



Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st March 2022 at 7.30pm in the Church Centre

Present:

Revd Joshua Brocklesby (JB) (in the Chair)
Joanna Cooper (JC)
Roger Courtney (RC)
Peter Dean (PD)
Tilly Elliot (TE)
Margaret Greenstreet (MG)
Cathy Honeyman (CH)
Alison Saunders (AS)
David Scourfield (DS)

In Attendance: Pam Rastall (PR) (Minute taker)

In the absence of TR, PD who had previously been elected as Vice Chair by the PCC would normally chair this meeting, but it was proposed that JB should chair the meeting as part of his training; agreed by all present.

- 1 **Opening Prayers** were led by AS in the absence of AK.
AS said these are difficult times with illness and different pressures. She quoted Hebrews 12.1-3 and also Hebrews 10. He who promises is faithful; we need to spur one another on; persevere; fix our eyes on Jesus. He is our example in all the chaos of the world; we can be driven to despair. It is easy to get despondent, but we need to fix our eyes on Jesus to love and do good deeds. She finished with a prayer including praying for TR.
- 2 **Apologies for Absence** (or not present) – Tony Rindl (TR), Annafrida Kadzura (AK), Jane Carter (JC), Clinton Dan-Jumbo (CD-J), Abie Idris (AI)
- 3 **Conflict of Interest** – DS, if there was anything about WTCC

- 4 **Approval of Minutes of 21st February 2022** – PD proposed accepting them as a correct record, seconded by CH, and agreed by all present.
- 5 **Matters Arising:**
- i) *Register of Interested Parties:* PD had circulated a form showing who is to be included, and who not to be included amongst family members. Agreed only those with a potential financial interest to be included. Forms to be completed by all members as soon as possible and returned to PD.
ACTION – all members of PCC to complete the form and return to PD
- ii) *Repair of Monitors and other AV issues:* JB, RC, PD and DS had had an initial meeting for discussion with some plans put forward. Now waiting for TR to respond.
ACTION – waiting for response from TR once he is back from sick leave.
- 6 **Correspondence:** an email had been received from Jackie and Brian Mee (copy available) regarding Churches Together. They stated the Walk of Witness is to take place on Good Friday – PD will contact Ian Pankhurst (IP) to see if refreshments are required at St Mary’s. They informed St Mary’s that the Churches Together in Central, South and West Watford will join with Churches Together in North Watford and Garston in due course, following ongoing negotiations. There will be a request to each church for payment of a subscription of £45 regarding Public Liability Insurance. The Mees asked for feedback on the purpose and relevance of Churches Together in Watford but it was agreed more information is needed before a discussion can take place, JB therefore agreed to speak to Brian and Jacky before placing an item on a future PCC Agenda.
ACTION - PD to contact IP to see if refreshments required on Good Friday
ACTION - JB to speak to the Mees about the current status of Churches Together.
- 7 **Committee Reports**
- a) *Finance* – (paper available) PD reported that the January 2022 accounts showed overspending due to the payment of annual invoices; on the other hand, it is too early to see significant income regarding church centre lettings. The 2021 Accounts are on their way to the Independent Examiners. Treasurer Helen is struggling to confirm new Treasurer AK’s signature is on the Barclays account.
- b) *Buildings* – (paper available) – RC updated the notes on the paper. He has received an estimate for work to install children’s toilets (shade under £10,000) and will now seek grant funding. He has received the faculty for the New Hope memorial stone and has told New Hope they are able to proceed. He, and others, are surprised that some parts of the wifi system in church need replacing already but he understands that the parts have been discontinued. He has written to the DAC to ask for their comments. Is the system over-specified for our requirements? RC to follow up.

- c) *Staffing* - nothing to report
- d) *Pre-School* - MG is now a signatory and can access on-line banking. AS, Natasha (manager) and MG are the three signatories.
- e) *Missions* - waiting to hear from Rod & Frances.

8 **Deanery Synod**

PD reported that the Rural Dean (the Revd Peter Waddell, Abbots Langley) is on sabbatical; the Assistant Rural Dean is the Revd Vanessa Kerswill (St Peter's, Watford).

9 **APCM Report and Accounts**

PR had put together a Report but due to TR's illness it does not yet include the Vicar's Report. It is difficult to approve without a section but will need approval before the APCM and will need to be seen by the Independent Examiners prior to that. There could be a quick meeting on a Sunday morning prior to the APCM. Comments mentioned regarding the Report as it currently stands: although the church no longer banks with Lloyds, the preschool does, so both banks will still be named on the front cover. Regarding the Policies section on page 5, agreed to change the word 'all' to 'most' in the final sentence. Pdfs of the finance pages will be added after the Independent Examiner has finished. RC said that he feels the Report is too long; he has said this in previous years. He feels the APCM Report needs to be a formal report with a secondary informal report for the congregation. It is felt too late to change for this year but to be looked at for next year; to be added to forward planning for a future PCC Agenda (January 2023)

ACTION - to be on a future PCC Agenda

10 **Policy Reviews**

Pay & Recognition Policy - It was stated that it should not include specifics so there was a proposal to remove current details of National Living Wage in paragraph 3.1. It should have a 2-year review - both agreed by all present. PD said he would check that no-one, especially relevant to pre-school staff, should fall below the National Living Wage.

ACTION - PD to check with Richard Watson

Whistleblowing - no changes were thought necessary; all agreed on a 2-year review.

11 **Vicar's Report**

- In the *absence of TR* due to ill health, AS said she had seen him; he was progressing well from his lung infection which was taking a long time to heal. He is in touch with Bishop Alan.

- *JB* said he is busy in *TR* absence and thanked the wardens for their support in this time, especially as *Cath Da Costa (CdC)* had also been off with Covid. *JB* had spoken at an interfaith conference and covered seven or eight visits in one week by *Watford Grammar School for Girls* to the church which he had enjoyed and considered a good link. *AS* thanked him for the presentation slides for the ongoing Lent course.
- *CH* asked about the *Living in Love and Faith Course* which other churches had done as a Lent course – was *St Mary's* considering doing it after Lent/Easter? – a response is needed in May.
- *Parish Share* – nothing has yet been discussed – the deadline is mid-May. *PD* said he has a conflict of interest as he is on the deanery standing committee making the decisions. It is thought *St Mary's* current share factor is not representative of the demographic of *St Mary's* parish – we need to look at the church membership list, analysing the post codes and compare the results with the census.

12 Health & Safety Issues / Safeguarding

There are still PCC members who have not done the online safeguarding course. *Jacky* keeps emailing out details to *RC, TE, CH, AI, JC* and *AK* – *Jacky* will help if necessary. The link is in the email and members are encouraged to do it as soon as possible.

ACTION – *RC, TE, CH, AI, JC* and *AK* to do the online safeguarding course as soon as possible

13 Any Other Business

- *Away Day* – *RC* had not been able to attend but asked what happens now? He said a statement from *TR* had said the day would be followed up by group work. *AS* said the afternoon session had been the most helpful when those present had split into groups, but they had not had long enough for discussion. Some felt a sense of frustration after the day. *JB* said *TR's* plan was to encourage discussion in the May and June Connect Togethers then put together a Mission Action Plan (MAP) after the June meeting. The Connect Togethers will discuss in the different groups under the 3 Ps. *JB* encouraged members to read the report of the day in *St Mary's News*. The PCC will need to sign off the MAP before it goes to the Bishop.
- *Climate Group* – *RC* offered an update. There are plans to write terms of reference for the group as a committee of the PCC, feeding into the PCC. There is a lot of support for doing something; a meeting on the previous day had had fifteen people present with five more apologising; it's a theme which resonates with the world outside. The PCC will need to agree the terms of reference and the outline of their programme.

- Communication – TE talked about a lack of communication. She knows items are put on Facebook and the website but not everyone can access those. Not everyone reads St Mary’s News. She suggests more notices are given out on Sundays after the services. JB recommended TE join the Profile Group which included communication.
- Lavatory for the disabled – TE mentioned that a person in a large wheelchair is not able to access the lavatory for the disabled. RC said he knew this but when the toilet was designed this was not a requirement; it would need a radical rebuild to make it possible, which would be costly.
- Growing Leaders Course – is this likely to happen again?
- Sunday School leaders – AS said she had received a late email from CdC stating there are not enough leaders and so those involved are not receiving spiritual encouragement themselves as they are involved most weeks. There had been complaints about noisy children which had not encouraged families. DS said there had been no discussion about replacing CdC and although this is not directly linked to volunteers, it is assumed it is not going to happen because of money. AS said it all needed a future discussion
ACTION – children and families work on a future PCC Agenda.

14 Closing Prayer was offered at 9.17 pm with thanks to JB for chairing the meeting.

Dates of future meetings to be agreed (including items for Agenda):

- ?? May (*Churches Together; children’s and families work*)
- ?? June
- ?? July
- ?? September
- ?? October
- ?? November
- ?? January 2023 (*Annual Report*)
- ?? February
- ?? March