

## ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

### Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held in The Tiverton Hotel  
on Thursday 18 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

Present: The Revd Christian Hill (in the chair), John Brewster, David Catchpole, Emma Cobbledick, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Nickie Johnson, Averil Long, Tom Mitchell, Sally Mundy, David Ricks, Heather Vincent and William Zarrett.

Apology: Joanna Hall-Tomkin

The meeting opened with prayer.

#### 1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2023 were approved and signed.

#### 2 Matters arising from the minutes

2.1 *Coffee morning in aid of CHAT* (minute 2.1): It was agreed that this remained a commitment, and it would be organised by NJ with helpers and held in June.

2.2 *Live streaming* (minute 5): The system is now in place and some test cases of implementing it have taken place. It was noted that worries about infringements of privacy and considerations of safeguarding had been mentioned, notwithstanding the fact that most churches have gone ahead with live streaming without any anxiety of this sort. It was agreed to proceed with care and to give notice in advance of the streaming of any particular service. The actual participation in communion tended to take 7/8 minutes, and WZ had experimented with showing an image of our stained-glass windows during that time.

2.3 *Choral evensong* (minute 6.1): CH reported on his conversation with the Archdeacon. It was agreed that if there was evidence of support for such a service it should be held during summer time and at St Andrew's, and thus become a very welcome sign of the sharing of fellowship between the two churches. The matter had been discussed with Joan Mitchell, the church warden at St Andrew's.

2.4 *Fundraising* (minute 10.2): It was agreed that a fund-raising coffee morning should be held on Saturday 6 April. By this time the mezzanine/library should have been completed, and a special focus on the children's corner could help to equip that area attractively for the enjoyment of the children that we hope to attract to St Peter's.

#### 3 Safeguarding

In the absence of JH-T through illness the PCC was unable to follow its otherwise habitual consideration of safeguarding issues.

4 Finance

WZ introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 4 January and the supporting documents including the treasurer's report.

4.1 *Treasurer's report on income and expenditure in 2023:*

The numbers for the year end are in the process of being completed. The summary to 30 November 2023 is as follows:

	Actual £	Budget £	Variance £
Income	46,126	48,277	(2,151)
Expenditure	117,554	90,066	(27,488)
Deficit	(71,428)	(41,789)	(29,639)

Budgetary planning for 2024 (comparing 2023 budget and 2024 budget):

	2024 budget £	2023 budget £	Variance £
Income	47,964	52,640	(4,676)
Expenditure	138,393	98,086	(40,307)
Deficit	(90,429)	(45,446)	(44,983)

On the *income* side: She drew attention to the fact that approximately 75% of our income comes from our regular service collections and planned giving, principally through the Parish Giving Scheme. Over the past few years, we have lost some very generous donors and have not been able to replace them. This will hopefully be addressed by our 'Giving Sunday' campaign in Lent to attract new regular donors, and to ask those who already give to increase their donations. Our total budgeted income in 2024, standing at just under £48k, does not even cover our Common Fund allocation of £54k. The Diocese expects on average each participant at our church to give £52 per month or £13 each week.

On the *expenditure* side: (i) Our largest expense is the Diocesan Common Fund contribution of £54k. (ii) The assumption is that a new Director of Music will be appointed and that s/he will be operating for the second six months of the year. (iii) Planned maintenance includes regular inspections, work requested by the Fire Officer in the west tower entrance, emergency exit lighting, electrical work in the Greenway Chapel and other general day to day expenditure. (iv) Emergency maintenance includes approximately £17k (excluding VAT) further expenditure on the vestry and an additional £2k for unexpected events. It has been assumed that VAT will be reclaimable on building work through the Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme. (v) Maintenance excludes reordering although now that the Church House Fund has been spent, the remaining expenditure will show up on the face of our accounts and is estimated to be a further £40k (excluding VAT) to complete the re-ordering currently planned including the Newte Library. (vi) Utility costs are now more closely monitored since an electricity smart meter was installed in the church at the end of 2023, but they remain high. When external events are held in the church, a charge is made for heating. (vii) Parish administrator costs include an inflationary increase. And (viii) accountancy includes the independent examination by Apsleys for the year end and costs of the treasurer throughout the year.

In conclusion: (i) The budget for 2024 shows an overall deficit of £90k, and this could be increased by the additional re-ordering costs after the exhaustion of the Church House Charity fund. Expenditure has been pushed up by the discovery of the dry rot in the Vestry in 2023. It should be noted that in previous years, we have not had to use our emergency maintenance budget. (ii) Every effort needs to be made to encourage new members of the church and to ask them to contribute to our income on a regular basis, hopefully in an amount large enough to cover the increase in the Common Fund assessment caused by their attendance. In this connection the following table sets out the position on general donor giving for 2023 as a whole in comparison with 2022.

	2023	2022	variance
Year end PGS members	40	43	-3
	£	£	£
PGS Non-Gift Aided	1,323	1,448	-125
PGS Gift Aided	21,033	24,573	-3,540
Gift Aid tax total recovered	8,803	7,638	1,165
OOGA	335	6,824	-6,489
Standing orders	1,164	1,174	-10
Give a little	444	69	375
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	33,102	41,726	-8,624

- 4.2 In discussion, (i) WZ observed that additional fundraising for work on the bells was proving very successful and presently stood at £18k. He also outlined the policy on charges for externally organised events in church, where adjustments are made that take into account the nature of the sponsoring organisation. It is not our role to make things difficult for struggling good causes, while higher charges apply in the cases of better-endowed organisations. (ii) CH registered his hope that there might be favourable adjustments to tariffs for utilities, and he undertook to review potential suppliers that might bring savings. He also hoped that the programme of booking might expand. He planned to remind the congregation regularly of the importance of stewardship, and in this connection he suggested that we might improve the publicity both within the building and outside with a view to encouraging financial support, not least from well-disposed visitors. He also advocated the appointment of an events planner to give momentum to effort in this area and to give respite to the churchwardens who have handled these arrangements in the past.

An encouraging discussion took place concerning improvement of the impact and visibility of the card giving 'pod'. CH showed a picture of how The National Trust position and display their own 'pod'. Everyone agreed that it was a lot more impactful than our current arrangement and that we should be able to work on a significant improvement of some kind. CH and DR would work on our machine pod, improving the fixture to make it more obvious and inviting. When functioning efficiently it should help provide an additional and valuable donation stream.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

## 5 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 2 January. There was widespread appreciation of the services that had been held over the Christmas period, and thanks were offered to CH and others who were responsible for them.

The PCC endorsed the Worship Committee meeting minutes.

## 6 Fabric

DR gave a report on matters relating to fabric.

- 6.1 *Dry rot works in the vestry:* Works have commenced on the construction of the new timber floor. New sleeper walls are complete with new precast concrete joist plates. Floor timbers are scheduled for delivery on 19 January. Electrical works first fix are underway. Wall finishing and suspended ceiling works will proceed more rapidly once the floor is in place.

The architect has been asked to update his financial forecast now that ‘destructive’ works are complete and the reinstatement phase has begun.

- 6.2 *Fire precautions at the base of the tower as required by the fire officer:* The works to fireproof the electrical cupboard and gas meter chamber are well underway with only plastering and finishing works remaining. The installation of the fire alarm system remains to be instructed.

- 6.3 *Smart meters:* The electrical mains intake cupboard in the Greenway Chapel has been inspected by Ian Yeo, an electrical contractor who has worked for us in the past and knows the church. It would be a simple task for him to remove redundant equipment to allow the fitting of a smart meter, but he questioned the need for us to have a second supply at all, with its cost of additional standing charges, now that all the floodlights the panel once served have been removed.

Discussion is needed with Derek Long concerning the feasibility of supplying the Greenway Chapel/porch area from the new main board. It may require a new linking cable from the board mounted on the west wall, making the second supply redundant.

Our ongoing concerns with electrical consumption would be much easier to monitor with a single supply, already covered by a smart meter.

- 6.4 *Bells:* The refurbishment work on the bells involving Taylor’s of Loughborough has commenced.

- 6.5 *Quinquennial inspection:* This was delayed from last year due to consistently inclement weather, and it is now hoped that it will be undertaken this coming April.

## 7 Reordering

- 7.1 *The children’s area:* The works are complete, and the furnishings now need to be considered.

- 7.2 *The library/meeting room:* The work has progressed well and should be complete within a week. The architect will inspect the work when he visits on 23 January to issue his schedule of snags. There are no significant additional costs over the contract sum.
- 7.3 *Bookcases:* An acceptable price for new oak bookcases has been received from Crowstep.
- 7.4 *Window blinds to the mezzanine:* A faculty for the light-reducing permanent blinds has been received, and a quotation from the specialist contractor will now be requested.
- 7.5 *Fridge:* The new fridge has stopped working and its repair or replacement will be processed under guarantee.
- 7.6 *National Lottery Heritage Fund:* EC reported that applications for grants between £3,000-£250,000 are currently closed. From January 2024 applications for grants between £10,000-£10m will reopen under 'Heritage 2033'. She will continue to prepare our application for the remaining work on the library and hopes to submit when the funding programme reopens.

## 8 Prospects for 2024

CH outlined his hopes and expectations for the coming year, which he said he regarded as a very crucial one in the development of the life of St Peter's. He emphasised the theme of 'togetherness', which he hoped would show itself in the development of groups and teams for the carrying out of tasks and the deepening of reflection on our faith. One example of group commitment would be in the area of pastoral care, another in the provision of hospitality, another devoted to the wider distribution of the many tasks currently undertaken by the wardens, another for the opening of the church so that regular access might be achieved, and another with responsibility for publicity.

He introduced the booklet issued by the two Archbishops which would be a basis for consideration and conversation during the six weeks of Lent. He placed firm emphasis on the need for an increase in the number of participants in the life of the church, on making them welcome, and on encouraging their varied contributions to its life.

## 9 Preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The PCC decided (11 May 2023) that the 2024 APCM should be held after the main morning service on Sunday 21 April and followed by a bring-and-share lunch. [CH has subsequently requested that the date be brought forward to Sunday 14 April, and the overall timetable as set out below has been correspondingly adjusted.]

### 9.1 *Election of churchwardens:*

WZ reminded the PCC of The Churchwardens' duties are set out in Canon E1 of the Canons of the Church of England, which are summarised as follows:

- To represent the laity and co-operate with the parish priest in the encouragement of true religion, unity and peace.

- To welcome guest minsters and (with their goodwill) to give out the notices, see that the service registers are completed, and in the absence of an authorised minister, arrange for a suitable lay person to lead Morning or Evening Prayer.
- To welcome the congregation and maintain order in the church and churchyard with the help of the sidespersons.
- To supervise the collection, record it in the register and pass it on to the Chairman of Finance or Treasurer, and assure (with their assistance) that all fees and expenses are paid.
- To provide, at the PCC's expense, the bread and wine for Holy Communion and other requisites and registers for public worship and sacraments, and see all is ready for the services. (At St. Peter's, this is done by the Sacristans).
- To bring to the attention of the bishop or archdeacon anything that is specially well or amiss in the parish, and reply to the Archdeacon's Articles of Enquiry annually.
- To arrange during a vacancy with the rural dean (and assistant clergy or readers) for the conduct of public worship and pastoral care, and to look after the parsonage house and garden.
- To hold in trust the moveable furnishings, plate and registers of the church, keeping an inventory of them, which should be produced at the APCM with a signed statement of its accuracy and passed on to their successors, and to act when required as trustees of parochial trusts and charities.
- To see that the quinquennial inspection is carried out, the Churchwarden's logbook kept, faculties applied for, and a report presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (this can be delegated to a fabric officer, as is the case at St. Peter's).

WZ observed that much of what he and GH do is not part of their responsibilities as Churchwardens. Over time, the new Churchwardens will be looking for help in those areas but they will not be expected to take on those additional roles themselves. He and GH requested members of the PCC to search their hearts to see if this relatively straight-forward job might be for them.

## 9.2 *Revision of electoral roll:*

The full-scale creation of a new electoral roll will take place in advance of the APCM in 2025, but this year it is a matter of revision, updating and, where necessary, correction of the existing roll. Sarah Ware, the electoral roll officer, will be following the required guidelines and timetable for the process of revision. Thus, 'a notice announcing the revision should be displayed ... for at least two weeks before the commencement of the revision. ... Announcements should be made in church each Sunday during the 14 days the notice is displayed. The revision should be completed not less than 15 days or more than 28 days before the Annual Meeting.'

This produces the following timetable:

- Sunday 18 February: notice about revision will be posted in the porch
- Sundays 18 and 25 February, and 3 March: announcement in church of that revision.
- Sunday 10 March: start of revision
- Sunday 24 March (Palm Sunday): completion of revision

It was agreed in discussion that the reasons for membership of the electoral roll should be clearly explained to the members of St Peter's.

### 9.3 PCC membership 2024-25 and elections

There are two issues to be addressed here: (i) whether DC be elected by the APCM to the PCC specifically on the basis of being a licensed lay minister. This is possible, but not demanded, on an annual basis. If it happened it would mean that he did not at any stage stand for one of the places assigned to 'representatives of the laity'. This could be strategically useful in the event of the electoral roll's membership total's sinking below the figure of 100, with consequent 'loss' of 3 members of the PCC.

Then (ii) there is the question of the permissible number of 'representatives of the laity', which is determined by the total number of persons on the electoral roll. This currently, i.e. in advance of the 2024 revision, stands at precisely 100. In what follows the two people whose second three-year period of membership has expired, i.e. AL and DC, and who cannot stand this year, are noted, and so is the one person whose first three-year term has ended, i.e. SM, who can stand if she would like to do so.

The membership of the PCC will consist of the incumbent plus **two churchwardens, three deanery synod reps, one LLM**, and the **9 or 12 representatives of the laity**. The figure is 9 if the total of electoral roll members is > 50 and < 100, or 12 if the total of electoral roll members is > 100.

The identity of these representatives is slightly affected by the earlier decision of the PCC that the safeguarding rep and the reordering supremo should be *ex officio* members, i.e. not needing to stand for election. (JH-T is not affected, by virtue of being a deanery synod representative, but DR is affected.)

The net result is that the 'new' PCC would consist of:

Incumbent	CH
wardens	x and y
licensed lay minister	DC
deanery synod reps	EC, JH-T, KH
representatives of the laity	JB, NJ, TM, DR ( <i>ex officio</i> ), HV, plus 4 (or 7)

## 10 Any other business

- 10.1 *Christian Aid Week*: This is set for 12-18 May this year. DC asked members to give some thought to how we can increase the sum of money that we raise for what is widely agreed to be an especially vital charity working to respond to hugely increased need in a troubled world.
- 10.2 *Dates of future meetings*: It was agreed that as well as meeting on dates already agreed, i.e. 14 March and 9 May, we would add to the list 11 July, 5 September and 7 November.
- 10.3 *Notice boards*: NJ asked whether it would be possible once again to have notice boards at the west end of the church. WZ responded that there were varied views about whether this was a good idea, but the existing tables provided opportunity for papers to be circulated and the notice boards in the porch remained available. It was observed that the impression conveyed to visitors to St Peter's was affected by whether or not those notice boards were kept up to date, neat and tidy, using A4-sized sheets which had been laminated wherever possible.

10.4 *Hired cleaner(s)*: CH reminded the PCC that he remained keen to find cleaners to look after the inside of the church and to relieve St Peter's members of this task.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Signed:

Date: