



Minutes

of the Parochial Church Council meeting
held via Zoom on Thursday 15 July 2021 at 7.30 pm

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), David Catchpole, Emma Down, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Deborah Lal, Averil Long, Catherine Makepeace, Sally Mundy, Jennifer Palmer, David Ricks, Chris Shields, Richard Stenlake, Vicki Stuckey and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Sally Mundy and Vicki Stuckey.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Remembering Roy Webber

The PCC's prayer included a grateful remembrance of Roy Webber. The request from his family that his ashes might be interred in the churchyard of St Peter's was unanimously supported by the PCC. While a fee of £42 would be charged by the Diocesan Board of Finance, the PCC resolved *nem con* to waive the additional fee of £124 chargeable to St Peter's.

2 Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 6 May were agreed and signed. There were two matters arising from those minutes:

- 2.1 *Parish magazine* (minute 5.2): It was reported that the team of volunteer distributors of the paper version of the magazine has been reassembled and is at work. The magazine will be distributed free of charge during the rest of 2021, with normal subscription arrangements resuming as from January 2022. It would be good to have some more local contributions to its content.
- 2.2 *Future meetings* (minute 11): The Standing Committee has agreed that in view of the increased cost of hiring a room at the Tiverton Hotel, meetings will instead continue to take place by zoom, at least on Thursdays 9 September and 11 November at 7.30 pm.

3 Safeguarding

- 3.1 CM introduced two policy papers: *Guidance on Safeguarding Procedures* and *Recruitment of Ex-Offenders* (both attached as appendices to these minutes). Both conformed to Diocesan norms, and it was agreed *nem con* that they be adopted and reviewed biennially.

3.2 It was noted that at every service there needed to be two persons acting in a safeguarding capacity vis-à-vis any children that might be attending. It was agreed to try and form a small group of St Peter's persons who would be prepared to be on duty in this way.

4 'Lunch on the Go'

GH reported the recent very successful initiative on the part of the Tiverton Town Council, CHAT and the local churches, to provide a free 'Lunch on the Go' at different locations in town every weekday between 11 am and 1 pm. Members of St. Peter's, the Baptist Church and the Exe Valley Mission Community had worked on this together. Many friendships were formed within the working group, as well as with and among those who regularly came to receive a lunch. Confidential conversation had also proved helpful for those needing help of various sorts, e.g. advice about what could be provided by CHAT.

The Baptist Church would be returning to its own monthly lunch club, so 'Lunch on the Go' has ceased for the time being, though it might well be possible to renew it at some future date.

5 The interregnum: thinking it through and seeing it through

GH and WZ introduced a paper setting out some initial perspectives on the experience of interregnum, with particular reference to the thought processes that were appropriate before the writing of the parish profile and the personal description of the incumbent who would be suitable for St Peter's, St Thomas's and St Andrew's. They also outlined the practical plans that would be fitting as we move into the process culminating in an appointment. In detail:

- It was suggested that we should get into the habit of including in each Sunday's prayers a prayer that the right person might be found and that we ourselves might be ready to fulfil our own part in the process of becoming ready for this new era in the life of our churches.
- It was noted that we have more time to prepare than was at first thought, in that the writing of the relevant documents can take place over the autumn, the post will be advertised in the spring, with an appointment probably achieved in mid-summer.
- It was noted that the interregnum working group consist of the five churchwardens from the three churches, plus the house for duty priest at St Andrew's, DC, KH, CM, MS and RS.
- There was grateful recognition of the very helpful and constructive approach being adopted by the Archdeacon, the Ven Andrew Beane. The wardens have been impressed by his approachability, his willingness to visit and preside at service in the three churches, and his concern to get to know us all.
- The Revd Michael Clark a colleague of the Archdeacon, would after his recovery from illness be helping us to understand and articulate the vision appropriate for parishes working through the experience of a vacancy.

6 Post-lockdown planning for St Peter's

There was an extended discussion of possible responses to the imminent changes in the government's 'roadmap' as the country moved out of the phase of mandated regulation. The Church of England would be responding and briefing dioceses and parishes in due course.

A variety of views was expressed on such matters as the welcome return of the choir to active leadership of worship, the reintroduction of congregational singing, the continuation (or not) of social distancing and similarly of the use of face masks. It was agreed that the standing committee would seek the opinion of our health and safety adviser and formulate a briefing paper which would be sent around the network of St Peter's members. This would recognise the fact that some members of our church are instinctively more sympathetic than others to continued use of face masks and social distancing.

It was agreed that the overall aim must be to show sensitivity to, and to make appropriate provision for, the varied wishes of those who come to church. It was important to balance safety and freedom and above all to prevent any situation in which members were uneasy about coming to church. [Cf. the attached appendix setting out the proposals circulated on 19 July.]

7 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Worship Committee on 21 June. She drew particular attention to the following matters.

- 7.1 *Zoom/telephone-type services:* these would continue to be offered from Witleigh despite RG's move to a new appointment. Steph was keen that she should receive some help from St Peter's personnel in what was otherwise an excessively demanding process for one person, and the PCC agreed that some members would offer to help in this way. This would be a further gesture on our part in the direction of mutual support of the two mission communities, to which St Peter's had already committed itself.
- 7.2 *Appointment of a new organist/director of music:* an advert had been placed on the Exeter & District Organists' Association website, but there had been no applications. It had been agreed that this position would most likely need to be filled by a local person. GW has been extremely helpful and willing to play live, or his recorded organ music, whenever possible, and GH would be writing to him to thank him for all his hard work and commitment to St Peter's. An informal approach had been made by another musician who had indicated willingness to help on an occasional and supportive basis, and this offer would be investigated further.
- 7.3 *The timing of the main morning service at St Peter's:* the PCC considered the majority proposal by the Committee that as of 1 January 2022 this should be adjusted to 10 am. After discussion it was decided to retain the 10.15 timing despite some advantages that 10 am might achieve, since (i) this would represent a reassuring return to our familiar norm, and (ii) after the appointment of a new incumbent it could well be important to facilitate that priest's presiding at a service in Chevithorne followed by one at St Peter's, and the earlier time would probably make this difficult.
- 7.4 *BCP celebration:* it was agreed that the main morning service of Holy Communion should follow the order of the Book of Common Prayer on a trial basis to determine the level of interest.

- 7.5 *The 50th anniversary of the ordination of the Revd Ian Johnson:* it was noted that this would occur on 26 September, and it would be appropriate that this should be celebrated in some way.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

8 Finance

WZ introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 1 July.

- 8.1 *The state of the finances:* In his report, CS observed that actual income to 31 May was £25,613, compared to £24,209 budgeted, with actual expenditure standing at £30,342 as against £38,962 budgeted. The comparable figures for the period to the end of the following month were income £29,685 (budgeted £29,051) and expenditure £36,578 (budgeted 46,805).

The net effect was that the actual loss for the first five months was only £4,729, much better than the budgeted loss of £14,753; and for the six months to 30 June an actual loss of £6,893, still much better than the budgeted loss of £17,754.

The church's income had been much protected, he said, by the continuing PGS monthly gifts, and the finances are thus reasonably healthy, so he expected to manage another month without having to liquidate any investments to cover operating expenses.

- 8.2 *Participants:* The calculation of Common Fund contributions by parishes to the Diocese takes into account the number of 'participants' in each parish. The decision has been made to base the next calculation on an average of the figure for the last three years. It had been agreed with RG that the figure for St Peter's should be 90, representing a reduction of 2, and the PCC agreed to submit that figure to the Diocese.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

9 Fabric

On behalf of the Fabric Committee DR presented the following report.

- 9.1 *Heating plant:* The hot air heating plant, which is now 38 years old, has been giving intermittent problems throughout the last heating season. It needs a completely new control system, as spares are no longer available. A quotation from our maintenance contractor has been submitted in the sum of £3,690.00 plus VAT. An alternative quotation is being given by Sprague & Ouseley, as recommended by the diocese.

Our system, which uses a lot of gas, is now considered unacceptable by the Diocese, who will be bringing in new requirements for all parishes to become gradually more environmentally friendly. With everything else going on, and next heating season not too far away, the Fabric Committee felt that there was no alternative but to repair our present heater so as to get a few more years life out of it while alternative technology is being developed and proven. It has been indicated that diocesan grants may be available for new heating systems at some time in the future.

We have a new galvanised steel gate to the heating chamber, at the bottom of the steps, with improved security. The engineers have undertaken additional works to the vandalised security fencing behind the ductwork enclosure.

- 9.2 *Repointing:* Russ Palmer, maintenance architect, has been consulted about the dampness at the east end of the south aisle. He is preparing a specification for repointing works which will allow quotations to be sought for this work.
- 9.3 *Regular maintenance:* The lightning conductors have been tested and have passed. The CCTV cameras at roof level have been inspected: five are working properly but one (no. 2) is unserviceable, so our contractor is preparing a quotation for the supply of a new camera.
- 9.4 *Clearing the church for reordering:* The west end of the church is being cleared ready for the contractor to start work on 28 July. Large items of furniture have been moved to the east end of the side aisles, and the Memorial Chapel is being used as a general storage area. Being a large building, we have managed to accumulate a vast quantity of 'stuff' over the centuries, and some rationalisation must be attempted at some stage. A temporary children's area has been set up in the Greenway Chapel.
- 10 Reordering
- DR reported the following recent developments.
- 10.1 *Faculty for re-ordering:* This was finally granted on 8 May after a call to the Bishop's office.
- 10.2 *Pre-contract meeting:* This took place with Crowstep Building Services Ltd on 26 May to work through and agree all the various aspects of the contract and the site setup and administration.
- 10.3 *Programme for the works.* This was issued by Crowstep, with the start date slightly delayed to 28 July. Delays have been experienced in getting important sub-contractors signed up, especially the ground workers to undertake the toilet block piling. There is no point in starting until they can be programmed in. Phase 1, the west end and the new baptistry, will be completed towards the end of November, and phase 2, the nave altar and office, will be completed in February. The congregation will use the new west end of the church during phase 2.
- 10.4 *Contract:* The contract for the works was signed on 7 July using the Joint Contracts Tribunal intermediate form of contract proposed by the architect.
- 10.5 *Insurances:* The necessary contract insurances are being put in place via our brokers ready for the contract commencement. We have elected to not add a certain item [specified orally] to our policy as this was felt to be unnecessary and is not included in our normal insurance cover. The PCC agreed to this decision.
- 10.6 *Approvals:* Conditions apply to the DAC consent for the internal works, as also to MDDC approval of the external works to the WC block. These are being addressed for sign-off prior to the commencement of work on site.
- 10.7 *Preparation of the church:* As reported above under fabric (9.4), the church is being cleared ready for the phase 1 works.
- 10.8 *The Newte Library:* ED has produced a paper on libraries held in other parish churches with recommendations as to how we might proceed. The PMG needs to meet to discuss her recommendations and agree a best way forward.

ED reported that the Church Buildings Council (CBC) has a fund specifically for the conservation of parish libraries. The first step is to apply for a grant for a conservation report to assess the collection and make recommendations for its housing, display and any conservation needed for individual items. The second step would be to apply for a grant to carry out this work. The Newte library needs two reports: one for the books and one for the 17th century paintings, since the conservation of books and paintings are two separate disciplines, although both reports can be applied for under one grant application.

MS voiced the thanks of the whole PCC to DR and the Tuesday group for their painstaking work in these matters, spread over a long period of time and saving St Peter's a great deal of money.

11 GDPR

A personal reference in the minutes of the meeting on 20 November 2020 to a member of the church, who had been thanked for valuable service, had caused disquiet for that person when the minutes had been posted on the website. The PCC was concerned that no such unease should be caused, and DC undertook to ensure that no named references would be included in future minutes, or that if they were it should be a redacted version of the minutes, lacking all personal names other than those of members of the PCC, that would be made available via the internet.

PCC members were asked for their agreement to their email addresses' being known to other PCC members, though in practice communications from the secretary use the 'bcc' device and addresses are therefore not disclosed.

It was noted that the Charity Commission requires that the names of trustees, and therefore PCC members as trustees, should be in the public domain. It was agreed that after the election of any new members of the PCC at the APCM in 2022 a document would be written and handed to them specifying the terms and conditions of trusteeship (cf. PCC minutes, 6 May 2021, minute 4).

12 Calendar 2021-2022

A provisional and partial calendar for the current year had been circulated to members, who noted in discussion that plans for a number of future events would necessarily be subject to adjustment in the light of developments in the covid-19 situation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed:

Date: