

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2020 via Zoom

Present:

Revd Tony Rindl – Chair (TR)

Revd Josh Brocklesby (JB)

Roger Courtney (RC)

Clinton Dan-Jumbo (CD-J)

Peter Dean (PD)

Tilly Elliott (TE)

Margaret Greenstreet (MG)

Cathy Honeyman (CH)

Abie Idris (AI)

Ivor Jones (IJ)

Victor Kitange (VK)

Alison Saunders (AS)

David Scourfield (DS)

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

- 1. Opening Service.** The meeting began with a service of Holy Communion led by the vicar who reflected on the gospel reading from St. John chapter 4 reminding us how much we have learned about being church while unable to meet together in the church building. Whenever and however we meet it is to be hoped that we can come together with glad and sincere hearts in spirit and truth, including as we gather via Zoom for tonight's meeting.

2. **Welcome to new members:** Tony welcomed Clinton Dan-Jumbo, David Scourfield and Tilly Elliott as newly elected members of PCC. Also Abie Idris who is returning for a second term and all other returning members.
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Received from Helen Baldwin (HB), Jane Carter (JCa), Joanna Cooper (JCo), Pat Moore (PM)
4. **Conflict of interest.** TR explained for the benefit of new members that this is a standard item on the agenda and reminded everyone of their responsibility to declare personal interest in any of the matters under discussion during our meetings.

Post APCM business items

5. **Trustee responsibilities.** St. Mary's operates as a charity and as such all PCC members become trustees which brings with it certain responsibilities. There is a useful booklet which explains these which TR will circulate to new council members.

ACTION: TR to circulate to C D-J, TE and DS.

6. **Confidentiality:** All PCC members are expected to exercise great discretion. Whatever is discussed in these meetings does not become public until after they have been agreed at the following meeting so it is important to treat everything we hear with the strictest confidence. There are occasions when particularly sensitive information is recorded separately from the minutes.
7. **Elections:** Tony expressed thanks to PD and AS who were re-elected churchwardens at the APCM, but reminded the council that AS wishes to stand down and to be mindful of the need to find her replacement in time for the next APCM which we assume will be next April.
 - a. **Vice-Chairman:** Alison Saunders
 - b. **Treasurer:** TR thanked PD for chairing the Finance Committee in addition to his role as churchwarden. HB has been our treasurer for three years and has done a fantastic job. HB also wishes to step down at the next APCM in 2021 and it is important to honour her commitment to her term of three years. She will complete and present the accounts for 2020 in preparation for the APCM, but we must not take advantage of her good will beyond that. PD added that ideally we should be looking for someone to pick up the bookkeeping from January as our accounts run from Jan. – Dec. TR said that there is helpful software available. It is important to find someone who can keep on top of the job regularly. DS asked for clarification that the job did not require the skills of a professional accountant and TR confirmed that it only required some bookkeeping ability. DS suggested it would be helpful for HB to put in writing a

list of her tasks and some indication of the time commitment. It was agreed that this would be helpful.

ACTION. AS to contact HB to ask her to do this.

- c. **Secretary:** Jacky Faria acts as PCC secretary and deals with all correspondence from the diocese etc.
- d. **Minutes Secretary:** At present the minutes are taken by PCC members who volunteer on a rota basis. It would be preferable to find someone who could do this regularly. The minutes secretary does not have to be a PCC member so if anyone knows of someone with the appropriate skills who might be willing to take this on please let us know. DS kindly agreed to be on the rota along with AS, MG, PM and RC.

ACTION: AS will produce a rota for the current PCC year.

TR to include an appeal for a minutes sec. in his mailchimp letter.

8. **Election of Standing Committee:** TR explained that this includes the vicar, churchwardens, treasurer and one other, usually RC as chair of the buildings committee. TR asked if everyone was happy to elect these *en bloc* and council gave it's approval *nem con*.
9. **Periods of service of new members:** TR confirmed that all newly elected members would serve until April 2023. For the benefit of new members PD clarified that PCC members are elected for a period of three years and can then be re-elected for a further three years.
10. **Committee structure and membership:** TR listed the committees: Finance; Buildings; Staffing; Pre-School; Missions. He said that currently there is a particular need for additional help on the Finance Committee. He felt It might be helpful for a potential treasurer to sit in on a couple of the meetings to get a wider picture of what is involved. He added that as well as the bookkeeping we would be looking for the treasurer to be an active member of the Finance Committee and to have an overall view on decisions that the committee has to make. The Buildings Committee is chaired by RC. TR thought we may want to re-visit the Staffing Committee which has not always existed. He thought that maybe the Standing Committee could take responsibility for matters currently dealt with by this committee. TR also pointed out that we are able to co-opt people who are not PCC members on to any of these committees so he would be happy to hear from anyone who is aware of someone with appropriate skills or interest in any of these areas. DS said he would be happy to join PD on Finance, which was gratefully accepted. PD mentioned that Richard Watson and Charlie Luckhurst are also involved in the Finance Committee, but it would be helpful to have PCC members strengthening

it. TR invited other new members to prayerfully consider future involvement in any of the committees.

11. Dates of PCC meetings 2020-2021 TR confirmed the following dates for future meetings: 16 Nov. 18 Jan. 22 Feb. 22 March, 19 April. The meeting on 19 April may not be necessary depending on how far forward we are with preparations for APCM.

12. APCM

- a. **Receive minutes.** The minutes of the APCM had been circulated prior to the meeting. TR explained that the role of the PCC tonight was simply to receive these minutes as they are officially approved at the next APCM. The council members indicated that they were happy to receive them.
- b. **Matters arising** – TR pointed our attention to item 10 in the APCM minutes, the Financial Report, specifically the concern that Marcus Jones had expressed concerning the steps taken for making new appointments. Marcus had asked whether the PCC had taken due care or had been properly informed about the financial implications of these decisions. He also enquired whether there are some things we can put in place to improve the process, to ensure we have a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of our financial position. TR considered that this applied to all PCC decisions involving significant expenditure, although with staffing there are specific risks. PD responded by agreeing that we should always look for ways to tighten procedures, but at the same time we need to be careful that we do not create procedures that tie us into not being able to make decisions to move forward and to grow. TR endorsed this wholeheartedly, but at the same time agreed that it was right for Marcus to express his concern as we do need to be better informed about the decisions we make. However, we do have a responsibility mixed with vision and opportunity. DS suggested that as a new member of the Finance Committee he would be happy to work with PD to see if he can provide a fresh eye to the process. TR thanked DS and said that he felt PD has made considerable progress with this during the past few years. As a trustee of several charities TR had experience of the presentation of a number of accounts and considered that we could make the presentations simpler and clearer so he welcomed DS's offer. TE felt as a new member to PCC she had not understood the issues that had been raised at the APCM and that in order to be able to do things better in the future it would be important to have some understanding of what had happened in the past. VK felt the question was more about the need to be able to see the future impact of present decisions. He didn't find the reports from the Finance Committee very user friendly and would like to see future projections more clearly in the accounts. In recalling Marcus's comments RC said it was not so much about the presentation of the accounts as the making of

financial decisions – more a case of principle than process. The principle is that significant items of expenditure should only be incurred when the PCC knows how much it will cost and where the money is coming from, which was not the case in the situation cited by Marcus. He urged the Finance Committee to look at this so that once the principle is established it can be followed vigilantly. TR agreed and although he didn't feel the PCC had been reckless or careless in making decisions he acknowledged that there are ways we can improve the process. IJ said that he felt appointments had been made in the past without the PCC having had a proper discussion about the financial implications and would welcome a review where lessons can be learned. TR agreed, but re-echoed PD's comment that we do not want to tie ourselves down to the extent that we cannot make important appointments and move forward. TR wanted to put on record that each appointment that has been made is absolutely necessary. Each member of staff is working extremely hard and doing exceptionally well and if they were not present we would have serious operational problems in the way we are functioning as a church. If we are looking forward to the future we need to be thinking about how we can do all the things we want to do because unless we make these appointments we will find ourselves in difficulties. DS saw the responsibility of the PCC is to minimise risk and suggested that it would be useful to give this matter further thought and to come back with ideas in Jan. / Feb. in good time for the APCM. He will be happy to work with PD over this.

ACTION: PD and DS to review with Finance Committee and report back to PCC in Jan/Feb.

Regular business items:

13. Approval of PCC Minutes 21 Sept. 2020. Approved by AS. Seconded by VK. All who had been present agreed that they were a correct record.

14. DBS Checks: TR explained that as part of our safeguarding policy and procedures all PCC members must be DBS checked so anyone who does not have one already will be contacted by the office to get the process underway. TR requested all PCC members to remind themselves of our safeguarding policy and procedures which are on our website.

ACTION: TR to ask church office to circulate necessary forms to new PCC members.

15. Matters arising:

- a. Brightwell Road. As indicated by PD at the end of his Finance report there is nothing further to report.
- b. Cleaning Contract: RC asked if there had been any progress towards purchasing a fogging machine and PD confirmed that a machine has been purchased which can be used in the pre-school, church and church centre.

16. Correspondence: None

17. Committee reports:

- a. **Finance.** PD had circulated his report so had nothing much to add. He invited questions. Income was holding up quite well although below budget. Expenditure was down even more, but he warned that it was beginning to pick up and returning to a more normal level now that we are using the church, the pre-school is open and staff are returning from furlough. Our overall income has gone down in the last few months so it is something we need to keep an eye on. We are three quarters of the way through the year with our income at 73% compared to budget and expenditure at 59%. TR asked if PD anticipated a lot of extra expenditure from now on. In reply PD mentioned the cleaning contract, but otherwise not too much although the overall situation needs monitoring. DS had looked at the two streams of congregational giving, from the plate and regular donations. He forecast that the increase in regular giving will be offset by a loss of plate collections resulting in a reduction of £11,000 in overall giving by the end of the year. PD explained that a lot of the increase in payments coming direct from the bank have been as a result of encouraging people to give through the bank rather than putting cash in the plate. There are also a lot of people who give using the weekly / monthly envelopes which we provide and he anticipates that when these people are back in church some of these envelopes will also come in. IJ asked if the anticipated deficit for the year of £6,900 is still correct. PD confirmed that it is. RC recalled some difficult discussions at the beginning of the year concerning the budget and wondered if PD would be able to produce a budget in time for the November meeting as it would be preferable to look at it before the beginning of the new year. PD said that he would do his best to have one ready. RC offered help if required.

ACTION PD to prepare draft budget for November meeting

- b. **Buildings.** RC had very little to report. He is waiting for some invoices to come in for work completed on the Church Centre roof. Designs are coming in for the engraving on the sliding door and he is hoping to view these with others later this week. RC was made aware recently that the Government scheme for the refund of VAT which we benefit from considerably is only supposed to run until the end of this financial year. Although it could be renewed, as has been the case in the past, with public sector finance under strain due to current circumstances, this is not something we should rely on. He felt it would be wise to try to press ahead with works that would come under the present scheme. He has already consulted with our architect about work needed in the ringing chamber following the quinquennial inspection.

Another major category would be work on the interior of the Church Centre. We have already received money from a local charity for this and there may be other sources of money available. Now that we have a waterproof roof we could consider replacing the ceiling and lighting downstairs and also replacing the flooring which is breaking up in places. He also commented that it would be advantageous if this could be done during the school holiday periods so that pre-school is not disrupted. RC would welcome views from PCC before making further progress. TE agreed that this would be very sensible to take advantage of the VAT refund while we can. RC will keep PCC informed but will take this forward to see what can be done. TR added that with the additional care and attention that needs to be taken into account when opening the church, we build into any programme of future works the necessary procedures that will be required. CH asked whether we have money set aside for this work. RC replied that we have had one grant already and also the possibility of money from another charity. PD asked if it would be possible to have updated estimates before the next meeting. In light of our previous discussion, if we are to go ahead we will need to know how much the work will cost and where the money is coming from. RC said he would do his best to get these.

ACTION RC to continue to pursue all possibilities for carrying forward work to the Church Centre and to obtain updated estimates.

- c. **Staffing Committee.** Nothing to report.

- d. **Pre-School.** MG has met with Natalia to go through the accounts and can report that they are in good order. AS has met with Natalia and agreed to arrange a meeting after half term. There are some new children ready to join in January and the staff are coping well although numbers of children are lower than usual.

- e. **Missions.** This group has not met. TR reminded us that we must not lose sight of our responsibility towards our mission partners and hoped there may be a possibility of arranging another Missions Day sometime in the new year.

18. Mission Action Plan. TR said he didn't want to say much about this today. He reminded us of Josh's presentation which he had made earlier in the year, and a particular slide, which was shown again at the most recent Connect Together. This outlined the proposed time-scale, but it was based on where we were at the beginning of the year before the pandemic struck. The slide showed what we should be aiming to do in years 1, 2 and 3. It also reminded us that the first thing we should all be doing in the next few months is to pray. TR encouraged us to use the opportunity during the next

few months when we are limited in what we can do to pray through and refresh the vision that God wants for us as a church, which he feels is something very special. He urged us to lead by example, to actively listen to what God is saying to us, to pray for the leadership team and the PCC that we will all hear God's voice leading us in the direction He wants us to travel.

19. Vicar's Report. TR reported on Josh's ordination saying what a wonderful occasion it had been – unlike any other ordination he had attended, but particularly special in its simplicity. He felt it also gave us the push we needed for coming back to public worship in church in the coming weeks. He confirmed that the doors will be open for a morning service from 1st Nov. We have been taking things slowly and it is important that everyone feels included and safe. He thanked Josh for all his technological skills and also Liz, Jackie and the CW's for managing the opening of the church, as well as the other volunteers who have been supervising in church on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He expected that members of PCC will be called upon to play their part and we will need a limited number of stewards for Sunday services. As numbers will be limited it will be necessary for some to continue to join in via Zoom to allow those who do not have this facility to attend. Our priority is to get through the next few months as best we can. DS asked if there is any operational plan for limiting numbers. TR said that numbers will be limited to 40, but he did not anticipate large numbers to begin with, but eventually we will be using Eventbrite thanks to Pam Rastall's expertise. RC suggested that as there may be a certain number of people unable to attend via Zoom attending regularly we may have to limit the number who can book in via Eventbrite. TE asked whether we will need people to pick up those who need transport. AS confirmed that plans were underway for MG, DS and Helen Hunter to meet to discuss the procedures necessary, including a risk assessment, for using the minibus. PD confirmed that the minibus is ready to go having had its annual service etc. TR thought that named nurses should phone those we haven't seen on Zoom to ask if they need any help with getting to church if they want to come.

20 Health and Safety Issues / Safeguarding. TR had nothing to add to his verbal response at the APCM to the child abuse case that has been in the news recently. He has checked that everything on our website is up-to-date and thanked Josh for doing all the necessary to ensure it is there. He is greatly indebted to Claire Edwards who has extensive experience in dealing with these issues in her role as a deputy head teacher. It is a statutory item on our agenda each month in line with our safeguarding policy. DS said he had looked at the link on the website and felt very happy with it and also TR's wording on the mailchimp. He wondered whether there should be a response to the national report on the website, but TR felt it was too early for that and was waiting further guidance. He is hesitant to do more than he has done already at this stage. He felt it would be dangerous to make an ill-considered response.

21 Any Other Business.

- RC asked as a follow up to the APCM whether there is access to the PCC minutes on the website? TR confirmed that the Sept. meeting minutes will be uploaded and October will be once approved at the November meeting. July and August will also be put on the website once they have been checked for any confidential information.
- CH queried if she could have tel. nos. of the people she is named nurse for. She offered to write a letter to hand in to Manor House. TR emphasized the need to move slowly and perhaps we should wait a couple of weeks until we have a good routine before inviting our friends from Manor House, much as we want them to come back for services as they are much valued members of our church family.
- VK wondered whether we should produce an introduction pack for new PCC members. TR asked if he was volunteering to write one. He agreed that it was an excellent idea and asked VK to send an email to Jacky to tell her what is required.

22 **Closing Prayer.** The meeting closed at 9.35 by saying The Grace.

Date of next meeting: Monday 16 November.

SUGGESTED ROTA FOR RECORDING PCC MINUTES Nov. 2020 – April 2021

If these dates do not suit please arrange a swap and let me know.

November 16	Pat Moore
January 18	David Scourfield
February 22	Margaret Greenstreet
March 22	Alison Saunders
April 19	Peter Dean
April 25 (APCM)	Roger Courtney

Monthly summary for SMN Roger – are you still happy to do this?

AS