

## Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at the Church Centre

### Present:

Revd Tony Rindl – Chair (TR)  
Revd Joshua Brocklesby (JB)  
Roger Courtney (RC)  
Tilly Elliott (TE)  
Margaret Greenstreet (MG)  
Cathy Honeyman (CH)  
Abie Idris (AI)  
Alison Saunders (AS)  
Cath da Costa (CdC) (Items 1-5i)

### *Minutes taken by RC*

1. **Opening Prayers** – TR noted that it was St Luke's Day and read Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan which, TR observed, appears only in Luke's gospel. He commented that as a church we needed to examine our purpose from a fresh perspective, seeking to partner with the work of others like the Good Samaritan who were doing God's work such as caring for the downtrodden. In doing so, we would be promoting the Good News of the gospel, as St Luke had done.
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Jane Carter (JCa), Joanna Cooper (JCo), Clinton Dan-Jumbo (CDJ), Peter Dean (PD) and Annafrida Kadzura (AK).
3. **Conflict of Interest** TR noted his conflict of interest if any matter concerned the Children and Families Worker or the Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy.
4. **Approval of Minutes 20 September 2021** MG proposed that the minutes be accepted as a correct record. This was seconded by CH and agreed by all present.
5. **Matters arising**
  - i. **Safeguarding** (This item was taken first.) CdC introduced her report which had been circulated. She explained that following the resignation of the Safeguarding Officer (SO) it had been hoped that through a combination of her

input and that of Jacky Faria(JF) on the administrative side the church's safeguarding responsibilities could be discharged until a new SO had been appointed. However, it was clear from the rules that she could not play a formal role in safeguarding owing to her relationship with TR. While JF could handle matters such as arranging DBS checks, CdC was concerned about the ability of the church to respond correctly if there were any incident involving safeguarding. She underlined the need to appoint a new SO in order that St Mary's could fulfil its legal responsibilities.

As Children and Family Worker, though, she had examined St Mary's current practices and documentation in the light of the latest diocesan guidance which was provided through the 'ThirtyOne:Eight' portal on the diocesan Website. Her report reviewed the changes that were now needed. These related not only to the revision of existing documentation and practices but also noted the need to cover wider aspects of safeguarding such as Domestic Abuse and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders which had not previously been addressed. Accompanying it was a Safeguarding Action Plan which the PCC would need to approve and the House of Bishops 'Roles and Responsibilities' statement which had a section on the PCC's responsibilities for safeguarding which PCC members should read. Areas where changes in practice were needed included the preparation of a job description and taking references prior to any appointment that required a DBS check. The church's insurance also needed to be checked to ensure that it included appropriate cover.

The Council thanked CdC for her comprehensive report and noted that she would present revised documentation and recommendations at the next meeting. TR said that he would be approaching church members to invite them to consider taking up the SO role.

#### ACTIONS:

CdC to prepare amended documentation and accompanying recommendations for the November meeting of the Council.

TR to approach church members with regard to filling the SO vacancy and to arrange for the church' insurance cover to be checked.

All PCC Members to read the relevant sections of the 'Roles and Responsibilities' statement.

In further discussion, the need for training of PCC members and others was raised. CdC commented that everyone with DBS clearance (which therefore would include all PCC members) was required to complete at least Level 1 training (a short on-line session), while those with other responsibilities would need higher levels. She would ask JF to contact PCC members about this.

ACTION: CdC/JF to arrange safeguarding training for PCC members.

- ii. **Register of interested parties.** In the absence of PD, no information was available on this item.
- iii. **Repair of monitor and any other AV issues.** Similarly, there was no progress report on this item.
- iv. **Appointment of minutes secretary** TR reported that Pam Rastall (PR) had offered to take the minutes at every other meeting. The Council welcomed this offer and thanked Pam for it, while noting that it would be appropriate to offer her time off in lieu.

ACTION: TR to convey the PCC's thanks to PR and to discuss time off in lieu.

- v. **Outside Noticeboards** RC informed the Council that the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) had advised that they were not aware of any churches that had installed digital notice boards but were prepared to consider a proposal on its merits. A changed design for the West notice board would be considered by the DAC in the usual way. He had transmitted the DAC's response to JB who said that he would look further into the possibility of a digital board.

ACTION: JB to consider possible changes to notice boards.

- vi. **Purchasing coffee to support "Rejuvenate the World"** TR said that he had not yet ordered coffee from this source. He would shortly be discussing the use of Fair Trade products within the church with several church members.

- vii. **Memorandum of Understanding with WTCC** TR said that he wished to see a strong partnership between St Mary's and the Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy (WTCC). One aspect of this had been that St Mary's had provided a payroll service for WTCC. However, this had proved to have complications and WTCC had now offered to take over payroll responsibilities. This would enable the Lead Chaplain to have, as now, a single contract of employment with WTCC. He therefore recommended that this offer be accepted and the change actioned following agreement of the MoU. The Council agreed with this recommendation.

ACTION: TR to arrange for the draft MoU to be examined by Finance and Staffing Committees.

## 6. Correspondence. None

## 7. Committee reports

- **Finance.** The Finance report was noted. In discussion it was observed that the separation of Pre-School finances from the General Fund (GF), as previously agreed by the Council, meant that in the end-September accounts the GF surplus recorded in previous months had now become a deficit of some £11k, with the Pre-School showing approximately £15k of surplus (but some rental

payments were due, which would reduce the difference). While less than the GF forecast deficit for the year, this was still not a satisfactory situation.

TR commented that the Council should consider the budget for 2022 at its next meeting and he asked budget holders to provide PD with their forecasts.

**ACTIONS:**

Budget holders to provide PC with 2022 expenditure estimates.

Finance Committee to prepare 2022 budget for discussion at November meeting

*Brightwell Rd* RC reported that David Brown had contacted the agents for Brightwell Rd who informed him that there had been no developments over the matter of works at the property and they recommended that no action be taken until the New Year. The Council noted this report.

- **Buildings.** RC had circulated a report prior to the meeting. He noted that since the report had been prepared, the control gear on the light illuminating the cross on the north transept had been found to be faulty. This light had been removed for further examination. The plan for the children's toilets (circulated with the report) had met with approval within the church but it required the cleaner's sink to be relocated and he wished to settle where it could go before the plan was submitted for Building Regulations approval.

*Wastes collection* The Council considered a note by PR setting out the current position on collection of wastes and recommending that the church take out a contract for an improved service at an annual cost of some £520. This would be a call on the General Fund. In discussion, it was observed that external users of the Church Centre sometimes left excessive wastes, perhaps because the present bins were inadequate. The provision should be reviewed and users urged to recycle as much material as possible. The Council the agreed that a new contract, as proposed, should be arranged.

**ACTION:** TR to convey the following requests for action:

- PR/Facilities Manager to arrange a new contract for wastes collection, as proposed.
- Facilities Manager to advise on whether current bins are adequate, and possible changes, and to review notices in kitchen and elsewhere concerning wastes and recycling.

*Curtains in Church Centre* TE had arranged for Council members to examine samples of material which could be made into curtains for the carpeted part of the Church Centre and blinds for the Pre-School area. TE explained that the samples shown were those that she and AS had preferred when she had shown AS a larger selection. They had come from a supplier in Finchley who had been

very helpful, visiting the church to view the Centre and to take measurements. The supplier would undertake the complete removal and replacement of the present curtains, supplying and fire-proofing the material, making up the curtains/blinds and providing and installing all necessary fittings. In her view, their quoted prices were very competitive. These prices were £4582 for the curtains in the carpeted area and £4042 for blinds in the Pre-School area, with curtains in that area being somewhat more expensive.

Following discussion, the Council members present unanimously agreed on a preferred design and also agreed that blinds would be more suitable than curtains for the Pre-School area. After discussion of whether a replacement cushion on the long seat in the carpeted area should be commissioned, it was agreed that this would be deferred until the curtains were in place.

It was noted that no budget had been allocated for these replacements in the funding for the refurbishment of the Centre. However, it was thought that there would be a positive response if an appeal were made since the present curtains were in such poor condition and detracted from the appearance of the refurbished space. The Council were informed of a generous offer to underwrite the cost of the new curtains and blinds if insufficient funds were forthcoming from such an appeal.

Following further discussion, the Council:

- Thanked TE for taking forward this initiative and identifying a suitable curtain design and supplier
- Expressed its gratitude that there had been an offer of underwriting the cost, thereby removing a call on existing church funds
- Agreed that an appeal for funding should be made, through St Mary's News and by other means, and asked TE and AS to prepare this
- Invited TE to proceed with placing an order for the curtains and blinds.

ACTIONS: As set out above

- **Staffing** No report,
- **Pre-School** AS reported that at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September the Pre-School Committee had included the possibility of operating for the whole day as a matter to be considered in the course of the Business Plan period. An experienced member of staff had tendered their resignation which would take effect in November. Recruitment was in hand but there could be a need for temporary cover to maintain the required staff/children ratio.
- **Missions** AS advised that the question of whether St Mary's would continue to support the Church Missionary Society was still unresolved.

- **Deanery** TR reported that Revd Pam Wise, Vicar of All Saints, South Oxhey, would be retiring shortly.

**8. MAP update and Review of Bishop Michael's visit** TR invited those members of the Council who had been present at the session with Bishop Michael to give their reflections on the discussion. There was general agreement that it had been a stimulating session with relevance to the preparation of a Mission Action Plan (MAP). TR noted that Bishop Michael had been accompanied by his colleague Sas who worked for Tear Fund. Sas lived in Croydon and had provided an inspiring perspective on his local situation. While most people saw a rather run-down area, he described it as an Urban Wasteland where God is King and where God's work was being done. TR commented that in line with the concept of Asset Based Church Development which had been employed by Tear Fund in Africa, the church needed to focus not on what it and its community did not have but on what it did have, to see what God was doing and to support and strengthen it. This approach was reflected in the proposed 'Partnership' theme for the MAP and in the Living God's Love principles of showing imagination and courage. He would provide more reflections on the visit in an article for the November issue of St Mary's News.

In discussion, it was suggested that St Mary's already was engaged in such partnerships and that more might be stimulated. Publicity for the services of the Women's Centre would stem from the recent discussion at the Current Affairs Connect Group; a conversation with the Samaritans who had been meeting in the church at the time of the Bishop's visit had shown how we shared their aims. But there was a need to inform the congregation more effectively, eg through St Mary's News, of these sorts of links and to encourage active support for such bodies.

TR reminded the Council of the provisional themes for the MAP of Parish, Profile and Partnership and said that he would establish a Working Group to take forward preparation of the MAP. The previous MAP had been instrumental in getting the church to where it was now and he expected the same benefit from a new MAP.

**ACTION:** TR to establish a MAP Working Group.

**9. Policy Reviews** The Council reviewed two policies:

*Bullying and Harrassment* The following changes were made:

- Replace the clergy Discipline Measure 2003 with the Clergy Discipline Measure 2016
- Change the Review Date to October 2023

*Conflict of Interest* The following changes were made:

- Add to the end of Para 2.3 'or authorities, eg the Charities Commission and the Independent Examiner or Auditor.'

- In Para 3.1, replace 'Data Protection Act 1998' with 'General Data Protection Regulations 2016'
- In Para 6.1, change the Review Date to October 2023.

RC proposed acceptance of the policies with these changes. AS seconded and this was agreed *nem con*.

It was agreed that Lone Working and Safe Use of Image policies would be reviewed at the next meeting.

**ACTION:**

JB to arrange for amended policies to be placed on the church's Website.

All PCC members to read the policies to be reviewed in November and note any changes required.

**10. Autumn Programme.** TR invited views on the evening services that had been held in September and October. There was general agreement that the services had been stimulating. The comments included appreciation for the effort that had gone into the preparation of the church for the October 'wedding' service; recognition that it was not easy to combine a service that would be attractive to newcomers with one that would be satisfying to existing members, so perhaps one or other aim might be adopted; the services were quite different, and this might inhibit inviting people since the form of service was not made known in advance. In response, TR and JB commented that the form of service would settle down. The wedding service had been more conventional in content and this was more the pattern for the future. Those who attended regularly would develop a 'feel' for the type of service which would help them in inviting guests. Prior to Christmas, the main focus was on church members but this would broaden afterwards.

TR went on to note that the usual autumn programme was being prepared, with Remembrance Sunday approaching and services for Christmas being planned. He was also working with the Hospital Chaplaincy on a memorial service for those who had died in the past year; this would take place at 2pm on 12th December.

**11. Vicar's Report.** TR began by saying that he had been pleased to be able to attend the 'Moving On' service of Andrew and Maria Leake. His retreat had been a time of reflection; he had felt God speaking of the value of 'stepping back' to gain a wider perspective. In terms of activities within the church, the Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership had conducted their first 'drop-in' session at the church and it was good that David Scourfield had been able to be present. He had, with Cath, visited one of the hotels housing Afghan refugees. This had been a deeply worthwhile occasion with bonding over table tennis and chess. It was open to anyone with a DBS check to make such a visit. In terms of future intentions, as hopefully we emerged from the constraints imposed by Covid, he had asked JB to see who was attending on Zoom in

order to monitor the balance between in-person and on-line attendees at services. In due course, we would move from Zoom to streaming the service; he was convinced that the most satisfying and effective worship was through being present in church. He hoped that the system of maintaining contact with church members established at the start of the pandemic would still be providing a link with members who were not either on Zoom or coming to the church. Discussions with other incumbents had shown that young families had been particularly cautious about returning to services and it would be a challenge to re-engage with them.

JB added that new people were coming to the church at a greater rate than previously, and many were from the parish.

**12. Health and Safety / Safeguarding.** Nothing further to report.

**13. Any Other Business** The Council noted that PD had spent a night in hospital for observation and expressed its good wishes to him.

**14. Closing Prayer.** The meeting closed at 10.25 with the Living God's Love prayer.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 7.30pm in the Church Centre.**