

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

## Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 on Zoom

**Present:** Rev Rob Powell (Chair), Nick Burt, John Farebrother, Liz Gibbons, Marcia Gordon, Millie Miller, Stephanie Sulaiman, Glynis Wilkinson, David Kafuko, Jacqueline Gray, Sandra Lucas, Ailie Neill, Representing BFK Michael White.

1. **Opening Prayers:** Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with prayer.
2. **Apologies:** Frances Christian, Marlon Ganesh and Alan Burrows
3. **Minutes from the meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** Stephanie Sulaiman proposed an amendment regarding the need for racial diversity within the Anti-Racism working group. The PCC approved the minutes subject to this amendment and they were signed by Rev. Rob Powell.
4. **Matters Arising:**
  - a) The Suggestion Box is now regularly available on the Information Desk on Sundays.
  - b) Rob reported on Furzedown Churches' embryonic plans for services and events for the Queen's Jubilee celebration weekend in June. These will be advertised in the notice sheet in due course.
  - c) Rob reminded people that the APCM would take place after the service on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and flagged up the need to think about how to cater for any children who stay with their parents.

### 5. Building For the Kingdom

Michael White (BFK Chair) thanked the PCC for having him back. Mike updated the PCC on the 2 things he asked of the PCC. 1. To share detailed role descriptions for the 4 positions needing to be filled before any further work on the BFK can begin. 2. Try to simplify cost projections due to the vast data contained within the documents. Mike wanted to give a simpler idea of 'Build cost', and 'value of assets' we can liquidate to meet some of the build costs, and some of the funding options we can look at.

Mike opened up to questions and the following issues were raised:

- Do the people filling the roles need to be church members or can they be from outside the church? Mike responded by saying that so far everyone on the BFK working group has been a member of our church family, but the important thing is that they are committed to the project and have the skills necessary to help the project progress.
- Are the roles voluntary or paid? Mike responded that all roles are voluntary, but will receive reimbursement of agreed expenses.

Mike continued to share with the PCC the urgency to reach a decision before any works can begin. Although there are roles to be filled, and funding to get in place, there are other conversations needed with the church family and with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). We need the PCC, the church family and the DAC to approve the project before we can move forward. He asked whether the PCC members feel comfortable to give that approval yet or is there anything else to consider?

The comment was made that those absent may need to give their approval too. In response Mike said he would draft a letter explaining that all PCC members who were present supported the BFK to move forward, and giving those not present an opportunity to express any concerns by the time of the next meeting in May 2022.

The PCC agreed to this proposal.

Mike said the other thing to keep on the radar is that if we get to a point where the church family says we don't have any objections to this going onto the next stage, and the 4 main roles are filled, and we have approval from the DAC – we still have a significant challenge financially of being able to finance the next stage. So there are still obstacles we need to find our way through before any work can begin.

Nick shared some headline costings, as follows: The stage we have just finished, Stage 1 was a fixed lump sum. Stage 2 will take us to develop the design and allow us to approach Wandsworth Borough Council (WBC) – not with planning permission, but what is called pre-application, giving WBC the opportunity to sound out any concerns they have. This stage is estimated to be around £140k. Stage 3, which would be detailed further, would allow us to apply to WBC for planning permission, and to the DAC for their formal permission. This stage is estimated to cost around £165k inc vat, extra professionals etc. So, in summary, Stages 2 and 3 will cost a total of £305k approximately, which shows the seriousness of the next steps we need to take. This is why we need to be as transparent as possible. As we move further into the project we need to be certain this is the direction of travel we are agreed to go on.

A question was asked whether VAT on the fees is reclaimable? Mike said it will depend on whether any building work is considered a new construction or adaptation of existing construction. If we were grade listed then the work would be VAT free – but we are not! There is a difference between how we treat repair, refurbishment and remodelling as opposed to a new build. When it comes to spending these large sums of money, we will consult a VAT specialist to make absolutely sure.

The question was asked that, as we have a general fund budget of around £250k a year, and as Stage 2 will cost £140k and Stage 3 a further £165k; do we have an idea of the timescale in which we are likely to burn through that money? Nick said it's in our control as each stage will take approximately 6 – 9 months for architects and their professionals. Given where we are now, the most we can do this financial year is Stage 2. and Stage 3 next financial year.

Mike thanked the PCC for their time. He asked them to continue to pray over the project. He left the meeting.

## **6. Finance Report.**

In Alan Burrows' absence, Rob presented the PCC with the management accounts for January 2022. This should have been to February but Rob explained Alan had experienced computer issues and apologised. Donations on the budget were down approximately £2,500. Expenditure was up due to ministry expenses, £3,000. Only being for one month of 2022 it did not give an indication of where we were in relation to the budget. The PCC accepted the management accounts on the basis of being for 1 month.

Rob presented the PCC with the annual financial report for 2021 explaining to the PCC that they have been independently examined by Leroy Reid & Co. who found no issues with the accounts. They will be presented at the APCM on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022. Rob highlighted the income for 2021 was £215k and expenditure was £221k giving a deficit of £5,927 which is lower than the expect deficit budgeted. Rob directed the PCC to pages 7 & 8 'balance sheet' listing all assets and breakdown of funds. Pages 9-11 'notes on the financial statements' Approval of the accounts was proposed by Nick Burt and seconded by John Farebrother. The PCC approved with no objections or abstentions.

## **7. Welcome Back Sunday**

There have been discussions within the Church Leaders group about the number of people who have returned to church at least once as opposed to those who have not returned at all since lockdown restrictions were put in place, and since lifted. The number of people returning is slowly increasing week on week. The number of people not returning is decreasing. There are 15 individuals or families who have been identified as not yet having returned at all. The plan is to make Easter Sunday an event to welcome back as many of the church family as possible. Refreshments will be served at the start of service as with Messy Sunday. After the service we would like to present everyone with a goody bag filled with chocolate eggs, booklets about Eater, a bookmark, seeds and compost and a balloon. A special invitation will be sent to those who have not yet been back to church in person. We also thought Easter is not the time to cease using the Livestream. However, a discussion will be had to determine the future of livestreamed services at St James.

### **Pause for Prayer**

## **8. Southwark Antiracism Charter**

Jacqueline led the PCC to discuss the Southwark Diocese Anti-racism Charter and how St James Church fits into those discussions. The charter states that 'Being anti racist is not the same as not being racist. It is not enough as a Diocese to be antiracist, instead we must act to counter, and disrupt racial injustices. It is not easy, but we should not shy away from the responsibility to protect our fellow man. We are all one in Christ.'

To move forward we must have robust conversations. Sadly, there is so much work to be done, even after all these years. We want to have a statement of intent as St James Church that we are a church that actively opposes racism and welcomes ALL. In order to arrive at that we have to have some sort of approval of the charter. Do we agree this document is speaking truth which means we have to have dialogue about the issues that the document raises and what the wider church of England is saying because we, St James, form a part of that? As Christians we cannot sit on the fence when we see evil. It is through our baptismal covenant that we are all one in Christ! Recognising and challenging attacks on diversity within our parish and diocese.

The following comments were made:

- We have to ask ourselves and be brave to ask each other “what is racist at St James?” then listen to the answer. How do we start? What is St James doing collectively to recognise/challenge racism? Depending on the answer how do we tackle these responses?
- What does the charter say? How many people of colour have filled roles of curate, vicar etc. at St James? Institutional racism – do you think the church reflects the Diocese ambitions to move to become more diverse?
- We need a balance of diversity within the working group to avoid division.
- It is important that we see any discussion on race as not being divisive. It is a difficult discussion to talk about racism. We need to do more as a Church to discuss the issues more.
- Justin Welby has said the Church of England is institutionally racist, it’s about the structure with the organisation and its impact. I think we need to look at behaviour and address issues which arise. The working group needs to be more diverse, more reflective. It's not them & us! Racism is experienced by people in ethnic groups but needs to be ALL groups who work together to address, challenge and adopt necessary changes needed for St James, the Diocese and the Church of England to move forward.
- We need to start reading more on both sides to learn more. It is an emotive topic, be careful, but it needs to happen.

In light of the discussion Rob said we are probably not ready, at this point, to adopt the charter yet. More discussion is needed.

### **9. Response to the Situation in Ukraine**

Rob asked the PCC to signpost him to any charities, organisations accepting Ukrainian Refugees currently fleeing the war in Ukraine.

### **10. Mission Action Plan 2020**

This needs to be reviewed. The PCC approved the proposal that we hold a PCC+ Away Day in the Autumn to begin this work.

### **12. Holy Week & Easter**

A list of dates are in the notice sheet.

### **13. Safeguarding**

No reported incidents since last meeting.

Meeting closed at 10pm with a sharing of the Grace

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022