

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 November 2019 at 7 pm in the Tiverton Hotel

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), the Revd Robert Gordon, David Catchpole, Helen Fensome, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Rod Hilton, Jean Jenner, Deborah Lal, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Jennifer Palmer, David Pope, David Ricks, Vicki Stuckey, Keith White.

Apologies: Christopher Burford, Christopher Shields, Richard Stenlake, Roy Webber, and William Zarrett.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5 September 2019 were approved and signed.

2 Matters arising from the minutes

Wildlife in the churchyard (minute 11): CM reported that she had been in touch with those churches which had recently won awards as the best churchyards in Devon, as well as speaking briefly to Ian Johnson. These conversations had been useful in focusing on what might be feasible at St Peter's. Some enthusiastic volunteers, as well as finance, would be required, and in the light of the reordering due in 2020 as well as other commitments it was agreed that such a project be put on the back burner for the time being.

3 The wellbeing of St Peter's

- 3.1 *Time Together*: RG reported that very low attendances at recent sessions had led to the decision that at least for the time being *Time Together* should be discontinued. At the last four sessions, there had been one pre-school child together with the grandmother at one of them and none at all at the other three. So it seemed sensible to pause, regroup, and revisit the question, perhaps after the completion of reordering when facilities would be improved.

Members of the PCC paid tribute to those who had over a considerable period of time sustained *Time Together* with their care and commitment. Planning began in the autumn of 2011, and we opened to the public in January 2012. That means that most of those who were still involved at the suspension of activities had been labouring faithfully for nearly eight years, and their work was greatly appreciated and admired by the whole St Peter's community.

- 3.2 *Hope and Anchor*: RG observed that this was developing interestingly, the number of participants having settled at approximately twelve. The content of the sessions, fellowship in varied forms, is developing very much according to the wishes of those who come.

- 3.3 *Relationships between the Tiverton churches*: RG is working with the Revds Andy Humm and Richard Maudsley on a mission plan for the Tiverton mission community. Additionally, conversations are taking place with Richard Maudsley on the developing St Andrew's/St Peter's relationship, e.g. the defining of a joint policy vis-à-vis baptisms and weddings.

4 Safeguarding

CM reported the issuing by the Diocese of revised guidelines on DBS checks and changes in the regular training courses. She undertook to inform members when the time for undertaking these courses had arrived. She also mentioned that she had recently attended a Diocesan course on domestic abuse, a problem which sadly was as real in the Church of England as in society at large.

5 Pastoral care

CM reported on the recent work of the Pastoral Care Group.

The Diocese has issued guidance on the safe recruitment of those church members who have more than incidental contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, as well as those with overall responsibility for safeguarding, i.e. the PCC. This includes the requirement to have a clearly defined role description for each person, who would need to produce two references. The Group is drawing up descriptions for the pastoral care and home communion visitors as a first step. Those groups and individuals within St Peter's (of which there are about ten) who fall within this category for safe recruitment will then need to do likewise, and overall it will need to be a carefully managed exercise. This is a measure designed to protect not only those visited but also those who visit them. It would be necessary for each person to provide the required two references from those who could attest their suitability.

It was recognised that the demands of these procedures ran the risk of dampening willingness to volunteer for these roles, but that this will just have to be faced and hopefully overcome.

6 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 30 October.

- 6.1 *New service books* (minute 2): RW had printed book E (gold cover) which is now in use; book D will be the next to appear in due course.
- 6.2 *Andrew Curtis's illness*: A number of plans, e.g. for some innovation in the content of services, had been under discussion between RG and Andrew, plans which would now be put on hold as a result of his absence through illness. RG reported on arrangements, which were well advanced, for substitute organists during the period to the end of the year.

DP mentioned that Andrew's contract as Director of Music needed to be checked vis-à-vis payments during a time of absence for health reasons. RG undertook to do so.

- 6.3 *Diocesan requirement concerning persons recommended for assistance at Holy Communion*:
 - 6.3.1 As recommended by the Worship Committee, the PCC resolved unanimously that the following persons, commended by the Rector, should be authorised to assist with the distribution of the Holy Communion within Public Worship in accordance with the Administration of Communion Regulations 2015 for a period of 3 years: Susan Beale, David Catchpole, Pam Cornwell, Penny Drysdale, Helen Fensome, Jim Grose, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Catherine Makepeace, Sally Mundy and William Zarrett.
 - 6.3.2 As recommended by the Worship Committee, the PCC also resolved unanimously that the following persons, commended by the Rector, should be authorised to assist with the distribution of the Holy Communion to the housebound in accordance with the Administration of Communion Regulations 2015 for a period of 3 years: Susan Beale, David Catchpole, Pam Cornwell, Helen Fensome and Jean Jenner.

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

7 The office of treasurer

It was agreed to co-opt Chris Shields to membership of the PCC with immediate effect. He would take over as treasurer on 1 January 2020. DP reported that he would be responsible for the completion of the 2019 accounts. He and CS had met several times in order to secure a smooth transition.

On behalf of the whole PCC, MS expressed admiration and gratitude to DP for his work as treasurer over the last twelve years. His style had been 'affably direct' and had been greatly appreciated. He had clarified and simplified the conduct of the St Peter's finances, which placed the whole of the St Peter's community in his debt. DP for his part spoke of his enjoyment of the role and of the company of those who had shared with him the care of the life of our church.

8 Finance

RH introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 31 October

8.1 *Budget 2019:* The present state of the finances is favourable in relation to the budget, principally because planned maintenance expenditure on the roof level stonework has not yet taken place. The quotation for the work has turned out to be lower than anticipated. Major points of difference between actual and budget figures reflect disappointing *Seedtime to Harvest* donations, and lower fee income, both statutory and non-statutory, resulting from there having been only one wedding at St Peter's this year. DP predicted that at the year-end, the overall figure would be close to that budgeted.

8.2 *Development Fund:* DP proposed, and the PCC agreed, that this should be merged with the unrestricted general fund.

8.3 *Stewardship:* Helen Wakely's report recorded an increase (2019 over 2018) of £814.23 in the aggregated total income for Parish Giving Scheme (up to September) and envelopes/standing orders (up to August). The results show a definite trend towards a slow uptake of the Parish Giving Scheme and a steady decline in those using regular envelopes. The PCC has taken the decision that the parish will, as from the start of 2021, stop offering the regular envelopes, which are heavy on administrative time and declining in revenue. At the year-end, along with next year's envelopes and a thank you for everyone's contribution, HW will indicate to those giving by this method that 2020 will be its last year.

Thanks were expressed to Helen for her careful and efficient coverage of stewardship matters.

8.4 *Common Fund:* DP reported that the assessment for 2020 had been notified as £50,538.

8.5 *Legacy:* A bequest of £728.16 has been received from the estate of the late Mrs Kay Mesney.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee.

9 Fabric

DR introduced the minutes of the Fabric Committee meeting on 5 November, drawing particular attention to the following matters.

9.1 *Trees (minute 3b):* While the delegation from the Town Council had been content with the St Peter's proposal, the quotation from *Four Seasons* for works on the trees had been met with reservation on the part of the Mid-Devon authority. As a result, the application would have to be withdrawn and a specialist report by Green Trees Arboreal Sciences (which would cost St Peter's some £400/500) sought. The PCC agreed to do this.

- 9.2 *Churchyard noticeboard* (minute 3f): A quotation for a new notice board had been received from *Green Barns*: £1,732.53 (inclusive of VAT), which the PCC accepted. The Tuesday group would install it and at the same time remove the additional notice boards.
- 9.3 *Churchyard maintenance: grass cutting* (minute 4o): Stuart Maddocks having resigned his responsibility for cutting the churchyard grass, DR was investigating possible replacements. It was noted that Bob and Matt Ridd, who were giving very satisfactory service at Chevithorne, had provided a promising quotation, and *Four Seasons* would also be approached for one.

DR alerted the PCC to the fact that some tasks, hitherto undertaken by the Tuesday group, were beginning to be beyond the capacity of its members, so it was likely that some alternative provision would in future prove necessary.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Fabric Committee meeting.

10 Project management

DR introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Project Management Group on 5 November.

The most important development is the need for a revised, delayed, programme for the works. The most significant cause of this delay is the need for detailed structural engineering input, especially for works to the new toilet block below ground and its proximity to the boiler room steps. A drainage survey will achieve CCTV coverage of the drains and obtain invert levels and falls. This work is now in hand, with a quotation [subsequently set at £390.00 inclusive of VAT] for this survey being sought from Drainology Ltd, a firm known to the architect.

The delay will also allow fuller consideration be given to a number of design aspects, details of which DR outlined, and allow much more confidence in the completeness of the submission to the DAC, when made.

The programme for the works is now as follows:

- Finalisation of structural design, construction details and final selection of materials and finishes: during November and December.
- Submission to the DAC on 6 January 2020 for consideration at the DAC meeting on 3 February.
- Tender process in parallel with DAC submission: put to tender at the end of January with tender returns on 2 March, giving a five-week tender period.
- Following DAC meeting and their approval, a process of statutory notices and a subsequent application to the Chancellor for a Faculty will take until the middle of April. (Easter Sunday is 12th April).
- Contractor tender review, appointment and mobilisation will also take until the middle of April.
- Start on site after Easter, mid to late April.
- Anticipated contract duration of 6-7 months.
- Completion for Christmas 2020.

DR undertook to look in detail at the design drawings which the architect had tabled at the meeting and to respond with any further comments.

In discussion the question was raised whether the expenditure involved in reordering was justified when the church faced other pressing challenges.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Project Management Group meeting.

11 Deanery Synod

RG reported on the meeting of the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod on 30 September.

The meeting had been concerned especially with the Five-year Deanery Plan which the Diocese have asked the Deanery Synod to put together by October 2020. This would probably be the principle focus of the Deanery Synod meetings over the next 12 months. The Deanery Plan aims to allow the Synod to look at how the constituent churches function as a Deanery, and whether there are any structural changes that could help them to function better, and also to inform decisions about the Deanery allocation of stipendiary clergy posts which are expected to be reduced from about 10 full time equivalent posts (currently), to 9 full time equivalent posts by 2022.

RG advised that it would be unwise for St Peter's to suppose that it would be exempt from any changes that the plan would envisage. When a vacancy occurred, it should not be assumed that another incumbent would automatically be appointed for St Peter's. Therefore, some hard thinking should take place concerning the identity of St Peter's, its strengths and weaknesses, and its relationship to other benefices in the Deanery.

The questionnaire covering these and other questions needed careful consideration, he went on, and all members of the PCC were asked to consider carefully how they felt those questions should be answered. They were asked to sign and return their answers to him or to leave them in the vestry by 1 January 2020. A collation of those responses would be considered by RG, MS, RS and the wardens in advance of the January meeting of the PCC, when a full discussion could take place. It was agreed to try and move the date of this meeting back a week to 23 January [Tiverton Hotel has confirmed this].

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

Signed:

Date: