

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

## Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Attendance:** Rev. Rob Powell, Liz Gibbons, Alan Burrows, Glynis Wilkinson, Sarah Veal, Yvonne Mason, Rev. Mark Pybus, John Talbot, Mary Scarlett.

- 1. Opening prayers:** Rob welcomed members and opened the meeting in prayer.
- 2. Apologies:** Ailie Neill, Rocky Deans, Nick Burt, Sandra Lucas, John Farebrother, Marcia Gordon, Adam Seymour- Davies, Lisa Burrows, Marlon Ganesh.

- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**  
No amendments. The PCC approved the minutes unanimously.

- 4. Matters arising.**  
Item 13: General behavioural policy still to be drafted, tabled, and ratified.

### **5. Finance Report**

#### a) Management Accounts

Alan Burrows, Treasurer, presented the management accounts up to the end of August 2023, showing a variance of -£6710 and a real deficit of -£21,747. Energy costs from the hall and church are a significant contributor to the deficit. As of October, is expected that utility bills will come down.

There needs to be a slight adjustment as something was charged to children's fund that should have been general fund. However, this will not impact the overall figure.

The comment was made that we are not in deficit due to negligence, we are in this due to circumstances, covid, cost of living and it could be a lot worse. Almost every church is in these circumstances. We should stay positive. Alan said that the diocese commented when our accounts were submitted that our strategy was very positive.

#### b) Finance Recovery Strategy

Rob reported on progress made on the strategy since the last meeting, including the following:

- We have started to include finances onto the weekly prayer list, which is now to be compiled by the pastoral team.
- Finances are being included in the new monthly Praise & Prayer meeting.
- We will discuss whether we should increase our mission tithe when we set the budget in December.
- Gabby Parikh from the Diocese finance department is coming to speak on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to talk about giving in general, including Gift Aid, the Parish Givin Scheme, and Legacies.
- We have agreed new rates to the ballet school and the church group with effect from September.
- We have decided not to move reserve money into a higher interest account, as we have cash flow issues, so it might not be sensible to do this at the moment.
- We are having a discussion on the individual budgets for each area of the MAP.
- We now have a list of 'Friends of St James' and we will write to them in the next few weeks to invite them to make a regular contribution.
- As of next month (October) £1350, per year will be saved as Veolia contract will end and Wandsworth will collect for free. Mark points out we need a 'fireman's' lock to ensure that council can open and nobody else can fill our bins.

## 6. Policies

'Responding to Domestic Abuse Policy'

Rob presented a draft policy produced by Rocky and asked the PCC to look at it and feed any suggestions for changes to Rocky with a view to final approval at the next meeting.

Mary pointed out that we should have signposting to DV services in Church, on noticeboards, in toilets etc. Alan to look at ordering leaflets from Wandsworth.

Sarah suggested adding two lines on:

As a church we recognise that domestic abuse can come in many forms: violence, bullying, verbal, control, sexual, cohesive behaviours, financial control (there may be others).

We should also add that victims of domestic abuse can be anyone - they can be male, female, older, younger, in heterosexual or homosexual relationships and living with an abuser who is not their partner.

Mary commented that we should also add that according to the new act we should include that victims are also children who live in situations of DV.

Rocky to have a conversation with Mary and to kindly redraft the policy to reflect the above and possibly make the language stronger.

Mary, who works in safeguarding for Wandsworth Council, offered to run some training for St James. Conversation to be had with Parish Safeguarding Officers (Rocky & Sarah).

**Pause for prayer.**

## 7. Buildings and Fabric.

### Building for the Kingdom

A DAC delegation came to meet with Building for the Kingdom Working party before the summer and reported back to the full DAC. We are awaiting feedback from that meeting to enable us to plan for the next stages of the project.

### Lighting Project

We have finally received faculty permission to carry out this work. Thankfully, Electrosmith have honoured the original quote. We hope that the work will be carried out in October half term. We will then draw down an interest free loan from Diocese to be paid back over 5 years.

### Gardening Proposal

We have had Dee come to do a few hours work on the church garden and grounds (£20 per hour for 2 hours) and she has proposed that she continue to come and work. Can we afford this? She has also suggested that we buy a shredder for making compost. We could eventually turn this into a community project to make mulch for others, ask for people to supply plants etc.

After much discussion the PCC agreed:

- a) To consider whether we can include hiring Dee to work on the garden regularly in the 2024 Maintenance Budget. This will be included in the budget setting discussion at the December PCC meeting. (£40 per week for 39 weeks would be £1560, but maybe set at £2000 to include materials).
- b) To consider creative ways to fund this extra cost. For example, ask individuals or a small group to sponsor a week? Or run an event such as a 'Green Sunday' to raise funds. Explore cost of hiring a shredder compared to buying one.

## **8. Mission Action Plan (MAP)**

Rob presented a proposal for a different approach to implementation of the MAP, given our limited capacity to work on lots of areas at the same time. It may be more effective in the long run for the PCC to decide one priority area per year and focus energy on implementing that. This can then be reviewed at the end of each year before choosing another priority area for the next year. This will take longer to implement the whole MAP but could be more practical and realistic.

After much discussion the PCC agreed to this principle.

Members then discussed what the first priority area should be for 2024.

One of the many challenges we face is diminishing numbers in church, so let's focus on getting more people in. Evangelism is therefore the obvious place to start. That way we can build numbers to complete the other mission priority areas.

Mark spoke about 'Through Faith Missions' and suggested this organisation could be invited to partner with us in an outreach campaign between Easter and Pentecost 2024.

So, the PCC agreed to make TELL (Evangelism) our MAP priority area for 2024 and Mark (with Keren) was invited to take the lead, assemble a team, and develop ideas.

## **9. PCC + Away Day 2023.**

Rob shared with PCC his thoughts as to whether we would be better postponing our Away Day for the autumn and reschedule for early 2024 in order to focus the day on discussing the implications of LLF, decisions for which will be made at November's General Synod. That would enable us to have some extended time to talk openly and honestly about the way forward.

However, it was commented that we shouldn't miss the opportunity to meet to discuss our MAP priority area for 2024 – TELL (Evangelism) as plans will need to be put in place before the start of 2024.

After discussion the PCC agreed to hold two days: one in November 2023 focusing on evangelism and one in Jan/Feb 2024 for LLF.

Rob to try to book St Albans for 11<sup>th</sup> November and to invite congregation members and PCC.

## **10. Safeguarding update.**

No incidents that we have been made aware of.

### **Future Dates:**

11<sup>th</sup> November (TBC) PCC+ Away Day at St Albans

11<sup>th</sup> December PCC at St James