

# Minutes of the Meeting of St. James P.C.C.

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## The meeting was held on Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions

**Present:** Rob Powell, Johan Allen, Nick Burt, Liz Gibbons, Marcia Gordon, Ailie Neill, Alan Burrows, Lisa Burrows, Jacqueline Gray, John Talbot, Glynis Wilkinson, Sandra Lucas, David Kafuko, Marlon Ganesh, John Farebrother.

**1. Welcome:** Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened the meeting with a prayer.

**2. Apologies:** Peter Neill, Frances Christian, Stepheney Sulaiman, Millie Miller, Kat Striesow.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were approved unanimously.

**4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

**Item 4.4)** Rob reported that the contactless giving unit is now in operation on Sundays and in some of the midweek activities.

**Item 4.11)** Rob reported that Rev Belemo Alagoa was licensed as new Associate Vicar with special responsibility for St Paul's in a special service at St Paul's at 4pm on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

**Item 6)** Nick gave a brief update on the Building for the Kingdom project. We are still waiting for the final draft of the Feasibility Study which we hope to be able to present to PCC at a special meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October. We have commissioned Heritage Unlimited to produce a Statement of Significance which is a requirement for the project. The cost came within the current agreed budget for this year.

**5. Finance Report:**

**a) Management Accounts:**

Alan presented the management accounts as at the end of August 2021. Total Income was £527 under budget and Total Expenditure was £15,285 under budget giving a variance of £14,762. The PCC was once again encouraged and grateful for the sustained and generous giving of the church family throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Rob thanked Alan for his continued hard work with the finances.

**b) New Ways of Giving:**

Rob and Alan reported that several new ways of giving have been introduced at St James, namely Contactless and Online. Both seem to be bedding in well. Rob will be writing to PCC members soon to invite them to join the Parish Giving Scheme as we do a soft launch in advance of the full launch in January 2022. Alan answered several questions about Gift Aid donations.

Finally, Rob gave an overview of next steps including receiving and reviewing the first draft of the Feasibility Study; integrate and challenge where necessary the cost estimates for the proposed build being drawn up by JBKS; review and consider the formal feedback from the DAC when it is received; complete the first draft of the Business Case; and prepare and present the Feasibility Study and Business Case to PCC at a dedicated meeting in October before updating and consulting the wider church family.

Rob reported that the PCC was being asked to decide on its pledge to the diocesan Parish Support Fund (PSF) for 2022. The Indicative Cost of Ministry for St James in 2022 will be £81,900 which represents an increase of 1.9% on 2021. Rob reminded members that our principle has been to at least cover our costs each year.

Following some discussion, the proposal was made that we pledge £81,900 for 2022 – Proposed by Johan Allen and seconded by John Talbot. The proposal was approved unanimously.

**6. Roadmap to Freedom Review**

Rob informed members that most of our midweek activities would be resuming operation in the next couple of weeks. Each group or activity has carried out its own risk assessment with different restrictions according

to activity or group specifics. He asked PCC members to review current restrictions at Sunday services and presented the latest government Covid-19 data plus some statistics on numbers attending Sunday services (in person and on livestream) since the beginning of July.

Members shared a variety of views and suggestions, including:

- Continue with mandatory face coverings.
- Bring all pews back into use but keep a zone where alternate pews are fenced off (as at present) for those wishing to socially distance.
- Introduce a colour-code system (Red, Amber, Green).
- Refreshments to be resumed.
- Refreshments to await lifting of face mask restriction.
- Carry out a church-wide survey to gauge views.
- Carry out a smaller survey of those currently attending in person to gauge whether bringing most pews back into use would trouble them.

It was suggested that there are various reasons why the majority of members are still joining on the livestream rather than coming in person – some don't yet feel safe, some don't wish to worship with restrictions, some have developed a different way of doing church and may not wish to return, some are waiting for creche to resume.

Rob will reflect on all the comments and communicate his decisions to the church family.

## **Pause for Prayer**

### **7. Racism in the Church of England:**

Rob reminded members that we have had a couple of brief discussions on this important issue at the last two meetings. Several things are happening in response, including the new sermon & small group series on the Book of Acts entitled: Beyond Diversity – Global Gospel, Global Church, and a plan to celebrate Black History Month in the final service of October.

He made the proposal to establish a small working group to draw up a strategy to take things forward at St James. This was approved by PCC members and Rob will approach various people to form the group, which will then report back to PCC.

### **8. Staffing:**

Rob reported that Alan Burrows is doing a great job as Interim Church Manager. The permanent post has been advertised in St James, the Furzedown Churches, The Bridge, and Global Connections website. The closing date is 1<sup>st</sup> October with interviews on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

### **9. Future of Friendship Circle:**

Rob told members that John Farebrother had given notice that he would be stepping down from leading Friendship Circle after 20 years' service. It seems like an opportune time to conduct a review of the work with over 55s while Friendship Circle remains closed due to Covid-19. PCC members approved the idea of conducting a survey of over 55s to ascertain views and opinions and Rob will work with John on this. It was also suggested that consulting with the other Furzedown Churches would be good, to see if this is an area of ministry where we could collaborate.

### **10. Buildings & Fabric:**

Alan updated members on various building/fabric works either completed or in the pipeline, including hanging a new door to the Centre toilets; varnishing the outside Centre doors; fitting a crash bar to the fire door near the organ; hanging a fire door to the kitchen entrance in the hall; installing a metal fire-resistant shutter to the kitchen hatch in the Centre. He also reported that we had failed our 5-yearly electrical safety inspection for the church building and remedial works were due to be carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> September after which a certificate will be issued. Plans are being made to put on some fire safety training for key church volunteers and staff.

**11. Volunteers:**

Rob told members that a number of areas of church life and ministry are struggling for volunteers as we resume normal activity. Currently there are gaps particularly on Transport Rota and Welcome Team.

**12. Safeguarding:**

There had been no safeguarding incidents to report since the last meeting. The PCC approved the reappointment of Judy Douglas and Stephanie Sulaiman as Parish Safeguarding Officers for St James.

**13. A.O.B. - none****Future Dates**

18<sup>th</sup> October – PCC (Building for the Kingdom)

13<sup>th</sup> December - PCC

The meeting concluded at 9.55pm with The Grace.