

St Peter's Church

Worship Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023 at 7.30 pm

Present: Gill Heard (chair), the Rev'd Christian Hill, Kate Henshall, Nickie Johnson, Julian May, Tom Mitchell and William Zarrett

Apologies: Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Jennifer Palmer, and Jennifer Park.

Gill opened with a prayer at 7.30 p.m.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 29 August were agreed and signed.

2 Matters arising

2.1 *Readers:* NJ reminded the committee that readers could use the lower microphone if they were reluctant to go up to the lectern. JM commented that one (the first) reader had stood on the chancel steps after her reading, facing the altar, and asked whether this was necessary. It was agreed that the readers should position themselves wherever they felt right. GH wondered if it might be helpful for older readers to have something to hold on to while they waited; NJ suggested that a chair be placed by the pillar, but it was felt that the stall by the lectern would do.

2.2 *Taizé services:* See discussion under review of services held.

3 Review of services held

3.1 *Harvest festival:* This was regarded as having been very successful. Ali Padfield from CHAT had given an address and subsequently sent an email to thank everyone at St Peter's both for their donation following the collection and for the food items given at the service. She commented that there have been significant increases in the demands made on foodbanks (143% in the last year) and that the coming months were going to be tricky, so the support of the local community is vital if CHAT is to meet this increasing need. NJ said she had been into CHAT recently and had found the shelves full, which is not always the case. It was agreed that there had been a great Harvest response from the churches and that we must not forget to help at other times as well.

3.2 *Taizé:* There were 12 people in attendance in addition to the choir, who much enjoyed the singing. CH was very complimentary and commented that the chancel provided an ideal setting for such a service. Many thanks were due to Lydia who organised the whole service – readings, music and prayers – and to TM for his gift of refreshments (sherry and nibbles).

3.3 *Mayor's service*: this had been cancelled.

3.4 *Prayer and worship course*: Two sessions had been held, timed for 6.00 – 7.30 on Sunday evening. GH and Sue Beale have provided refreshments. 12 – 14 people have attended, including some young people, and have enjoyed a mixed format, including teaching and video. From the next meeting onwards, music will be provided by Lydia and friends. CH hopes to continue to use the Sunday evening slot after Christmas, and will be trying to garner further interest, perhaps from new churchgoers, over the Christmas season.

Further to this, NJ raised again the question of Choral Evensong and asked when it might be possible to have this service. CH thought that it might be a possibility from December; WZ said that it would be better to wait until after Christmas as the choir will be very busy in December. There has been no Choral Evensong since Andrew Curtis died, and CH stressed the need not to commit to something unless there was real support for it. NJ recalled that it used to be held once a month and, with GH, agreed that it had been held, at least during the winter months, at an earlier time, perhaps 4 p.m. KH remembered having Choral Evensong as a CTT service, at which 'Cloth for the Cradle' was introduced, and also at Candlemas. GH agreed that Candlemas would be a good time for such a service, and CH asked about the possibility of holding it in St Andrew's, where the acoustics are good and there would not be a clash with CH's Sunday evening course. It was suggested that NJ should look into this. Perhaps Ian Johnson could help to organise it?

4 Future services

4.1 *Remembrance Sunday (12 November)*: CH said that the Town Council was happy for St. Peter's to organise the service and that he is currently dealing with the choreography. He would be keeping the format of the 2022 service, starting at 10.45 and ending at the war memorial. There would be two hymns ('O God, our help in ages past' and 'Jerusalem'). NJ asked about a choir anthem and CH agreed that there would be one if there had been one in the 2022 service. WZ mentioned a friend of his who had cancelled the service in his own church on Remembrance Sunday, in order to encourage attendance at the main Remembrance Service, and wondered whether our Remembrance Service could be advertised in the Tiverton churches, in order to achieve the same goal. KH asked if the uniformed groups would have a rehearsal; CH is going to organise this for Friday 10 November; WZ said he would be interested to see what the uniformed groups' attendance would be like.

4.2 *Carol Service (17 December at 6.30 pm)*: GH said that last year Lydia organised her family and friends to help with the singing and it is hoped that the same will be true this year. She proposed that we continue to use the format of the Nine Lessons and Carols (suggested by John May during the interregnum), and that people be asked to read the lessons (lessons and prayers to be found at the back of the book *Carols for Choirs 1*). She offered to help CH with the planning. There will be mulled wine and mince

pies after the service. JM asked about candles and WZ reminded the committee that the church has lots of LED candles which can be placed on the pew shelves and which, together with some electric lighting, provide sufficient light.

4.3 *Christmas Eve: Sunday 24 December Holy Communion at 10.15:* CH has asked Philip Sourbut to take this service. PS plans to use the theme of a 'Blue Christmas' and to think about people who are anxious or sad or in trouble at this otherwise joyful season. NJ observed that it will also be the 4th Sunday in Advent, which has its own theme, not to be overlooked.

4.4 *Christingle service: Christmas Eve at 4 p.m.:* GH is looking for an Order of Service to give to CH. Jean Vickery organises the making of Christingles – with which help will be needed on 23 December – and she also has an Order of Service, published by the Children's Society.

Midnight Mass will take place at 11.30 pm, and on Christmas Day there will be Holy Communion at 10.30 am.

4.5 *General points* arising from discussion about Christmas: (i) The person who donated the Christmas tree last year would like to do the same this year. WZ reported that the tree would come into church on 5 December and be expertly decorated by Sally and Neville Mundy in time for the concert of Handel's *Messiah* to be given by the East Devon Choral Society on 9 December. (ii) There will be 2 school carol services: Castle Primary School on 12 December with live streaming, and Bolham Primary School on 14 December. Blundell's also hope to use the Church. (iii) WZ asked about a service for the Hospice but as CH has had no word from them it is assumed they do not want one. (iv) Graham Willson will play for all the Christmas services except for the Midnight service, when Simon Trott will play.

4.6 *Giving Service: 18 February 2024:* Helen Wakely and CH want to share with the congregation the financial position of St Peter's. Giving is diminishing, and it is important to be transparent about the situation, once Christmas and January are over. Great work has been going on, and we are working with good people to organise events which will encourage people into church and raise the profile of St Peter's in the town.

4.7 *Other matters arising from the above discussion:* (i) CH mentioned that St John's RC Primary School is keen to be more involved with St Peter's and that he, CH, is going to continue to make contact with local schools. GH commented that CH's interest in the schools was much appreciated. (ii) GH, WZ and CH will have a hymn-choosing session, following the request for suggestions for favourite hymns, made in church on 22 October.

5 Choir items

5.1 *New choir member:* Lena sings alto, a welcome addition since Adi and Jane who have given years of loyal service to the church and choir will be retiring at the end of the

year.

5.2 *Thanks to musicians:* Graham and Simon, and also Lydia, to whom GH will write, deserve our thanks for their contributions.

5.3 *New Taizé books:* Second-hand copies are being purchased as funds become available. Rosie Longbourne is searching for them. Donations for the refreshments provided by TM at the last Taizé service have paid for the first one.

6 Any other business

6.1 *Smooth running of the service:* JM asked whether, in the interests of the service running smoothly, the notices could be given out before the service began, followed by a minute or two of silence before the first hymn. The notices could also include an invitation to join everyone for coffee after the service. She also wondered whether people could be invited to sit or kneel at the start of the Eucharistic Prayer as, despite the rubric saying this, the congregation was slow to sit down last Sunday. CH is keen not to give too many stage directions; and tries to gauge the number of non-regular attendees, who might need some help. WZ suggested that people often follow the lead of the choir: and GH apologised that the choir themselves were slow to kneel down last Sunday as they were missing Derek Long's lead!

6.2 *The welcome sheet:* WZ had received some comments about the welcome sheet: is it necessary or useful? He prints 65 copies and most of them are left in church after the service. This is wasteful of time and resources. Sue Beale is in favour of having them as being able to read the set passages might help the hard of hearing. KH said that a smaller sheet with the notices and details of the readings (which could then be found in the pew bibles) would suffice. NJ agreed and favoured the use of A5 sheets, with referencing of the page numbers. TM observed that many people would have already read the notices online, so fewer sheets could be produced for those who specifically requested one. WZ thought we might announce the reading and give the page number at the same time; there are, however, although only two Bibles per pew, which might cause the occasional problem. TM wondered whether the relatively small print of the pew bibles could also be a problem but WZ observed that they had been specially chosen with print of a good size. Finally CH suggested that we trial a month without a service sheet; it might encourage people to concentrate fully on what they were listening to and the readers to speak really clearly. WZ said we should leave it until after Christmas as the sheets were needed to tell people about the Christmas services, JM mentioned the possibility of putting details of all the Christmas services – including those at St. Andrew's and St. Thomas' – in one leaflet, an idea with which KH agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.35 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 2 January at 7.30 pm.