

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 March 2021 at 7 pm
by Zoom

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), the Revd Robert Gordon, David Catchpole, Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Deborah Lal, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Jennifer Palmer, David Ricks, Richard Stenlake and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Chris Shields, Vicki Stuckey and Roy Webber.

MS began by referring to RG's recently announced appointment as Associate Priest in the emerging Crediton Ministry Hub, underlining how much he would be missed after almost sixteen years of ministry in Tiverton, and reminding PCC members of how important our working together as a whole community would be during the time before a new appointment to the benefice could be made.

Tim Bayton, the newly appointed parish administrator, introduced himself to members of the PCC before the meeting began.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2021 were approved and signed.

2 Safeguarding

CM, speaking as the parish safeguarding representative, introduced the current version of the Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement and proposed that this statement of safeguarding principles be reaffirmed, subject to the updating of the date of adoption. This was agreed *nem con*. Cf. appendix to these minutes.

3 Revision of electoral roll

CM, speaking as the parish electoral roll officer, reminded members that the closing date for the current revision is 25 March, and asked that she should be informed if anyone was aware of any changes that might be necessary.

4 Post-lockdown reopening of St Peter's

Detailed consideration was given, in the light of the government's 'roadmap' for easing the lockdown and the advice of the Church of England, to the timing and any necessary constraints associated with re-opening St Peter's for public worship. Mark Heritage in his role as health and safety officer had confirmed that the present protocol for St Peter's was appropriate and had simply registered a concern about the tendency of worshippers to

gather and talk outside the church without strict adherence to social distancing. A copy of the refreshed document will be placed on file in the vestry.

RG reminded the PCC that the decision about re-opening was one for the incumbent and the PCC, and the essential issue was one of timing concerning when this could safely be done. It was agreed *nem con* that, subject to a thorough cleaning and airing of the building in advance, and also to a firm reminder at the time to everyone present to observe social distancing with care and good sense, St Peter's would be open for the morning service on Palm Sunday, 28 March.

4 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Worship Committee on 1 March, and drew attention to the ongoing discussion about the pattern of services that might be followed in the days after normal worship was resumed in church.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

5 Finance

WZ introduced the annual report and statement of accounts which had been certified by the auditor (formerly Apsleys, but now Aspen-Waite). He thanked a number of people who had played a part in assembling this document, most notably Chris Shields who had been greatly helped by David Pope as he took over the financial affairs of St Peter's. Thanks in no small part to the steady contributions of those who subscribe to the Parish Giving Scheme and the remarkably successful special fundraising events of recent months, the finances of the church had come through the covid-19 crisis in very good shape – so much so that the deficit for the year was much lower than anticipated in the 2020 budget.

The PCC adopted *nem con* the annual report and statement of accounts for 2020.

6 Parish magazine

6.1 Ivor and Sue Atkins have retired from their roles in looking after the business side of the magazine: dealing with advertisements and collecting fees from advertisers, and dealing with the subscriptions of those who have purchased copies of the magazine. Their labours over a very long period of time had been self-giving and dedicated, and it was agreed that GH would write to them and present them with some flowers as a token of our gratitude.

6.2 Given that the magazine had gone online during the last year, the question arose as to whether this should continue to be the case, and if so whether or not a paper version should once again be produced as well. It was accepted that the paper version had the twin advantages of reaching readers who were not used to online communication and also availability to casual visitors to the church, and it was agreed that we would follow the Church of England's guidance in the matter and in principle continue to produce it at least *pro tem*. But the provision on line was felt to be here to stay.

6.3 In this and in other connections it was agreed that the parish needs to have a zoom account, and Tim Bayton's willingness to administer it as part of his parish administrative responsibilities was welcomed. The cost would be £120 *per annum*.

7 Parish administrator

The appointment of Tim Bayton was warmly welcomed. WZ reported that his organisational skills and his efficient and 'hands on' approach had been evident from the beginning, and it was clear that his contribution to the life of St Peter's would bring a great deal of strength to our life and work. The arrangement with him is that he is not an employee of the church but will be paid as an independent contractor at the rate of £10 per hour (£400 per month) in response to his regular submission of invoices for work done and time spent. His position would be subject to the normal process of review after three months.

8 Fabric

DR reported on recent developments concerning the fabric of the church. The Fabric Committee had not met since the last PCC meeting, and operations had been limited to periodic inspections of the church and churchyard. On specific issues:

- 8.1 *Trees:* The pruning work on the trees was undertaken on 17 March. As much was done as the Local Authority would allow, so no trees have been felled. The reduced extent of work resulted in a reduced contract sum of £1,172, i.e. £732 less than the previous quotation which was almost two years ago.
- 8.2 *Heating system:* The heating system was serviced at the start of the year, and faults that were found have resulted in two return visits. Problems continue with its operation. The burner will work for about an hour and then cuts out due to overheating. Our system is 38 years old, and while the basic metalwork and burner are easy to maintain the control systems are now showing their age, including the valve which controls the reduction of the burner from high to low heat. The contractor is trying to find spare parts, but if these are no longer available a more major replacement of the whole control system may be required.
- 8.3 *Heating chamber door:* The timber door and frame at the bottom of the steps to the heating chamber are now completely decayed and almost impossible to open and close, especially in damp conditions. The suggestion is that we replace the door with a galvanised steel gate, made up of steel bars, and a price is being obtained from *Morrish Engineering* who provided our heating chamber security last year.
- 8.4 *Clock chime:* One of the wires that rings the bells for the clock chime has broken and will be repaired on 19 March by *Cumbria Clock Co.*

The PCC thanked DR for his very careful and thorough supervision of the wellbeing of the fabric of the church.

9 Reordering

DR reported on developments since the last meeting of the PCC.

- 9.1 *The library:* Advice has been sought from the DAC, and in principle the relocation of the library to another suitable location in the church has been accepted by them. Three alternative locations, from a longer list, are being considered. We favour the proposal to form new, secure bookcases along the back of the westernmost pews in the nave, having

removed four rows of pews. This can be done easily without the removal or moving of anything, unlike other locations considered.

9.2 *The faculty:* The granting of our faculty has been delayed while the relocation of the library was considered and the correct form of words established. The Chancellor has a six- to eight-week period, ending on 5 April, to consider his approval. The Registrar has been informed that the DAC supports the moving of the library.

9.3 *Tender report:* Our architect published his tender report on 17 March, and this is now being scrutinized by the Project Management Group in advance of a special PCC meeting to agree the way forward. Four tenders were received, ranging from £517,216 + VAT the lowest to £594,488 + VAT the highest. Subject to certain areas of clarification, the architect has no concerns about proceeding with the lowest tenderer.

10 Helping visitors to the church who need accommodation

JJ described her experience of being approached by a group of visitors who were looking for help with accommodation, and of being followed by another visitor when she went to the car park. She recalled that her feelings at the time included a sense of powerlessness in the face of human need, and a sense of vulnerability in the face of a possible threat.

It was noted (i) that CHAT does not offer a service providing temporary or short-term accommodation; (ii) that personal vulnerability brought the situation into the area of safeguarding, and it was recognised that in such a situation it was important to ask for help and to seek the company of other church members if they were readily available; and (iii) that a public statement, put together by JH-T, would be posted publicly in the entrance of the church with copies available for distribution to provide clarification for both church members and visitors.

11 'Lunch on the Go'

GH reported that a 'Lunch on the Go' scheme is proving a success in supporting people in need across Tiverton. The Churches of Tiverton and other organisations, including CHAT and the Town Council, have come together to offer food, information and a listening ear. The project is available at different locations in the town, from Monday – Friday, 11am-1pm. St Peter's have teamed up with the Baptist Church, and they work from there on Tuesdays. If anyone feels able to help occasionally, GH asked that they should contact her.

12 Support for Christian Aid in May 2021

DC reminded the PCC that this year Christian Aid week would take place during 10-16 May, and it was agreed that once again every effort would be made to offer support to this hard-pressed charity.

RG would be writing about it in the parish magazine. MS reported the decision that a very fine blanket, currently being made by a member of GH's crochet group, would be raffled for the benefit of Christian Aid. DC would obtain a supply of envelopes which would be distributed at the morning service on Sunday 9 May and collected at the corresponding service on 16 May.

13 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

In the context of the government's phased roadmap for emergence from the lockdown it was agreed that this meeting would be held by Zoom on Thursday 15 April at 7pm.

Four members of the PCC having reached the end of their period of membership – JJ, AL and DC after three years, and RW after six, there would need to be an election to fill their places. DC undertook, with the agreement of the PCC, to accept nominations, whether for PCC membership, or for deanery synod membership, or for the office of church warden, by phone or email.

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

Signed:

Date: