

## ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

### Parochial Church Council

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Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7 February 2019 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, Rod Hilton, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Sally Mundy, David Pope, Richard Stenlake, Helen Wakely and Roy Webber.

Apologies: Jean Jenner, Jennifer Palmer, David Ricks and Keith White.

The meeting opened with prayer.

#### 1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 15 November 2018 were approved and signed.

#### 2 Matters arising from the minutes

2.1 *Sunday lunch party: 'Celebrating togetherness'* (minute 5.4). DC reported that the full total of 56 tickets had been sold or allocated, including 10 sponsored guests. The replies from those who had been specially invited, especially those members of St Peter's who now find it difficult to come to church, had been very appreciative.

2.2 *Deanery Synod* (minute 9): MS reported on the widespread disquiet that had been caused by the briefing paper on the Common Fund which had been laid before the Deanery Synod meeting in October. While it was recognized that the Diocese must give attention to the balancing of its books, the paper was felt to show insufficient sensitivity to the genuine problems some churches experienced in paying their Common Fund allocation, either because of small numbers or because of their heavy and costly responsibility for the maintenance of ancient buildings. Although the paper did allow for a process of enquiry into special local circumstances, it was felt that non-payment of Common Fund contributions could not automatically be explained in terms of local unwillingness.

The PCC supported their Deanery Synod representatives in registering unhappiness at the tone and content of the briefing paper, and urged that it be recognized that a punitive approach, which had an acutely dispiriting effect on Christian people, and which might unnecessarily, even if temporarily, deprive a benefice of the leadership of an incumbent, ran the risk of jeopardising the worship and witness of a local Christian community. They hoped that representation to this effect by the Deanery Synod might bring about a change of approach at diocesan level.

#### 3 The wellbeing of St Peter's

3.1 *Archbishops' prayer course*: RG referred to the course *Thy Kingdom Come*, sponsored by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and designed to help develop the prayer life of the churches during the period between Ascension Day (30 May) and Pentecost (9 June). He suggested that St Peter's might participate in the course this year.

3.2 *Mission communities*: At present the churches in Tiverton form one single mission community in theory but in practice operate as two. Following conversations that had taken place during RG's recent ministerial development review, this issue had been acknowledged by Bishop Robert. RG hoped to be able in the near future to discuss it further with Bishop Jackie.

## Safeguarding

CM presented three documents dealing with current safeguarding issues, two of them representing St Peter's positions giving guidance for lone workers, and a statement on domestic abuse, and a third, for information only, being the diocesan safeguarding checklist for benefices and parishes.

The PCC endorsed *nem con* the two St Peter's documents and agreed that they would be placed on the website and also made available to everyone attending the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 11 April. (They are attached as appendices 1 and 2 to these minutes.)

There was considerable discussion of the unease felt by some who work alone in the church, where lighting is poor and the absence of other people increases a sense of vulnerability. This applies, for example though not exclusively, to flower arrangers and stewards and also to the person acting as parish administrator. It was noted (i) that the cost of having lighting, using LED bulbs, would not be great, and it was felt that turning on the lights would be helpful; (ii) that the project management group had discussed the provision of a panic alarm in the new-style office when it was established; and (iii) that the transparent glass doors that were envisaged for the entrances and for the library/office would be beneficial (cf. PMG minutes, 18 January 2019).

## 5 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 17 January.

- 5.1 *New service books* (minute 2). The Prayer A service books had been well received, but a question was asked as to when further books involving other Eucharistic prayers would emerge. RG responded that he would very soon be passing the material to RW, who was poised and ready to produce those books.
- 5.2 *Review of services* (minute 3): A number of recent special services, notably the Remembrance Day service, had been very well attended and greatly appreciated. In respect of future planning, AL requested that during the Christmas period services should be spread out in time a little more than had been the case in 2018.
- 5.3 *Christian Aid* (minute 6b): Support for *Christian Aid*, the leading charity for the churches, had been seriously weakened by the collapse of the local committee for want of support from local churches. In 2018 a short-term contingency arrangement at St Peter's had at least raised £366 in all. Given that the need for all possible fundraising for such vital work was more pressing than ever, it was agreed by the PCC that the recommendation of the Worship Committee be accepted, namely that St Peter's would officially and formally make clear its support for this vital charity. Christian Aid Week would take place during 12-18 May this year; posters would be obtained from Christian Aid headquarters; envelopes would be enclosed with the welcome sheets at all services (8.00 and 10.15) on the Sundays immediately beforehand, and collected on the Sundays immediately afterwards (19 and 26 May, the former being Mayor's Sunday and therefore not the easiest for an efficient collection).
- 5.4 *Sidespersons* (minute 6c): The urgent need for more volunteers to act as sidespersons at all services was noted, and a personal approach would be made to those who might help in this way.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.\

## 6 Finance

RH and DP introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 17 January, drawing attention to the following points.

- 6.1 *Budget 2019* (minute 2a): The expected deficit for the current year is £30,715, which includes projected post-Quinquennial Inspection expenses in the region of £12-13k. We are heavily dependent on the legacies of former members of the church.

- 6.2 *Investment policy* (minute 2c): Consultation concerning realisation of investments in advance of re-ordering expenditure had focussed on the likelihood of stock market volatility in the near future. However, the decision had been taken to realise £50k worth of investments at this stage rather than the £100k which the Client Relationship Manager and Client Investment Director had envisaged.
- 6.3 RW reviewed the fundraising bookings that had been made for 2019, including the Exeter Chamber Choir in March, the choir safari lunch in May, a shared light entertainment event in aid of the Devon Air Ambulance in June, the Köln Philharmonic Choir in August, the grand sale and coffee morning in November, and at some time the churchwardens' lunch and a fundraising event organized by the bell-ringers.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

## 7 Fabric

The PCC considered the minutes of the Fabric Committee meeting on 8 January. Heartfelt gratitude was extended to the members of the Tuesday DIY group, who use their skills and save the church a great deal of money.

The new floodlight mounted over the southeast door in order to illuminate the churchyard paths was regarded as an excellent development.

## 8 Project management group

The PCC considered the minutes of the meeting of the Project Management Group on 18 January.

### 8.1 *Toilet block planning:*

- An application has been submitted to the MDDC, prior to which a survey was required to ensure that the habitat of any endangered species, i.e. bats, would not be disturbed by the demolition involved. The survey had been carried out, and no evidence of bats had been found.
- Two small amendments have been made to the design of the toilet block. The flower arrangers' cupboard and sink have been moved to be next to a slightly smaller servery, i.e. inside the church; and the urinal in the male toilet has been omitted and replaced with a second WC cubicle.

### 8.2 *Revision of the overall plan:*

- The removal of one additional row of pews from the west end, to give three remaining in the nave and north aisle, west of the cross aisle, would allow a more generous open space and place the remaining two freestanding columns more centrally in the space. It was hoped that the DAC would give approval to this adjustment.
- A slight reduction (approximately 1m) in the size of the servery would result from the introduction of the flower arrangers' cupboard and the reintroduction of north aisle pews.
- For the porch, consideration has been given to the architect's options for the design of the new lobby inside the south door. A simple clear glass approach in a timber framework with a modest amount of embellishment is the favoured option, with the provision of double doors of a suitable size. Consideration has been given to the use of a ship design on the glass, as an appropriate reference to John Greenway.
- The development of the design of the existing library to become a multi-use space and meeting room is under discussion. The plan would be that this would be used as a parish office during the mornings, be available as a small meeting room at other times, and probably remain as a choir changing room on Sunday mornings. The door would need to be glazed to allow inter-visibility

between the office and the church, lockable, and have an interlock to the new south porch doors, to allow the secretary to make the church secure when s/he leave the office for any reason. The occupation of the office will give life to the church and a focus for those with enquiries or any other parish business.

- Children's area. Preliminary concept sketches, which have been provided by the architect, have been reviewed by the children's helping team, and a way forward has been agreed. Comments have been passed back to the architect and the design is being developed.

### 8.3 *Pews:*

The architect has completed the survey work in church for the report, required by the DAC, on the provenance, detail and description of any unique features of our pews, to ensure that when we remove some, examples of all types will remain. He has also completed the necessary photographic survey. When completed this report will be sent to the DAC to establish its acceptability as a record of the existing furnishings.

### 8.4 *Timing:*

Present indications are that the work might be able to start towards the end of the year. But attendance figures show that the many additional visitors St Peter's attracts for Christmas services, regular and special, amount to some 2,700. This compares with a relatively small extra number at Easter. So it has been agreed that no works will be commenced until the start of 2020, to leave Christmas undisturbed. This assumes that progress with the design works and DAC approval allow this to be a realistic goal.

### 8.5 *Display of design drawings*

The architect is to be requested to supply a display of the design drawings that can be mounted at the back of the church, to show progress and encourage the congregation, when the work is at a slightly more advanced stage.

## 9 Electoral roll and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

9.1 CM reminded the PCC that this year the whole electoral roll has to be renewed. Members of St Peter's will be alerted via the welcome sheet, and registration forms will be available in church.

9.2 At the APCM on Thursday 11 April, there will need to be some elections: two churchwardens; one representative to serve for one year on the Deanery Synod, since SM has decided to retire; and at least two members of the PCC, since CM and DR will have completed their second three-year terms of membership and are not eligible for re-election until 2020.

## 10 Any other business

RG reported having received a letter from Canon Patrick Whitworth, the chair of the Peache Trust, which is the patron of this parish. The need to find new support and capacity in the exercise of the Trust's responsibilities has led to an agreement to merge its operations with the Church Pastoral Aid Society. Two members of the current group of Peache Trustees will remain in place and will work with three nominees of CPAS in making appointments within the evangelical tradition of the Church of England.

Some considerable hesitation was expressed within the PCC concerning this development, especially with the spectrum of Anglican churches in Tiverton in mind. The evangelical tradition is already well represented, as is the catholic tradition, so it is vitally important that St Peter's, which is not evangelical in stance, should continue to represent a position of central churchmanship.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed:

Date: