

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held at the Tiverton Hotel
on Thursday 10 November 2022 at 7.30 pm

Present: Mary Seaton (in the chair), John Brewster, David Catchpole, Emma Cobbledick, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Nickie Johnson, Averil Long, Sally Mundy, David Ricks, Christopher Shields and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Jenny Palmer and Richard Stenlake.

The meeting opened with a prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 8 September 2022 were approved and signed. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2 Safeguarding

JH-T had reported that several PCC members needed to renew their DBS checks.

3 Finance

CS reported on the general financial situation which had been reviewed at the meeting of the Finance Committee on 27 October.

3.1 *Review of income and expenditure to the end of October:* Income stands at £47,479 (budget: £46,873), i.e. a surplus of £396. Expenditure stands at £67,441 (budget: £77,219), i.e. a saving of £9,778. So we have overspent by £20,262 compared to a budgeted overspend of £30,436 as at the end of October. (For details of income and expenditure under particular heads, cf. the appendix to these minutes.)

3.2 *Energy expenditure:* The Diocese has obtained a grant of almost £500k towards provision of support for the increased energy bills PCC's are seeing. Payment of 45% of the figure for 2021 energy usage means that we should receive £1,600 from this source by 31 March 2023.

3.3 *Common Fund contribution:* At its meeting on 15 October the Diocesan Synod approved a 7% increase for Band A. Our reported 'participants' figure has risen from 89 last year to 90 this year. Our contribution has therefore been set at £51,536 or £4,280 per month. We are currently paying £4,035 per month, so the monthly increase amounts to £245.

The PCC endorsed the Finance Committee minutes.

4 Report on the vacancy

WZ reported recent developments relating to the vacancy in the benefice.

- 4.1 *Parish profile*: This has been revised so as to highlight the benefits accruing from the virtual completion of the reordering process.
- 4.2 *Schedule for the appointment process*: The third round of advertising envisages 31 December as the final date for applications; 3 January for the shortlisting process; 10 January for the orientation day; and 11 January for interviews. In view of the difficulties which had been experienced during the second round, especially in the area of communication with the Archdeacon's office, we would be setting out our plan in detail and then informing the Archdeacon.
- 4.3 *The proposed rectory*: The Archdeacon has confirmed that he believes the house at the bottom of the upper half of St Andrew's Street to be the correct choice of housing for the new incumbent. WZ and the Archdeacon will be meeting diocesan officials there on 18 November to discuss detailed modernisation. NJ drew attention to the need for work on the garden, for which Ian Johnson had offered help, and WZ undertook to discuss that offer with him.

5 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 24 October.

- 5.1 *Playing the organ* (minute 2): It was noted that Graham Willson, who has been so generous with his cover throughout the period of the vacancy, has asked that in future he should be responsible for no more than two in every three Sundays. Others had in the past provided help, but the attempt would be made to progress towards a permanent appointment to the post of Director of Music.
- 5.2 *Remembrance Sunday* (minute 4): A unilateral revision of the Remembrance Day service and celebration had produced what appeared to be a seriously misjudged plan and one that devalued the important connection of civic remembrance with St Peter's. Knowledge of the revision, which had also not been made available to the Mayor's Chaplain until it was too late to counter the changes, had come as a *fait accompli*. The PCC expected to contact the local Council with a view to both correcting the tendency to make changes affecting St Peter's without consultation with St Peter's representatives, and also restoring the important pattern of worship and remembrance which had obtained hitherto. That pattern, the PCC wished to underline, had important educational purpose as well as being for the wider community of all ages an appropriate means of remembrance.
- 5.3 *Christmas celebrations* (minute 4): Plans were well in hand for the provision and leadership of all the usual Christmas services.
- 5.4 Home Communion visits. JJ reported on the present post-lockdown provision of Home Communion visits, which have been gradually resuming but which in the cases of the three care homes – Margaret Allen House, currently in the care of Sue Beale; St George's, currently in the care of Helen Fensome; and the Ashdowne Care Centre,

for which JJ, with assistance from Sue Beale, has responsibility – present issues that need fresh consideration.

- Margaret Allen House (15 residents): Here there is now more interest in a short service with a hymn and prayers but not Holy Communion. There is a need to make very precise what would be the detailed plan that the residents would prefer, and for Sue Beale to investigate practicalities of provision to this end.
- St George's (16 residents): Here the usual said Holy Communion service seems still to be acceptable, and Helen Fensome will begin again on 16 November.
- Ashdown Care Centre (60 residents): Here the needs of those who live in the two parts of the Centre vary considerably, and further discussion is needed, not least because of the diverse needs of the residents. In the one building the residents have mental health problems, while in the other nursing and respite care predominate while accommodating an increasing number of residents living with dementia. JJ indicated that she would be consulting with the relevant member of staff, but she felt that the time had probably come for her to retire from this ministry, though for the present she was very willing to continue to meet individual requests for Holy Communion.

5.5 *Distribution at Holy Communion* (minute 6): The present practice of intinction by the celebrant will continue, given the ongoing concern with covid.

5.6 *Magazine prayer diary* (minute 6): Adi Pannifer had indicated that she would be glad to pass on responsibility for this monthly provision to a successor. NJ offered to undertake this task.

The PCC expressed its thanks to JJ, Sue Beale and Helen Fensome for the arranging and provision of Home Communion visits, and endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

6 Fabric

DR reported on recent developments.

6.1 *Routine maintenance*: No significant major projects are currently being undertaken. The new enhanced Tuesday working group continues to look after minor items of repair and maintenance, with most energy still being expended on the clearing up, cleaning and re-cleaning and sorting out of the church post-reordering.

6.2 *Inspecting Architect/Surveyor*: At the PCC meeting on 20 January 2022 (cf. minute 6.4) we reported that our present Inspecting Architect, Russ Palmer, has notified us of his retirement at the end of this year. We need to appoint a replacement as the rules require us to commission a full quinquennial inspection of the fabric of the church during 2023. The last inspection was in 2018.

An approach has been made to Benjamin and Beauchamp, our reordering architects, who would be very happy to undertake the role of inspector of the fabric of the

church, and as we now know them well we recommend their appointment. The appointment would be a personal one with Michael Vaughan as our named inspector. He would undertake the inspection himself but would have the backup of his practice behind him. He is now a director of the practice, John Beauchamp, one of the founding members, having retired. His charges would be on an hourly rate for the inspection. His rates are slightly higher than those of Russ Palmer but are equivalent to those of other architects.

Michael Vaughan is responsible for about 25 other parish inspections, all graded historic buildings, and his qualifications are satisfactory. He is an approved inspector for the dioceses of Bath and Wells, Bristol, Exeter and Salisbury.

The proposal to appoint Michael Vaughan as inspecting architect was approved by the PCC *nem con*. It was also agreed that a letter of thanks and good wishes for his retirement should be sent to Russ Palmer.

7 Reordering

DR reported the latest developments in the reordering process.

7.1 *Servery and Toilets*: The work on the servery and toilets is almost complete with the exception of a few minor items and snags. We are now using and enjoying these facilities.

7.2 *The porch, children's area and new pews next to the porch*: These works, all along the south wall, are all specialist joinery items. The main subcontractor for the works, who undertook the fabrication of the servery, is very stretched at the moment but will attend on site as soon as possible. The quality of their workmanship makes them worth waiting for. The porch, which is in the church waiting to be put together, will be undertaken first.

7.3 *Library building costs*: We are gradually getting a better understanding of the overall reordering contract finances. To date we have paid Crowstep £400k. Their tender was £545k so we have £145k remaining. We estimate, very approximately, the value of the remaining works, without the meeting room and library, to be ca. £115k, thus leaving £30k to cover the meeting room and library. This sum is insufficient.

We are waiting for a tender figure from Crowstep for the library and meeting room, but our best estimate is ca. £60k, so we are looking at a shortfall of about £30k. We therefore request the PCC to authorise an additional £30k for the reordering project, which would raise the contract sum to £575k and the overall project budget to £705k, a figure still within the value of the Church House Fund.

We will use our best endeavours to spend less than this allowance, but we consider it opportune to raise the finance of the library mezzanine with the PCC at this time. It should be remembered that the new library was not part of the original scope of the works.

EC stressed that we needed to have a cost and start date for work on the library as funding which had already been secured needed to be spent within two years. It would

also be preferable to have a completion date from Crowstep so that preservation work on the library can be planned. One of the paintings is nearly ready to be returned but EC has asked the conservator to keep it until the reordering work is complete to avoid any deterioration to the painting. Conservation work takes months so this is not something which can be completed at the last minute. The faculty amendment also needs to be submitted so that this does not delay work further.

EC advised that further funding could be sought from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to match the £30k already available for the building of the Mezzanine floor. EC is hoping to put in an application to HLF for the final bits of funding needed for the paintings and library (clerical lending part) as well as an outreach programme so this could form part of that application. The finances of the church shouldn't matter, if anything the fact that the church has stable funding is useful as it demonstrates St Peter's is a good investment and will be able to support any development into the future. We have submitted our annual accounts in all our funding bids so far and this has not affected our access to funding.

The PCC approved *nem con* the allocation of a further £30k for this purpose but also indicated in the light of advice from EC that Crowstep should be asked to proceed without further delay, and therefore to provide some indication of how long this work might be expected to take and when they would expect to start on it. The formal approval of the DAC would also be sought without delay.

8 Any other business

- 8.1 *Help for Mandy Davis in getting to church:* The request from Mandy Davis for assistance was considered at length. While there was sympathy for her mobility issues there was also hesitation about initiating help on grounds of liability in the area of health and safety in moving her and her large rollator walker. It was decided that the risks of involvement were too great, and it was also noted that she might have greater ease of movement from her home in Dunsford Way if she were to transfer her church membership to St Paul's.
- 8.2 *Location of PCC meetings:* It was decided that the two forthcoming meetings on 19 January and 16 March would be held at the Tiverton Hotel.
- 8.3 *Future events:* It was noted that the following special events were in the church diary: a Devon Baroque Orchestra concert on Sunday 20 November at 4 pm; the pre-Christmas coffee morning in church on Saturday 26 November; the Blundell's Concert on Friday 2 December at 6 pm. It was noted that in the interests of developing closer reciprocal cooperation with Blundell's such events would not be subject to any charge.
- 8.4 *Churchyard paths:* Members commented on the serious danger posed by slippery, moss-infested paths. The application of biological soap powder was recognised as an antidote to the pervasive moss, but there was a great deal of ground to treat. It was decided to encourage those coming to church to approach via the south gate: a notice to this effect would be placed on the lych gate.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.48 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Dates of future meetings: 19 January, 16 March, 11 May.