

ST PETER'S, TIVERTON

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting held in The Tiverton Hotel
on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 7.30 pm

Present: The Revd Christian Hill (in the chair), John Brewster, David Catchpole, Emma Cobbledick, Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Gill Heard, Kate Henshall, Nickie Johnson, Tom Mitchell, Heather Vincent and William Zarrett.

Apologies: Averil Long, Sally Mundy and David Ricks.

The meeting opened with prayer.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 18 January 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 the event would take the form of a cream tea rather than a coffee morning, to be held in June, and that while NJ would take overall responsibility and liaise with CHAT beforehand, she would need two co-workers to help with the planning and provision.
- 2.2 *Choral evensong at St Andrew's* (minute 2.3): CH confirmed that this would go ahead, and that the event itself would confirm (or not) the degree of support on the part of members of the two churches.
- 2.3 *Fundraising event on 6 April* (minute 2.4): This coffee morning would be in aid of the provision of child-friendly equipment in the children's area. SM would be grateful for helpers to contact her.
- 2.4 *Christian Aid week 12-18 May* (minute 10.1): With the support of the PCC, gift envelopes would be distributed at services on Sunday 12 May and collected on the following Sunday; and during the week GH and SM would organise a safari supper in an effort to increase our support for this very needy cause.
- 2.5 *Hired cleaner(s)* (minute 10.4): SM had reported a conversation with one of the near neighbours of St Peter's about the need for a cleaner, but without success. She had suggested that the whole congregation might usefully be made aware of this need.

3 Safeguarding

JH-T reported on excellent progress with the obtaining of DBS certificates, including for all members of the PCC, and additional work on her part with members of St Andrew's. The requirement that those with particular roles must undertake group training courses had exposed a degree of nervousness on their part, and she was anxious about the risk of losing them from those roles if they were to withdraw in the face of this requirement. She planned to consult with diocesan personnel as to whether

she herself might be allowed to substitute more informal discussions for those undertaking specific tasks, while insisting that, for example, pastoral visitors must undertake the standard training preparing them to deal with serious issues such as violence.

4 Worship

GH introduced the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting on 26 February, drawing particular attention to a number of items.

- 4.1 *Welcome sheet* (minute 2): The PCC agreed to the suggestion that NJ in consultation with KH, CH and JH-T prepare a new-style, single-sheet A5-sized welcome sheet providing details of the readings (including page numbers in the pew bibles) for the service as well as information about forthcoming events.
- 4.2 *Committee membership* (minute 6): Clarification was provided concerning the appointment of church members, not confined to members of the PCC, to the committees of the PCC like the Worship Committee. The custom has been that chairs of committees check with current members as to whether they would, if invited, serve for another year, after which the Standing Committee brings proposals to the first meeting of the PCC after the APCM.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Worship Committee meeting.

5 Finance

WZ introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 5 March, including the treasurer's report and the *Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council*.

- 5.1 *Treasurer's report*: HW reviewed the accounts for 2023 as a whole, which had passed their independent examination by Apsleys, and for the first two months of 2024, cf. appendix to these minutes.

The figure for total income in 2023 stood at £71,984, of which £48,338 derived from donations and legacies, and £7,387 from general collections. The figure for total expenditure stood at £279,534, of which £133,302 represented the cost of re-ordering, and £51,356 the contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund. Emergency maintenance expenditure, standing at £29,729, had been unusually costly as a result of the discovery of dry rot in the vestry, as well as the cost of living crisis, which meant that expenditure on utilities had also increased, standing at £9,507 for electricity and £9,020 for gas.

The figures for January-February 2024 were showing an excess of actual expenditure over income of £29,712, as against a budget deficit figure of £12,982 for that period.

- 5.2 *Parish Giving Scheme*: This continued to be the main strategic instrument for income to the church. A special Stewardship Sunday had been held on 18 February with the hope of introducing the PGS to a new group of parishioners and encouraging those who already give by this scheme (currently 38 in number) to increase their contributions.

- 5.3 The *Annual Report* having been endorsed by Apsleys but with the charge of what was felt to be a disproportionately high fee, it was decided to recommend it to the APCM on 14 April and also to explore in advance possible alternative accountants for future years.

Thanks were expressed, and had already been conveyed by CH, to Helen Wakely for her excellent work on the finances.

- 5.4 *Events planner*: The PCC received details of a proposal by CH for the appointment of an Events Planner, the appointment of whom on a freelance basis, probably for a period of 12 months and at a cost of £600 per month, would mean 'working with St Peter's Church to build the profile and define a clear outward message through the development of Events and Marketing strategies, while also looking at growth and potential revenue streams'. As far as a possible appointee was concerned, CH was in touch with an independent contractor who does event planning for the Town Council, and is free to undertake an additional part-time role.

The expectation was that this time-limited appointment would remove all such responsibility from the role of churchwarden, and would cover marketing of the available space (now very advantageously improved by the reordering of the church), the determination of fees charged, and the management of the nature and number of events that can reasonably be held in the course of a year. It was hoped that after that one year responsibility would be shouldered by a member of the congregation.

In discussion WZ repeated reservations that he had voiced previously that a distinct challenge is managing the events on the day. Two of the choirs who have held events at the church have a rehearsal day plus the day of the concert. People will be needed from the congregation to get involved – serve refreshments, collect wine from the supplier, sell tickets on the door etc. We can attract more events but (he asked) do we have the people to deal with them? Repeat bookings are easier to deal with as all the legwork has been done for their first event. Pricing is tricky, as we want to charge as much as they will pay without making it too expensive with the result that they go elsewhere.

There was also hesitation over the cost of this appointment, which CH countered by setting it against the size of the investments held by the church, and over the exact nature of the hypothetical 'events' (additional to the choral and musical events that we already attract) that were in mind, plus the fact that competition has to be taken into account since St Peter's is not the only sizable building in Tiverton in which large-scale events may be and are being held. The preference of some bodies for a non-religious setting for high-profile events has, it was suggested, to be taken seriously as a potential drawback.

The PCC endorsed the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

6 Re-ordering

In the absence of DR through illness, WZ gave a report on the current situation vis-à-vis re-ordering.

Basically, the work is done. Snags are being ironed out, but very little else is outstanding. The one substantial item for attention is the purchase of a mobile nave

altar table (or 'communion table') which had been, in line with Anglican theological convictions, a firm part of the plan from the outset, and which was an essential expression of the corporate fellowship of the assembled Christian community celebrating eucharistically. It would mean that the high altar would be used only on high festival days. As a piece of furniture befitting in quality and style a fine church like St Peter's, this 'communion table' might be costly and WZ proposed that a special appeal be mounted in order to cover that cost. The expense could perhaps be funded as a personal gift to our church by an individual donor or group of donors.

Work on the vestry and offices is also in its final stages. Whereas there had once been some hope that the space available under the mezzanine would be sufficient to accommodate, for example, PCC meetings, it had become clear that this expectation was unrealistic, and therefore that the hire of a room in The Tiverton Hotel, at modest cost and enabling members to sit around a substantial table on which papers could be spread, remained the better option. Thus, this space will be the church office and priest's vesting while the vestry will accommodate the ladies' choir robing and sacristan activities.

7 Deanery Synod

KH introduced the notes from the meeting of the Deanery Synod on 1 February, drawing particular attention to two matters:

First, the importance of a strong sense of togetherness and mutual support on the part of the churches in a deanery. In this connection an initiative called 'Lifepath Tiverton' has been planned for 3-7 June, at St Paul's Church, and beamed on year 4 school children encouraging them to engage in art, history, drama, music, and the Christian faith, through the 'life path' of a well-known historic figure linked to their location. In Tiverton this is the Wesley family. Anyone considering volunteering or wanting to know more can contact lifepathtiverton@gmail.com. KH suggested that St Peter's might consider acting as host for a similar deanery-wide initiative at a later stage.

Second, the next two deanery synod meetings are open for anyone to attend and could be well worth attending.

On Monday 3 June at 7.30 pm at Cullompton Community Centre, Pye Corner, Cullompton EX15 1JX the speaker will be Andrea Corrie, BEM, a retired medical secretary, who, following the loss of her nineteen-year-old son James to a drowning accident, has written articles for bereavement websites. She is also the author of two books, *Into the Mourning Light* (2014) and *Living in the Mourning Light* (2020), which focus on the grieving process and the attributes of hope, light, love, faith, resilience and joy, with faith as a powerful tool for processing grief.

On Monday 30 September at 7.30 pm at Calverleigh Village Hall, Calverleigh, Tiverton, EX16 8BB, the speaker will be Colin Smallacombe, from the farming community network (FCN: a charity that supports farmers and families through difficult times). He will talk about the many difficult issues facing farmers today and sharing information about the support available in their areas so that the deanery synod representatives can take something back to help support their rural communities.

8 APCM and elections to the PCC

The PCC was reminded that the APCM will take place immediately after the morning service on Sunday 14 April.

[The final outcome of the electoral roll revision process is a membership of precisely 100.

Parish governance: model rules membership, paragraph M15.8b states: 'The number of representatives of the laity for the purposes of paragraph (1)(j) is: 'If there are more than 50 but no more than 100, nine.'

So, it is now clear that in addition to the 5 continuing members it will be possible to elect just 4 representatives of the laity at the APCM.]

So far there are no nominations for churchwardens and 2 (SM, WZ) for representatives of the laity. The likely [revised] membership profile of the 'new' PCC is therefore:

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

9 Any other business

None.

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

Signed:

Date: