

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

Monday 17th July 2023

Present: Rev Rob Powell (Chair), Ailie Neill, Peter Neill, Adam Seymour-Davies, John Farebrother, Nick Burt, Mary Scarlett, Heather Howard, Liz Gibbons, Sandra Lucas, Marlon Ganesh, Sarah Veal, Alan Burrows.

1. Opening Prayers

Rob welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies: Rev Mark Pybus, Yvonne Mason, Rocky Deans, David Kafuko, John Talbot, Marcia Gordon, Glynis Wilkinson, Lisa Burrows.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 15th May 2023

The PCC approved the minutes unanimously.

4. Matters Arising

Item 4: Electrical Lighting Project: Alan reported that the notification of proposed works had been displayed for the requisite 28 days and we are now awaiting the issue of the faculty. We will need to negotiate a time for the works to be carried out, ideally during the summer break.

Item 10: POTS: Rob reported that the planned training session had been cancelled due to lack of interest. We may try again in the autumn.

5. Finance Report

a) Management Accounts

Alan presented the accounts for the year so far to the end of June 2023 which show an income of £90,327 against a budget of £89,633. Expenditure in the same period was £106,921 against a budget of £100,941. This resulted in a variance of £-5316 and a real deficit of £-16,594. The main contributor to the higher than expected expenditure was very high utility bills. The PCC spent some time discussing the challenging financial situation and comments included the following:

- Our reserves are being depleted to keep up with expenditure and we are therefore breaching our reserves policy (3 months of running costs).
- Is the budgeted increase in donations for 2023 realistic given the cost of living crisis?
- When you factor in the loss of c.£23,000 p.a. due to members moving away and stopping their giving, donations have done well in the year so far.
- Suggestions for action: Create 'hot desk' facilities for rental; reintroduce the donations bowl for Messy Lunch; put a big collection bottle in church for people to bring in their small change; ask people to bring in used but unwanted goods from home to upsell.
- Communication is key – we must do better at letting people know the financial situation in simple, bold terms, and include those outside the Sunday congregation (e.g. The Well, Little Fishes).
- Alan reported that he has invited Gabby Parikh from the diocese to come in the autumn to speak about giving.

b) Financial Recovery Strategy

Rob presented an updated version of the strategy which included a progress column. He apologised for not having progressed many of the items with which he was tasked. Nick commented that we need to widen out the number of people involved in implementing the strategy.

c) Parish Support Fund 2024

Rob explained what the Parish Support Fund (PSF) is and told the PCC that our pledge for 2024 needed to be decided at this meeting. The Indicative Costs for St James for 2024 are £86,300, representing an increase of £2,800 on 2023. A lively discussion followed in which our challenging financial situation was clearly acknowledged, but in which also the moral case was made for maintaining our historical principle of covering our costs. After much discussion a proposal was made to pledge the indicative costs of £86,300 (Proposer: Peter Neill, Seconder: Adam Seymour-Davies) – 11 voted in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

6. Policies

In Rocky's absence Rob presented a revised version of the Pastoral Care Volunteer Worker JD. Rob reminded the PCC that we had delayed approval of the JD at the previous meeting due to a lack of clarity around the definitions of line management, supervision, and spiritual direction.

Rocky had included something in the revised draft about line management, mentorship, and review meetings. However, PCC members still felt unclear on precise definitions of these terms and it was decided that further work needed to be done to bring clarity. It was also agreed that the same person should not act both as Line Manager and Mentor. John F reported that the diocese is planning to introduce a role very similar to our Pastoral Volunteer, perhaps in the autumn.

Considering all this, it was suggested that we delay approval of the JD until we see what the diocese produces for its new role. Meanwhile, Rob suggested Rocky have a conversation with Mary Scarlett to clarify terminology.

In response to a question from Alan regarding name badges for volunteers, Rob suggested Rocky be consulted, but it seemed right that all pastoral volunteers, including SPAs, have an official name/photo badge to wear when visiting someone outside church, and that it should include church contact details on the back in case of loss.

The PCC paused for prayer at this point.

7. Building for the Kingdom

Rob updated the PCC by summarising a letter from Mike White, with news of the Volunteer Thank You Event which was attended by representatives from JBK Architects and a subsequent meeting which was held with representatives from Southwark Diocese Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), JBK Architects and the BFK team. Both meetings had been positive.

Rob highlighted that the funding of the BFK project will not come directly from St James Church general fund or reserves, but through the sale of assets and other forms of fundraising. Rob asked the PCC to share this information with those who may ask how the project will be funded.

There are still vital volunteer roles to be filled before the project can move to the next stage.

8. Mission Action Plan

An updated copy of MAP was distributed to the PCC members present. Mark Pybus is leading the work on the MAP and will be looking to appoint 'Champions' to gather teams around them to oversee each of the key areas of the Mission Action Plan. It is hoped that by October 2023 Champions for these areas will be identified.

Terms of reference: Rob described the T.O.R used by the BFK and suggested it may be beneficial for each of the working groups, including the two already operating (Pastoral Care and Youth).

9. Pastoral Care Working Group

In Rocky's absence, Heather Howard read a report to the PCC updating them on the progress of the working group since the last PCC meeting.

Pastoral Care Volunteer: Rob and Rocky met with Yvonne Mason, who has been appointed 'Pastoral Care Volunteer.' Yvonne was presented with an ID pass during a Sunday service in July.

A question was raised regarding all pastoral care volunteers and SPA members having an ID pass. It is believed all volunteers in these areas, should have an ID photo pass when visiting outside church premises.

10. Youth Working Group

Adam updated the PCC on the progress of the working group since its inception in March 2023.

Adam presented a draft mission statement for St James Children & Youth Ministry which had been prepared at a meeting of the Working Group plus some other key leaders, including Beth Powell, Claire Powell, Paul Rook and Mark Pybus. It read as follows:

“To develop, deepen and strengthen the children’s and young people’s knowledge and love of God through teaching, acts of service and a sense of belonging and purpose within the church family and community. To fully enable and empower the children and young people to flourish in all areas of church life.”

A motion was presented by Adam to accept the mission statement, seconded by Nick Burt, and unanimously accepted by all present.

Further discussion around the plans, by the working group, to organise a youth movie night on the 29th July 2023, and possibly a back-to-school BBQ in September 2023 (TBC).

Ailie informed the PCC on a fund available from Southwark Diocese in relation to Children and Youth Work (CYP Fund) this is available 3x a year at £300 each application. However, the funds will first have to be underwritten by church funds and replaced upon receipt of the CYP Fund. Rob brought attention to the Youth Evangelism Fund currently held by St James Church. Rob assured the working group their aims meet the criteria for the Youth Evangelism Fund. Ailie said the working group hope to use some of those funds in 2024 to plan a residential for

the youth. A proposal was made by Ailie Neill to apply for CYP Funding and underwrite expenses with funds from the Youth Evangelism Fund, and replenish upon receipt of the CYP funding, seconded by Adam and unanimously approved.

11. Living in Love and Faith

Rob updated the PCC on the Living in Love and Faith process within the Church of England since the General Synod met earlier in 2023 and agreed to introduce prayers for same sex couples who reach a significant point in their relationship, but not to change the doctrine of marriage. Three workstreams had been set up to carry forward work on redrafting the prayers, drawing up pastoral guidance, and giving pastoral reassurance. At the July synod these three streams were combined. The major problematic issues to be resolved include what legal mechanism should be used to authorise the prayers, and what, if any, provision will be made for those who cannot agree to their introduction.

Rob shared that the Bishop of Southwark had met with a group of clergy who were in favour of the prayers but felt the proposal was not going far enough to recognise same sex marriage, and he had also met with clergy who were opposed to the prayers, saying they felt the proposal had gone too far.

Rob shared there are more meetings and discussions ahead, and a decision on the prayers is not likely until the November synod at the earliest.

12. Safeguarding

No reported incidents have been reported since the PCC meeting in May 2023.

Rob mentioned a safeguarding incident was shared by a young person. The incident took place on school grounds and was being dealt with by the school, but several youth leaders from St James and Rocky Deans had been involved in discussions around the incident and the pastoral care of the young person.

13. A.O.B

General Behaviour Policy – to be tabled in September 2023

Meeting closed with the Grace at 10.03pm