret, albeit with understanding of Helen's reasons, and with much gratitude for the ministry that she had exercised.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Signed:

Date: