

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 September 2019 at 7 pm in the Tiverton Hotel

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), the Revd Robert Gordon, David Catchpole, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Rod Hilton, Jean Jenner, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Richard Stenlake, Vicki Stuckey, Keith White and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Christopher Burford, Helen Fensome, Deborah Lal, Jennifer Palmer, David Pope, David Ricks and Roy Webber.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 11 July 2019 were approved and signed.

2 Matters arising from the minutes

2.1 *Presentation to Elizabeth Ricks* (minute 3.1): Elizabeth's many years of service as lay pastoral assistant had been recognized with much appreciation and a presentation by GH at a 10.15 service. RG reported that the pastoral care group was actively considering the shape of the role it might take in the future.

2.2 *Tiverton mission community* (minute 3.1): Conversations had taken place between RG and Bishop Jackie and also the Revd Andy Humm (St Paul's) concerning the Tiverton mission community and whether it should persist as a single entity. It was recognised that the various churches were in fact (in addition to active involvement in *Churches Together in Tiverton*) working in their own distinctive styles but with much goodwill, and no need was felt for further integration of activity. However, it was recognised that it would be appropriate to formulate a mission community action plan, and RG was pursuing that possibility. With regard to a hypothetical vacancy in any one of the churches, he observed that unless clergy numbers in the Diocese reached crisis point, the appointment of a single incumbent to lead the diverse churches within the mission community would be an unhelpful and indeed retrograde step, and he was making this clear to all concerned.

3 The office of treasurer

WZ reported on arrangements, approved on behalf of the PCC by the standing committee, which had been made to cover financial activity during the period of DP's illness and in advance of the beginning of 2020 when Chris Shields would take over as treasurer. Bank authorisation of CS and WZ to sign cheques and access on-line banking had been approved, and he was very encouraged by the conversations which had taken place concerning the actual handover.

4 First Aid course

GH reported that 9 members of St Peter's, together with 3 from Chevithorne, had attended the course, which was run by a first aid lady from Paignton rather than (as had been anticipated) by St John's Ambulance. It had covered basic first aid, CPR, and the use of defibrillators. The ambience of the course had been helpfully calm and reassuring as well as informative.

The PCC had authorised expenditure to cover 6 people at £25 a head, whereas the actual cost had been for 9 people at £20 a head. It was agreed that the extra expenditure be retrospectively covered.

WZ reported that different models of defibrillator were being investigated. An archdeacon's letter would be needed for permission to introduce one into the church building. The PCC agreed in principle to cover the cost up to a figure of £1.2k, though it was noted that preparedness on the part of St Peter's member(s) to pay for this installation had been voiced.

In discussion, the question of making this facility available to the wider community as part of our service to that community, perhaps by installing it in the porch, was raised. It was noted, however, that there were security issues involved, especially with nocturnal availability in mind. It was agreed that at least for the foreseeable future and in order not to complicate the process of gaining permission, the equipment would be installed inside the church.

5 The wellbeing of St Peter's

A detailed report on the *Holiday Club* was provided by RG and KH. It had been well and imaginatively organized and had proved thoroughly enjoyable. Attendance had however been disappointing, the maximum number of children involved having been 12 for the final morning. It was felt that consideration of its future needed to be undertaken, and at the same time the *Time Together* strategy examined, since numbers there too had dwindled somewhat. KH was investigating the provision made by schools during after-school and holiday times, so that our planning might take account of where there were real needs not already being met. It was noted (i) that a good deal of contact with schools on the part of the different Anglican churches in Tiverton was already taking place, and (ii) that following the reordering of St Peter's there might well emerge some new and different ways of doing things.

Time Together would in future start at 10 am (second Thursdays) and 3.30 (fourth Thursdays).

6 Safeguarding

CM reported that there had been no comment on or reaction to RG's letter in the July magazine about safeguarding. She also explained that the stewardship rota had been suspended in 2018 because some of the stewards had been uneasy about their potential vulnerability. However, each individual has been given a copy of the Lone Working Guidance, and the rota has been reinstated this year.

7 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 21 August. Particular matters mentioned were (i) the preparation of new service books, which was in hand, subject to RW's health; (ii) a change from the planned Harvest Supper to a Harvest Lunch in the Rugby Club on the same day (Friday 4 October at 12.30 pm); and (iii) the provision of a parallel Holy Communion service at St Peter's on the day of the St Thomas's Patronal Festival, given the difficulty some found with mounting the steep path up to the church. This service had attracted 12 people, and it was agreed that this was a good provision which should be continued in future.

The PCC endorsed the Worship Committee meeting minutes.

8 Finance

RH reported on the financial situation, there having been no meeting of the Committee during the time of DP's illness. There was, he said, no reason for anxiety at present with the budget, and the major immediate concern of the Committee would be the cost of reordering when detailed costings became available. WZ added that all outstanding bills had been paid.

The stewardship report for the first six months of the year recorded a rise of £585 on the comparable figure for 2018 (£19,355 as against £18,760), with evidence of a small shift in giving towards the Parish Giving Scheme.

Fundraising had continued with the much appreciated visit of the Köln Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble, which had yielded £410 in income. The attendance had been very good, and twelve possible dates for a further visit had already been offered by their leader.

WZ suggested that when Chris Shields has taken over as treasurer there should be someone acting as 'backstop' in the rather changed circumstances, and he offered to fill that role himself. Members of the PCC were very glad indeed to hear that DP was making progress in his recovery from illness.

9 Fabric

WZ, on behalf of DR, presented the minutes of the Fabric Committee meeting on 27 August, drawing particular attention to the following details.

- 9.1 *Churchyard trees:* Work is long overdue on the recommended felling of eight trees and the trimming of a further six, including the large beech trees on the eastern boundary overhanging the road. A quotation in the sum of £1,908 including VAT, plus £150 to cover the application for planning consent, had been received from *Four Seasons*. The PCC approved this expenditure, for which adequate allowance had been made in the budget.
- 9.2 *Stonework repairs at roof level:* Masonry repair works at roof level, listed as urgent Category One, had been required by the 2018 Quinquennial Report, and a quotation in the sum of £1,750 + VAT had been received. This expenditure had been assumed in the budget, and the PCC agreed to appoint *Western Steeplejacks* to carry out this work. A small extra expenditure would be required as the work on the George Davey plaque at the west end of the nave, though scheduled and discussed, had not been included in their pricing schedule.
- 9.3 *New church notice board:* Detailed consideration had been given by the Committee to various possibilities for a ready-made notice board. The proposal of a man-made timber version, with fixed quotation and design to be submitted to the PCC for approval when finalised, and costing up to £1,500, was approved by the PCC.
- 9.4 *Stained glass repairs:* Two windows are involved.
 - 9.4.1 W24: The repairs to the window in the vestry, W24, have been completed, the window is back in place, and all keys and other valuables have been returned to the vestry, with the cost (£1,000) included in the budget.
 - 9.4.2 W13: A quotation for the repair of vandalism to W13 in the west end of the south aisle has been received from *Heritage Stained Glass* in the sum of £2,100 + (recoverable) VAT. The PCC approved the work and the quotation from *Heritage Stained Glass*. The cost, less our excess of £1,000, has been covered by our insurance. Application has been made to the DAC for an Archdeacon's Certificate, as required for this work.
- 9.5 *Trimming of yew trees:* Members of the Fabric Committee, and of the PCC, expressed their gratitude to Mike Heard who, with help from Neville Mundy, had once again carried out his annual yew tree trim.

WZ commented on the great debt owed to DR for his hard work in both areas of Fabric Committee and the reordering of St Peter's. The PCC expressed its thanks both to him and to the other members of the DIY team, through whose work and skill a great deal of expenditure had been saved.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Fabric Committee meeting.

10 Project management

WZ, on behalf of DR, presented the report of the Project Management Group.

- 10.1 *Costing:* The quantity surveyor's cost plan put the overall cost at £759,815, but DR's analysis suggested that this might be reduced to £564,867. i.e. a figure still in excess of the budget of £500,000, but lower than the last reported figure for the value of the Church House Fund. A significant factor is the extent of our ability to reclaim VAT, concerning which advice is needed from DP as and when he is able to provide it.

DR's proposal was (i) that the current scope of our reordering works should remain as planned, and that we should go forward to obtain DAC approval for the full scheme; (ii) that in the meantime we obtain the expert advice needed to resolve the question of our ability to reclaim VAT; and (iii) that the extent of the works be amended only and if necessary once tenders have been received, the question of VAT payment resolved and any extra over the budget known with certainty.

- 10.2 *Progress:* Production of working drawings had been a little slow and the intended DAC deadline for the September meeting may well be missed. But the works are still due to start in early 2020, with completion within the year.
- 10.3 *Display at the back of the church:* Many members of the congregation have looked at the display board at the back of the church, and members of the PMG have been on hand to explain the plans and answer questions. The proposals have met with a very satisfactory level of approval, with only small observations noted.

11 Wildlife in the churchyard

CM introduced a briefing paper on 'Living Churchyards', opening up the possibility a part of the churchyard's being set aside to encourage wildlife, an issue which had in fact been raised some years ago. She suggested that it could be an attraction for passers-by and visitors, as well as members of the congregation, given proper planning and care.

Thirty-six parishes in the Diocese are so far involved, some of them urban and others rural. Detailed briefing is available from David Curry, the Environmental Officer for the Diocese, covering matters such as the encouragement of bugs, bees and swifts as well as wild flowers which would probably be the main focus for us at St Peter's. He has a 45-minute presentation on the subject and has offered to visit St Peter's to give advice and to produce a project brief if it was felt that the idea was worth pursuing.

As the churchyard is closed and is in a conservation area, Mid Devon Council would need to be involved. There is experience there of dedicating some roundabouts and other small areas in Tiverton to the growing of wildflowers from seed.

It was agreed to return to the topic, but in the meantime to visit if opportunity arises the developments of this sort at Molland (rural) and Heavitree (urban), to take advice about the sorts of flowers that it would be appropriate to encourage and maintain, and also to consult with Ian Johnson, whose knowledge and enthusiasm for this area of life is well known. The sensitivities of the owners of the Castle would need to be respected if such an idea were to be implemented.

12 Any other business

RG reported that the advertisement for a new parish administrator was about to be posted on the diocesan website in expectation of interviews and a starting date at the beginning of November.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8 35 pm.

Signed:

Date: