

## Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June via Zoom

### Present:

Revd Tony Rindl – Chair (TR)  
Roger Courtney (RC)  
Peter Dean (PD)  
Tilly Elliott (TE)  
Margaret Greenstreet (MG)  
Cathy Honeyman (CH)  
Annafrida Kadzura (AK)  
Alison Saunders (AS)

*Minutes taken by AS. All agreed that the meeting could be recorded to assist preparation of the minutes.*

- 1. Opening Prayers.** TE began by asking us to share a moment of stillness – an opportunity to put aside all other thoughts and distractions as we focus our minds. She then read Psalm 100, a psalm full of joy and thankfulness. She then prayed asking for God's help and wisdom as we discuss the issues on the agenda and make important decisions about the future direction of the church so that all may bring glory to God.
- 2. Apologies for absence.** Revd. Joshua Brocklesby (JB), Jane Carter (JCa), Joanna Cooper (JCo), Clinton Dan-Jumbo (CDJ), David Scourfield (DS), Abie Idris (AI).

TR began by welcoming AK to her first meeting and thanked her for being willing to help us with the treasurer's role which would be developed during the coming weeks.

- 3. Conflict of interest.** TR reminded everyone of their responsibility to declare any conflict of interest. He would declare his own conflict of interest as and when appropriate, especially during any discussion relating to the Children and Families Worker.
- 4. Approval of Minutes 17 May 2021** After two amendments PD proposed that we accept the minutes as a correct record, seconded by MG and agreed by all present.
- 5. Matters Arising**

- TR still needs to send the booklet outlining PCC responsibilities to AK and will also arrange for a DBS check with Jacky Faria (JF). TE has not received one yet and requested a hard copy.  
**ACTION: TR to circulate trustees booklet to AK and the rest of the committee with a hard copy to TE. Also to follow up a DBS check for AK with JF.**
- AS reported that she had approached Jenny Whittick about the possibility of taking the PCC minutes. Jenny responded positively especially if the meeting could be recorded to allow her to do this from home avoiding childcare issues. TR felt this linked with future aspirations. He hoped to be able to meet in person from September, which would be his preference, but it may be that we can have a similar arrangement to Sunday mornings with some able to access the meeting via Zoom if necessary. TR then asked everyone present if they would be willing to meet in person or would prefer the meeting to continue on Zoom until current restrictions are fully lifted, the expectation then being that we should meet in person. The consensus was that people would be happy to meet in person from September. All being well, from September we would meet in person with the ability to join the meeting via Zoom only if it was not possible to attend in person as this is always preferable.
- RC reminded TR that there should have been a matter arising from the APCM concerning the management letter from the Independent Examiner. This will be addressed in PD's finance report later in the agenda.

6. **Correspondence.** None received.

## 7. **Committee Reports**

- **Finance:** PD began by explaining that to be compliant with current regulations, The Independent Examiner of our accounts is asking us to produce a more comprehensive list of interested parties – a register of people, extending to other family members of trustees, who may have interests and possible conflicts of interest with other organisations. Some previous PCC members had found this contentious, but MG offered clarification and reassurance from her experience of having to do this for her school. TR felt we could respond saying that PCC have noted the request, have addressed it and will action.  
**ACTION: PD to deal with compiling this register.**  
PD continued with his financial report which had been circulated to PCC prior to the meeting. Helen Baldwin's (HB) figures for May represent 42% of the year. Income is slightly ahead at 44% and church membership contributions at 46%. Lettings income is obviously down, but we are in the process of clearing the church centre in anticipation of occupancy from e.g. Market Research in the near future. Pre-School accounts show they are well ahead of expectation helped by a generous Covid Recovery Grant. HB's figures show spending well below forecast at 35%, but there are expenses on the flat which will be over budget,

including a new boiler. Having looked at expenditure which occurs annually e.g. the tithe taken from commercial income, plus refunds to the WTCC and WTRRP, overall expenditure is at about 39%. RC has pointed out that the July figures represent a half-year report. As we do not have a PCC in August PD felt it may be helpful to circulate a financial statement for July figures during August. TR asked if the projected deficit is still a reality albeit slightly reduced. PD agreed that it is looking more hopeful compared to the £38,000 deficit that was forecast, but we need to be cautious. TR understood that expenses may catch up with income, but it is certainly more encouraging. TR also asked where we are in terms of responses to the appeal. PD replied saying he is not in touch with day to day income but has emailed (HB) and Richard Watson (RW) asking for some figures indicating responses to the appeal and evidence of increased pledges. PD has been aware that although people are less ready to increase their monthly pledge, some are still willing to respond to an appeal with some additional giving. We have received some one-off donations.

Brightwell Road - nothing to report. RC said we are still in a position to do work there provided there is a contractor that is acceptable to the tenant. As far as he is aware the agents have not heard anything. Although there is no particular urgency TR agreed with PD and RC that we should check with the agent before too much time elapses.

**ACTION: RC to make contact with the agents to check progress.**

- **Buildings** RC had circulated his report prior to the meeting. The flat is costing us more money than we budgeted for as we need to replace the boiler. This will be done this week. The windows also require some attention as they have deteriorated over time. Together he expects the total expenditure to be between £3,500 and £4,000. This includes some repair to water damaged on ceilings. We have good tenants so this work should be done. His report also includes an update on some miscellaneous refurbishment details. He has raised the matter of the Pre-School outdoor play area concerning a gap under the gate with the council and is awaiting a reply. He also noted from the Pre-School business plan the desire for a higher fence and maybe a storage facility. He reminded the council that the area is part of a conservation area and under the control of Watford Council, so although we can make a request if we feel it is important it would have to be submitted to the planning department. TE updated us on the progress she has made with looking at curtains and blinds for the Church Centre. After exploring various options she decided to go direct to the manufacturers. She has sourced a company in Finchley who she thinks will do everything including the window seats. As this will incur a considerable expenditure, TE wondered whether it would be appropriate to ask Sir Andrew Davis for a donation in memory of his parents who were committed members of St. Mary's for many years. Andrew also learned to play the organ at St. Mary's. TR agreed that TE should pursue this and thanked TE for all her efforts so far in

sourcing suppliers. RC reminded us that Dave Newby who has been maintaining our boilers and doing other jobs for 10 years is retiring at the end of the month. The fitting of the boiler in the flat and the cooker in the kitchen would be his last job for us. TR agreed that we should note our gratitude to Dave for all the work he has done for us and asked RC to write on behalf of the PCC. TR enquired whether we have a replacement for Dave. RC replied that Dave has been working with a colleague, Jim Lawrence, who is familiar with our boilers and who RC has met. TR suggested that it might be worth checking with DAC that he is on their approved list. TE expressed concern about the gap between the cupboard and the cooker and the gap between the sink and the cupboard. RC confirmed that he and PD had looked at this and explained that the sides of the cupboards have heat protection plates and may contain asbestos so it was considered best to leave well alone. He will look into the possibility of sealing the gap between the sink and the cupboard.

**ACTION: RC to write a letter of thanks to Dave Newby on behalf of PCC.**

**RC to investigate sealing the gap between the sink and cupboard.**

- **Staffing.** AS asked whether David Scourfield has a contract. TR reminded us that there is a 'Memorandum of Understanding' in the way in which he relates to St. Mary's. This is something that was changed a year or two ago while Frances Novello was in post. David is fully employed by the Chaplaincy and has a contract. TR confirmed that DS understands that 25 % of his contract (10 hours) would be related to the overlap in ministry between the Chaplaincy and St. Mary's e.g. supporting the vulnerable people who come into church during the week and on Sunday. PD thought this conflicted with advice given to the Staffing Committee and that there should be a separate contract. He will trawl through the minutes of the Staffing Committee to check the details and take it to the staff meeting at a Monday meeting initially if he is still concerned.

**ACTION: PD to check Staffing Committee minutes and report back any concerns.**

- **Pre-School.** The Pre-School Committee met last week. AS confirmed that the Covid Recovery Grant of £6,500 has been received so the finances are looking healthy. Natalia, the manager, reported that she now has 25 children on the roll including two SEN children who she is expecting to receive extra funding for. One has already been confirmed and the other is awaiting results of tests to show that the criteria are met. There are now 5 paying parents and the rest of the children are funded by county. In answer to the question of whether the new banners had had a significant effect on attracting more children Natalia said that it was largely a result of recommendations by current parents to their friends which was encouraging, but hopefully the banners are also helping. There are 20 children already registered from September with plenty of time to recruit more. Adriana, the apprentice is due to qualify in November. The Early Years Advisor has said we can begin the process of appointing a deputy manager with Adriana in mind before November, but we will obviously need to go through the

recruitment process of advertising and interviewing. Natalia expects to manage until then with Mudy doing more hours and possibly help from a volunteer. The possibility of taking on another apprentice was also discussed. The problem of the disposal of nappies has been solved after contact with the company who deals with the church sanitary bins. AS then pointed attention to the three-year business plan which had been circulated to PCC in May and updated and re-circulated following the Pre-School meeting last week. The sections relating to facilities and finance were discussed at length last week. The Pre-School staff have been concerned that OFSTED would not be happy with the height of the fencing and the visibility in the outdoor play area. Although it would be good to improve this Natalia feels strongly that the provision of separate toilets is the greatest priority now that they are taking two-year old children so this has been moved to year 2 in the plan. The church toilets are far too high which means that the children have to be lifted up and there are also safeguarding issues associated with a shared facility. There are also problems of supervision with having only four members of staff when a member of staff is taking a child to the toilet. Natalia had suggested sharing the cost of this work with PCC to enable this work to be done as soon as possible. During the discussion about facilities the question of when Centre Club might resume also came up. As numbers are restricted to 16 on the day when there is Centre Club this restricts recruitment since most parents ask for five mornings so are likely to look elsewhere if they are only offered four. Cath da Costa (CdaC) suggested that due to the uncertainty about when Centre Club might be able to resume, Natalia should go ahead and recruit the maximum number of children possible. TR responded by supporting the suggestion that Pre-School should have priority on this occasion and go ahead with recruitment assuming they would have the full facility available every day. Whilst acknowledging the contribution that Centre Club has made he recognised that after the long break we may decide to do things differently in the future. TR approved of the idea to share the expense for the toilet facility, but we need to get an idea of how much this work might cost. RC suggested a figure of approx. £10,000. Proper plan will need to be drawn up and it would have to go for building regulations approval so it cannot be done quickly, but there is no reason why we cannot begin this process. AS proposed that the PCC ask Roger as chairman of the Buildings Committee to start the necessary process for installing a separate toilet facility for the children, MG seconded the proposal and all present agreed. RC is happy to take a remit but asked that the PCC authorise expenditure of up to £500 to cover fees which will become due once he has identified someone to draw up the plans. He will source a local architectural technician to do this rather than our church architect to keep the costs as reasonable as possible. AS went on to talk through the finance section of the three-year plan. She began by thanking Roger for his helpful email that he sent after receiving the three-year plan in May. He pointed out the financial risks involved in separating the Pre-School from the PCC and suggested that the Pre-School account could be treated in a similar way to the Development Fund within the PCC accounts. The Pre-School income and expenditure would be shown in a separate column and at the end of the year the sum carried forward to the following year and not regarded as part of the General Fund. Frances Collins circulated an email following the Pre-School meeting having consulted with her husband who had been church treasurer for a number of years and could explain how the current position came about. He explained that because funding from county represented a considerable sum the Pre-School would have been liable to pay bank charges so it was decided that this funding would be paid directly into the church

account where charges did not apply due to a Diocese-wide agreement with Lloyds bank. Also the pay roll is run from the PCC account. This means that each month the PCC Treasurer must have access to enough money from Pre School to pay the staff. This is easy if the Pre School money is a restricted account of the PCC because the PCC Treasurer can move it around but involves more people if Pre School has a completely separate bank account. At one time there were a number of very small separate accounts for Sunday School, Kitchen, Music etc, but because the amounts were so small they were closed and incorporated into the church accounts. Natalia still holds a separate account for petty cash and miscellaneous expenses. Only the fees paid by parents are paid into this account. TR asked for clarification about the account held by Natalia and MG confirmed that this money is included in the Pre-School accounts. RC was concerned about the Pre-School funds being referred to as restricted money because as such it could certainly not be moved. He is in favour of having the money being accounted in the Pre-School column but to declare it restricted imposes too many constraints. He would prefer that it becomes 'designated'. TR would be happy with this terminology - his main concern being that Pre-School money is not used for general church repairs. When MG took over the Pre-School accounts she saw that this had been happening in the past. TR would like Pre-School to be more visible within the accounts and RC agreed that it was all about transparency. RC felt the Pre-School Committee should be thanked for preparing the three-year plan which is a useful way forward, but it raises some questions about the potential of the Pre-School and what the assumptions are about how it will operate in the future. He wondered about implications if they were to operate in the afternoons. AS confirmed that afternoon opening had been discussed at length many times during the past few years, but so far had not been feasible for a number of reasons. TR felt it might be worth mentioning in an appendix as a future aspiration, but perhaps this was not the right time to pursue it. AS concluded by saying that it was Frances Collins last meeting as she will be moving away from Watford so we are looking for someone, not necessarily a PCC member, who could take her place on the committee to maintain the links with St. Mary's. TR thanked the Pre-School committee for their work and wished to convey thanks to Frances from the PCC for all she has done to support the work of the Pre-School during her years on the committee.

**ACTION: RC to begin the process of plans for the children's toilets**

**AS to add an appendix to the Pre-School plan mentioning future aspirations.**

- **Missions.** The Missions Group has not met so there is nothing to report. A meeting will be arranged in September.

8. **MAP Update.** TR began by thanking RC for his creative interpretation of the May minutes using 'Parish Profile and Partnership' as headings, which seemed to follow on well from 'Welcome, Worship and Witness' in our previous MAP and helps us to focus on the main areas of activity. TR confirmed that Bishop Michael is happy to come to spend a Saturday morning with the PCC on a date to be fixed in Sept. / Oct. He hopes this will help us to move forward in the right direction. There is much we need to be working on in the coming years such as the children's work when Cath is ordained and moves on. The MAP will set the direction of travel. He urged PCC members to join the next three Connect Together on the first Wednesdays in July, September and October.

He anticipates looking at 'Parish' in July, 'Profile' in September and Partnership in October although it might depend on where Bishop Michael fits in with this. We will invite other members of the congregation to join us for this occasion. If we are to do the 'Asset Based Church Development' (ABCD) we need to be very clear of our purpose as St. Mary's in the centre of Watford. Over the next few weeks there is also important work to be doing with re-opening and moving forward out of lockdown. All these things take time and energy and there are other matters to consider so we need to manage the MAP around all these other things. He feels we are making progress. RC brought up the question about the establishment of a working group which was a matter arising from the last discussion about the MAP. TR responded by saying that he felt it was not the priority at the moment and that the working group will probably come out of who is present and what is said in the Connect Together. He said that there are a lot matters taking our attention. There is a direction of travel we are following with this. RC also asked about the procedure for recording what is said at the Connect Groups. TR felt we can ask people to take notes such as CW's, Josh and Cath which can be collated and circulated with the PCC minutes. He is also in the habit of note taking at these events.

- 9. Vicar's Report.** TR is mindful that we are trying to navigate our way out of the pandemic not knowing how long the restrictions will last. We are awaiting further guidance on singing in church, social distancing etc. Much will depend on the announcement to be made on 19 July. Assuming that there will be a lifting of restrictions eventually, we need to get back to being in church together. We need to take measured steps forward, but also be in a position to take a step back if necessary. As the midweek study series on St. John's Gospel has been concluded, from this Wednesday the mid-week Holy Communion will return to something like a normal service. It will be live-streamed rather than pre-recorded. TR is also mindful of the need to address the evening service. He is aware of where we were before lockdown i.e. a small group largely made up of vulnerable people. We need to continue to serve this group, but also to develop a service that is relevant and attractive to our younger generation. Having spoken to Josh about this they have agreed that it is not sustainable to do this every week so have decided to use the break as an opportunity to start as we mean to go on, probably using the first Sunday evening of the month. The morning service will continue much as it is at the moment with hopefully congregational singing in due course. The aim will be to move towards having more people in church and fewer on Zoom, leading eventually to having people in church and the service live-streamed rather than on Zoom. Between now and Christmas we will probably continue to have HC as part of our morning worship each week. If we have HC on every Sunday there isn't the same emphasis of the first Sunday morning being HC. On the first Sunday of the month there will be a said communion from 9.00 - 9.30, followed by 'Worship For All' at 10.30 and the evening service at 5.30. This pattern will be reviewed perhaps at our November PCC meeting. TR feels that this will be manageable. AS felt that the evening service starting at 5.30 may also serve people who have been working in the town who have been unable to attend a morning service. TR also thought we might,

when allowed, serve refreshments from 5.00. TR reminded us that David Scourfield is starting as Lead Chaplain in July and Phil and Ash will be ordained this Saturday and asked us to keep them all in our prayers.

#### **10. Health and Safety Issues / Safeguarding.**

- TR reported that we have identified on Sunday mornings one or two people who present themselves as vulnerable and occasionally have caused concern to others. We have noted during staff meetings the need to report these incidents which have to be passed on to Claire Edwards our Safeguarding Officer.  
**ACTION: AS to check with TE that she has forwarded her incident report.**
- PD added that Liz Allan had discussed socket protector covers for the mains sockets on the pillars in church and had given her the go ahead to buy them. On further research he has discovered that they are in fact a hazard and should be removed so they have been. He also mentioned that there is a damaged socket in church which is now taped up.  
**ACTION: PD to follow up damaged socket.**
- TR asked for a speaker in the choir stall area. TR also enquired whether the moveable monitor is working. PD promised to check.  
**ACTION: PD to follow up both requests**

**11. Any Other Business.** PD mentioned that we need to review our PCC policies and suggested that they could be put in the PCC folder so that they are accessible to all PCC members in future. In response to a suggestion by RC, TR said he would arrange for Pam to create a timetable for reviewing all policies. TR will also ask Jacky or Pam to send an email to all PCC members two weeks before each PCC meeting asking for any additional things to be added to the agenda or matters arising from the minutes.  
**ACTION: TR to follow-up with Jacky and Pam.**

**12. Closing Prayer.** The meeting ended at 9.45 by saying the Grace together.