

# ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

## Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held at the Tiverton Hotel  
on Thursday 16 March 2023 at 7.30 pm

Present: Gill Heard (in the chair), John Brewster, David Catchpole, Emma Cobbledick, Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Kate Henshall, Jean Jenner, Nickie Johnson, Averil Long, David Ricks and William Zarrett.

In attendance: Leslie Boyce

Apologies: Sally Mundy, Jenny Palmer and Richard Stenlake

The meeting opened with a prayer. The assembled company kept a minute's silence in grateful memory of Mary Seaton. It was then agreed unanimously that the mezzanine, the construction of which will bring the process of reordering to a completion, should be named the Seaton Gallery in her honour.

### 1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 19 January 2023 were approved and signed.

### 2 Matters arising from the minutes

2.1 *Cushions* (minute 5.2): The cushions have arrived and are excellent in quality, and highly satisfactory in respect of both colour and firmness. Warm thanks were due to DR and WZ who have given meticulous attention to the precise details of this order.

2.2 *Heating* (minute 6.2): Taking into account comments made to the effect that the heating system was not achieving a sufficient temperature during services, WZ reported that he had exerted pressure on the firm responsible for the equipment. The temperature setting had been raised to as high a level as possible after he had exercised 'stubborn determination', as described by DR, and the hope must now be that the problem will have faded. (See minute 8.2 below.)

2.3 *Defibrillator* (minute 8): WZ reported that the necessary research on a suitable defibrillator had been carried out, drawing on the advice of St John Ambulance. The likely cost is in the range £1-1.1k. An order has not yet been placed because permission from the DAC is needed before it can be installed, the chosen position being by the entrance to the new toilet block. A group of people has already been trained in its use, though additional CPR training for a wider group was thought to be desirable.

2.4 *Cleaning the church* (minute 10.6): The chosen day for cleaning the church, a process which would be led by GH and JJ, is 13 April (9.30 am – 3.00 pm).

### 3 Finance

WZ introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 2 March.

- 3.1 *Treasurer's report* on 2022 year end results: Income had turned out at £1,196 less than budgeted, and expenditure at £10,706 less than budgeted, so the overall result was a loss of £27,012 rather than the budgeted £36,523. Income had held up well, and expenditure particularly on fabric was less than expected as a result of the presence of builders on site for the reordering work.

In response to questions WZ clarified that an annual deficit had unfortunately been the norm for several years. We are not in a position to pay our way. Investment income has been a substantial help from year to year as a result of prudent CCLA oversight, though the PCC had to recognise that sale of investment assets to cover reordering costs meant that investment income would be reduced going forward.

The report for 2022 was accepted by the PCC (cf. appendix to these minutes).

- 3.2 *Reordering expenditure* was limited by previous PCC decision to £715k (plus an additional gift of £10k). The latest expenditure totals were: £450k (contractors), £135k (architects) and approximately £50k (mechanical engineers/archaeologists, etc), totalling £635k. Of the £80k left, there remains some work to finish in Phase I including the cabinets in the children's area, snagging list, etc., all of which is estimated to cost ca. £30k.

This will mean that ca. £50k will be available to contribute towards the mezzanine floor above the meeting room/ladies' vestry, which will house the Newte library (maintaining its existing environmental conditions). The DAC has expressed enthusiasm for this additional project, but we await the faculty to be signed by the Chancellor.

- 3.3 *Stewardship and fundraising*: 2022 had seen a continuing commitment and contribution through use of the Parish Giving Scheme, as well as a steady number of donors through standing orders and by means of one-off gifts. Through those donations and the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS), we were also able to claim an additional £3380.58. WZ reported that the wifi service in the main church would now be sufficient to put in a new card-reader for donations.

- 3.4 *Concert bookings*: WZ reported that the reordered church is receiving good interest for concerts. He made an appeal for help in managing the events that were booked for the church during the remainder of 2023, which included events involving the two primary schools and Hospiscare as well as the following:

22 April: Tiverton Concert Band, honouring Andrew Curtis and establishing an

Organ Renovation Fund.

29 April: East Devon Choral Society concert (ca. £350-£450 for the Church)

7 July: Byrd Ensemble: renaissance music from Seattle, Wa.: (£500 promised)

23 September: Devon Baroque (£350 expected)

1 October: Rotary Silver Sunday (£100 donation anticipated)

9 December: East Devon Choral Society concert

#### 4 Bell restoration and rededication project

Leslie Boyce introduced the subject of the celebration of the centenary of the bells and arrangements for their overhaul in the year 2023-24, beginning in the final quarter of 2023.

- 4.1 *The centenary of the bells:* The 8 bells of St Peter's were installed by John Taylor & Co in 1923/24. They are regarded nationally as one of the finest rings of 8 bells in the country. So, the plan is to celebrate the centenary of the bells this year. They were recast in the autumn of 1923 and were rededicated on 23 March 1924, so the proposal is to hold a series of centenary celebration events over the weekend of 23/24 March 2024. These will hopefully include a tower open day and a celebration service with the bishop over that weekend with exhibitions and special ringing in the run-up to that day.
- 4.2 *The overhaul of the bells and the replacement of wire mesh:* The bells last received attention from a bellhanger over thirty years ago. It is therefore desirable that they now be checked and overhauled by a bell-hanging contractor. Following inspection by the Devon Guild Bell Advisers and a representative of one firm of bellhangers, it is felt that the following work by a contractor is necessary:
- To lift the bells and check, clean and re-grease the main bearings
  - To remove the clappers and some roller pulley boxes, refurbish them in the workshop and then refit them
  - To remove wheels, dip-strip, replace rusted nails and treat with preservative.
- 4.3 *Cost:* Two quotes so far received suggest an amount ca. £15k. The repainting of the frame is to be carried out by local volunteers, the materials involved costing £1k (compared with £8.1k quoted by bellhanger). For the replacement of the rusted wire mesh used to exclude birds from the bell openings: £5k for the fitting of new mesh and Galebreaker fabric by *Morrish Engineering*, and £3.5k for the hire of scaffolding (estimate from *Rapid Scaffolding*). This aggregates at a total cost of the project at £24.5k + VAT (VAT is reclaimable under the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme).
- 4.4 *Fundraising:* The ringers' fund can contribute £3k at the outset. It is proposed to organise a series of fundraising events following the project appeal launch on Bell Sunday on 14 May. The list of scheduled concerts and events already arranged (cf. minute 3.4 above) will be taken into account. Appropriate charities and grant-making trusts, including the Amory Trust, will also be approached for assistance.

Such applications would, it was emphasised, need to be made before the start of the work. EC mentioned the Heritage Lottery as another possible source of assistance and offered to help with advice about the preparation of applications.

#### 5 Safeguarding

JH-T reported progress with the logging of DBS checks and the required training courses for all relevant church members. In this connection the Diocese had issued a

paper setting out for all roles the answer to the question, 'Which safeguarding module(s) do I require for my role and function?' It made explicit that safeguarding training needs to be refreshed once every three years at the highest level of attainment required for each role.

After some three/four weeks JH-T hoped to be in a position to give definitive guidance to each person concerning their safeguarding status. But for ongoing guidance the safeguarding training site is <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/> which contains the overview and the list of courses provided. JH-T requested that once a course is completed, members should email her with the course title and the date completed.

## 6 The interregnum/vacancy

GH and WZ reported progress in the planning of the licensing service on Wednesday 3 May at 7.30 pm for the Revd Christian Hill, and the assembling of the list of invited guests. They also reported progress with the work on the Vicarage, which is confidently expected to be complete in time. The Hill family are hoping to move house during the last two weeks of April.

## 7 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 27 February. Three matters were singled out for comment.

- 7.1 *Taizé service* (minute 3): This had been greatly appreciated, especially for its atmosphere of quiet reflection. It was hoped that the new Rector would include another such service in his plans.
- 7.2 *Lydia Fitton* (minute 3): Lydia's contribution as choir conductor and also as a singer had genuine quality which everyone admired and enjoyed. It was noted that on Monday 8 May at 3 pm (Coronation weekend) she would lead a recital, to be followed by a cream tea and a session at which there would be reports by volunteers on their contribution to the life of their community.
- 7.3 *Home Communion visits*: JJ reported on the work she and Sue Beale had resumed in the provision of home communions in care homes.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

## 8 Fabric

DR gave a report on the fabric, to the effect that apart from general housekeeping and small maintenance projects, progress has been made on the following items.

- 8.1 *Fire risk assessment*: Works to address the requirements of the Fire Brigade have been undertaken as follows.
- Designs for fire protection to the gas meter cupboard and electrical panel, both at the base of the tower, are being finalised by the architect.
  - A quotation for a fire alarm system to cover escape from the tower has been received. The body of the church does not require an alarm system.

- The Fire Officer's comments on fire extinguisher deficiencies have been addressed.
- Fire action notices have been installed at exits.
- A quotation for fire awareness training has been received. A session will be organised soon for interested PCC members, selected sides-people and any others who feel they might benefit from a better understanding of the requirements. The training session will be limited to 15 participants.

DAC approval must be obtained for certain of these items before works can be undertaken. This will be applied for when the necessary documentation is to hand. We still have to address emergency lighting and illuminated exit signage. And we also need to organise a fire escape/evacuation practice for a full congregation at some time during a main service. Prior warning will be given.

- 8.2 *Heating:* Our heating engineers returned to church yet again in February and despite telling us that the heat output was set to a maximum, they managed to increase the gas flow rate and thus the hot air temperature so that the heating seems to be back to approximately the previous output levels prior to the new control system being installed. It is certainly working much better.
- 8.3 *Bird screens to bell chamber openings:* This work falls within the general responsibility of the church to maintain the fabric of the building and while related, is not specific to the bellringing programme.

A quotation has been received from *Moorish Engineering* for replacement screens to the openings in the bell chamber as the previous galvanised mesh has rusted. The new installations will be in aluminium or stainless steel (yet to be decided) fitted within frames and fixed to the sides of the openings in vertical panels. The quote includes 'Galebreaker' fabric for the screens.

The quotation for this work, assuming three days on site to fix the screens, is at maximum £3.71k. It could be less if they can finish the work in less time, which they hope to do. Additionally, there will have to be quite complex access scaffolding to reach the required height and avoid the bells and the bell frame. *Rapid Scaffolding* have given us a budget estimate of £3k.

## 9 Reordering

DR gave a report on the latest developments in the reordering process.

- 9.1 *Completion of works and correction of defects:* (i) The snagging list is being addressed by *Crowstep* at a very slow rate. (ii) The completion of the new stone facing to the chancel step, in the south aisle, has been completed. (iii) Our concerns with progress are shared by the architect who has met with the contractor a number of times. An undertaking has been given to send the necessary men to site to allow the defects to be 'blitzed' all together in one go. The timing has yet to be agreed.
- 9.2 *The porch area:* (i) The porch is now complete with the exception of a couple of minor defects. (ii) The pews adjacent to the porch have been installed. Some small remedial repair works and refinishing will be undertaken by the DIY group. (iii) We have been promised that the construction of the furniture for the children's area will proceed in April. We understand, however, that Alpine, the subcontractor, has had problems with labour shortages.

- 9.3 *Phase One final account:* The architect has begun the process of preparing the final account for the Phase One works (all the works without the library/meeting room), but this cannot be completed without the children's area being installed, since monies have been paid to the subcontractor already and it is not possible to take this work out of phase one.
- 9.4 *The Meeting Room and Library:* Our application for a Faculty has reached the stage where all our work is complete and we just await the Chancellor's issue of his determination and formal notice. In the meantime *Crowstep* have been asked to price an itemised schedule of works so that we may instruct them to proceed straight away with the installation of the new flooring works, particularly the placing of orders for the precast concrete elements for the floor and other required materials.
- 9.5 *Paintings:* EC reported the return of the paintings, for which she undertook to provide time lines.
- 10 Deanery Synod

KH gave a report on the meeting of the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod on 9 March, when the subject under discussion was 'How (village) Churches Thrive'. In detail this had covered the following topics: Extending a warm welcome; making the most of life events; using buildings creatively; caring for 'God's acre'; being the heartbeat of a village community; celebrating our heritage; cultivating fruitful festivals; welcoming more children; reaching the isolated and the lonely; and communicating effectively. A book provided by Archdeacon Andrew was available to all PCC members for reflection on these issues.

11 Renewal of DC's licence to act as a licenced lay minister

It was reported that the Bishop of Exeter had decided to replace the term 'reader' with 'licensed lay minister' and to abolish the use of the term 'permission to officiate' for those who had reached the age of 70. All those who wished to continue in this ministry were required to re-apply with the support of their incumbents and PCCs.

In the absence of DC for this item of business, the PCC discussed and gave its support to his application for the renewal of the Bishop's licence.

12 APCM and elections

DC reviewed with the PCC plans for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, to be held after the morning service and a bring-and-share lunch on Sunday 23 April.

It was agreed that thought needed to be given without delay to the matter of nominations for elections as church wardens (*ex officio* members of the PCC), 3 representatives on the Deanery Synod (*ex officio* members of the PCC), and an as yet uncertain number of members of the PCC, representing the laity (6 if the number on the electoral roll were to fall below 100; 9 if it exceeds 100). The size of the electoral roll will become clear with the completion of the current process of revision on 26 March.

Membership of the PCC sees retirement this year by Jenny Palmer after a 6-year term and the decisions by Jean Jenner and Richard Stenlake not to continue. Thanks were due to them all for their greatly valued contributions to the PCC and indeed the whole life of St Peter's. Members whose terms of office can in principle continue beyond 2023 without election are David Catchpole (2<sup>nd</sup> term until 2024), Emma Coppledick (1<sup>st</sup> term until 2024), Nickie Johnson (1<sup>st</sup> term until 2025), Averil Long (2<sup>nd</sup> term until 2024) and Sally Mundy (1<sup>st</sup> term until 2024). Members who must stand for re-election, if they wish to continue on the PCC, are John Brewster (co-opted till 2023) and David Ricks (1<sup>st</sup> term till 2023).

DC undertook to place nomination forms for all these roles on the tables at the west end of the church from Sunday 26 March onwards.

12 Any other business

- 12.1 The National Burial Ground Survey would be taking place at St Peter's on Wednesday 22 March.
- 12.2 Christian Aid Week 2023 is set for 14-20 May. Once again, as has been our practice in recent years, envelopes will be distributed in church on Sunday 14 May and collected on the following Sunday.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed:

Date: