

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 7 pm
by Zoom

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), the Revd Robert Gordon, David Catchpole, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Deborah Lal, Catherine Makepeace, Jennifer Palmer, David Ricks, Chris Shields, Richard Stenlake, Vicki Stuckey and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Averil Long and Roy Webber.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2020 were approved and signed.
There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 Worship

2.1 *Temporary closure of St Peter's:* RG introduced a briefing on the situation which had led him, with the advice of the Health and Safety Officer and the support of the Standing Committee, temporarily to suspend services at St Peter's. Government guidance and the Bishop's request to all clergy to review the risk assessment, while leaving the door open for services within the parameters of social distancing and hand sanitising, had led to the conclusion that it was unwise, unnecessary and quite possibly unsustainable in the present circumstances of rising infection rates to open the church, whether for public worship or for private prayer.

The PCC accepted the recommendation of the Standing Committee that services in St Peter's should be temporarily suspended until it is once more possible to be sure that they can be held safely. In that light RG undertook to write to Bishop Robert on behalf of the PCC to seek his dispensation from the requirements of canon law in this regard.

It was noted that the wording of the entry on the website concerning the 'closure' of St Peter's needed to be adjusted to include a reference to the zoom/telephonic Sunday services of Morning Prayer which have become a staple part of the worship and fellowship of the St Peter's community during the time of lockdown.

- 2.2 *Worship Committee:* GH introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 4 January. The Committee had reviewed with much regret the placing on hold of so many plans for services in recent months, including the special services for Remembrance Day and Christmas. Carol singing in the churchyard and the service of Christmas music and readings had however been greatly enjoyed.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

3 Finance

WZ and CS introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 7 January, including the preliminary year-end results for 2020 and the draft budget for 2021.

- 3.1 *Preliminary results for 2020:* On the income side, planned giving and tax recovery (gift aid) had both exceeded expectations, while general collections had been lower as a result of the closure of the church for substantial periods of time during the year. Fundraising had achieved the remarkable level of £12k (including over £1k in gift aid) as a result of the 'Give a little, help a lot' enterprise and Christmas fair events. In the latter case, much gratitude was due to Mary Seaton, Sally Mundy, Gill Heard, Jenny Palmer, Sheila Schofield and Judith Kerr for the very hard work they had put in and the delicious cakes, mince pies, biscuits and puddings that they had produced.

CS commented on the importance of the Parish Giving scheme as a means of financial stability: he reported that of all the parishes in the Diocese 53% were using the scheme and many of the remaining 47% were said to be experiencing serious difficulty. Thanks were due to Helen Wakely for her hard and efficient work in maintaining the PGS and her sensitivity and gentleness in contacting those who give to St Peter's.

On the expenditure side, many expenses had been reduced as a result of the church's not being open for a number of months. Similarly, planned maintenance could not all be undertaken, and would probably be higher in 2021 as a consequence. Emergency maintenance including work on the windows and the security grills around the boiler room had been necessary. There were no salaries for either an Office Assistant or a Director of Music.

The end result had been a deficit of £9.8k in an exceptional year, for which the projection at the start of the year had been a deficit approaching £32k.

Particular thanks were offered to CS for his preparation and maintenance of the accounts. WZ noted that CS and DC had begun the work of preparing the 2020 Annual Report and that CS was receiving guidance very kindly offered by David Pope.

- 3.2 *Draft budget for 2021:* CS introduced the proposed budget for the coming year, which had been compiled by the Budget Working Group and then scrutinised item by item by the Finance Committee. Planned income amounted to £58,890 over against planned expenditure amounting to £95,329, i.e. a planned deficit of £36,439. This budget was approved by the PCC.
- 3.3 *Table of fees 2021:* The PCC accepted the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the following table of fees be adopted.

Statutory Fees

The Table of Parochial Fees 2021 has been published by the Church Commissioners as follows:

Marriages

Publication of banns	£ 31.00 (DBF £00; PCC £31)
Certificate of banns	£ 15.00 (DBF £00; PCC £15)
Marriage service	£464.00 (DBF £211; PCC £253)
Marriage certificate	£ 11.00 (DBF £00; PCC £11)

Funerals

Service in church	£199.00 (DBF £108; PCC £91)
Service at crematorium, cemetery or funeral director's chapel	£199.00 (DBF £169; PCC £30)

Local Fees

We will continue to inform marrying couples and local funeral directors of items that are optional, and propose the following charges for 2021:

Weddings and Funerals

Organist	£ 70.00
Choir	£ 95.00
Verger	£ 25.00
Bells	£120.00
Heating	£ 50.00 from 1 st October to 30 th April inclusive

Mileage

The Diocesan rate remains at 45p per mile. We will continue to charge as follows:

St Peter's and / or Tiverton Cemetery	£ 8.00
Exeter or Taunton Crematorium	£18.00
East Devon or Barnstaple Crematorium	£28.00

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

4 Fabric

DR reported on fabric developments since the last PCC meeting. There had been no formal meeting of the Fabric Committee as a result of the covid-19 restrictions, but a watch on the fabric of the building had been maintained throughout by DR and WZ.

- 4.1 *Special thanks* were expressed for Derek Long's expertise and dedicated work in all matters electrical; for the creative arts team (John and Julian May, Jenny Palmer and Rosie Longbourne) for their design and creation of the triptych, which is designed to stand in the porch behind locked gates and to be floodlit during evening time; and for Margaret Mallett's helpful suggestion of biological washing powder as an effective means of dealing with the moss that accumulates on the cobbled paths.
- 4.2 *Maintenance*: At this time of year a number of maintenance contractors usually come to check the variety of systems and equipment in the church. This year has been difficult for them, so while some have managed to get to us we are still waiting for a number to contact us to catch up with their routine inspections.
- 4.3 *Trees*: There is no question of any trees' being cut down, but maintenance is needed for some of them, especially the beech trees. It is hoped that final permission will soon be obtained from the Tree Protection Officer of the Mid-Devon Council and that *Four Seasons* will then be able to stir into activity for this purpose.

The PCC thanked DR for his report and for his hard work in caring for the fabric, not forgetting his skilled assistance with the triptych.

5 Re-ordering

DR reported on the current situation vis-à-vis the reordering project. Requests for tender had been sent out, and it was expected that these would be available in March, when a special PCC meeting would be needed to scrutinise them and to make a final decision as to what can be afforded. The final faculties have not yet been secured since the necessary permission from the Chancellor of the Diocese has been delayed, but it is hoped that they will be confirmed very soon.

Particular mention was made of the three objections that had been made concerning the place of the Library in the reordering scheme. DR informed the PCC that no solution had yet been found concerning the relocation of the Newte Library, which is primarily a research collection, in a suitably ventilated setting. That being so, that part of the plan that involved the construction of an office and meeting room in place of the Library was probably at present not viable. A discussion of a number of theoretically possible, but on further investigation not achievable, settings for a relocation of the Library took place. In any case it was noted *en passant* that during interviews for the post of Rector's PA, neither of the possible appointees wished to work alone in the church building.

6 Safeguarding

CM reported that there was nothing to report concerning safeguarding matters.

7 Celebration of our eventual exit from lockdown

The PCC began to consider ways in which there might be some sort of celebration, when the present covid-19 situation has eased and normality returned to everyday life. It was felt that this should not be an event for church members or for St Peter's alone but rather one that might express gratitude to the key workers in the NHS and elsewhere who had been providing self-giving service to the community, often with significant risk to their own health and wellbeing. The possibility of joining this occasion to the 25th anniversary of CHAT was mentioned. It was agreed that approaches might helpfully be made to other interested parties and organisations so that such an event could have a genuinely Tivertonian ambience.

8 APCM 2021 and the revision of the electoral roll

CM mentioned the normal practice of determining the timetable for electoral roll revision on the basis of the agreed date for the APCM. This had originally been fixed for 15 April, but at present it is not clear whether that date will be possible nor what form the meeting might take. The Diocese simply stipulates that the meeting must occur before the end of May, so a decision will be made when the overall situation becomes clearer.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

Signed:

Date: