

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST,
MALDEN Registered Charity No. 1145155

Minutes of the 732nd meeting of the Parochial Church
Council held on Tuesday, 1st September 2020 by Google
Hangout, with members joining from their homes.

Present: The Vicar in the chair, Pauline Armour, Franklin Barrington, Margaret Barrington, Brian Bowers, Jane Bransgrove, Mike Broome, Milly Broome, Marilyn Burkett, Richard Burkett, Steve Clark, Lisa Down, Deborah Harris, Sally Josolyne, Anthony Pullen, Liz Pullen, and Lynn Sanger.

In attendance: Alastair Harris (treasurer), Faith Bowers (clerk).

Sally would again record the proceedings as a back-up for the minutes.

The Vicar opened with prayer.

7299 **1 - Apologies for absence** were received from Louise Hall, Martina Herpak, and Marie McGuire.

7300 **2 - Notice of Essential AOB**

Steve wished to speak about the electoral roll.

7301 **3 - Minutes of the July PCC Meeting**

After correcting the date of the meeting, the minutes were approved and signed, and would be published on the website.

CWs/Amy

7302 **4 - Finance Update**

Alastair presented figures to the end of July. Several donations, mainly from within the congregation and the Silent Auction had added £3000 to income. Expenditure had included costs of reopening the church (£500) and £250 for organ tuning. The deficit on the month was only £200. However, he still anticipated about £2000 deficit each month in the present circumstances. He stressed that he was always open to questions, not only in the meeting. Gift Aid for the second quarter was yet to come, which should be about £4000.

Bibles for school leavers had cost £300, but £200 had been given towards that.

Outlook: Unexpected expenditure had been rather high (£5000), including repairs to the church noticeboard. The deficit on seven months was nearly £10,000, of which £5000 had been unexpected. Forward predicting was difficult, dependent on reopening. He could work to two scenarios - for the church fully open from September, or locked until the end of the year - but the reality would lie somewhere in between.

There had been a slight drop in Free Will Offerings through the bank, which might be due to people's income falling with lockdown. This would be followed up.

There were no immediate questions to Alastair.

Richard then said that the Finance Committee felt in need of more help with the Free Will Offerings and Pauline had agreed to help, as someone regularly at services who could explain to people the benefits of FWO and Gift Aid.

Information about contactless payments was recorded at the time but Alastair sometimes was only notified of the sums, not the occasion or purpose. Sally would check on that. The contactless machine should be made available on all possible occasions, including Heritage Open Days, in the care of someone familiar with the device and record sheets. Anne Beales now had a separate machine for Traidcraft sales.

The Finance Committee felt the need to look to 2021, and so far there was no advice from the Diocese. Alastair and Richard would prepare two budget options to put before the October PCC. They would welcome any advance thoughts or requests. **All**

Alastair said there were only four possible ways forward for 2021: to dig into reserves again as in 2020, to reduce expenditure, to reduce giving to the Diocese, or to increase income. Likely figures for each option would be brought to next PCC to consider. It would not be possible to fix the budget as early as usual.

Tony observed that Trinity House had already made five staff redundant and terminated three short-term contracts, with more cuts to come. Some of these had been major offices, including Communications and Lay Leadership.

Nothing had come from the Diocese since May. Parishes had been asked to dip into reserves to contribute their share.

The Free Will Offering had never been adequate, with the church over-reliant on fund-raising. With fund-raising events largely ruled out at present, and the loss of income from plates at Sunday services and baptisms, there was a marked drop in income. Richard said he would write about the various ways people could still give to the church, with FWO, green envelopes, donations, contactless payments, and Easy Fundraising. Deborah said she would add to the Donations page on website something about prompts for Easy Fundraising. **RB/DH**

7303 **5 - St John's Hall - Scout Headquarters Lease Renewal**

Mike said he had been talking to Louise Dibble about this. The 20-year lease was nearly up. The site belonged to the church but the Scouts had raised money for the building and maintain it, so this was different from the more usual renting of a church hall. Renewal has to go through the Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance. The Diocesan solicitor is expensive, and with a surveyor's report the business could cost £4-5000 in all, which seems dear for a straightforward lease. The Vicar had written to the Archdeacon about this.

The church wanted to support its Scouts, but would like to keep the costs down. The lease had to be renewed by 13th February 2021. The Scouts pay £135 p.a. ground rent. The length of a new lease would be open to discussion. Did the Diocese understand that it was the church's land but the Scouts' hut? Richard said they were free to go to a different

solicitor, but the Diocesan one would still have to approve. The Scouts had already got a solicitor, with consequent expense. The national Scout Association have to be involved.

It might be necessary to charge a higher ground rent to recoup the expenses over five years, or find some alternative approach acceptable to both church and Scouts.

Mike said more information had to be sought, but the PCC needed to know that this was a current concern.

7304 **6 - Recovery Plan**

The church had now been open for three Sunday morning Eucharists at 9.45. From mid-September there would be a second service at 4 p.m. on Sundays and another at noon on Wednesdays. The 9.45 services were being live-streamed. There was organ music on Sundays.

Margaret was keen to restore Children's Ministry, at least once a month. Losing touch with families was a big concern. Attendance on Sunday would still be required for places at church schools, with registers for this available from 20 September.

Take-up for OMN and the weekly sheet had increased during lockdown (149). Of these about 90 had opened the service bookings and weekly mailings. Most of those who had not opened them have children.

The Vicar said there could be no big services for Harvest, Memorial, or Remembrance, and no parades of the uniformed organisations. To accommodate just the families of those whose funerals had taken place in the past few months would require two memorial services, with only 18 pews available. There could be none of the usual big services at Christmas. Marilyn and Barry were considering the possibility of the choir singing carols and using that on the web, perhaps with readings etc. as an online carol service.

The Vicar had been toying with the idea of lighting the tower around Christmas. He now wondered if some kind of feature might be made of the churchyard, with lights on the yews, etc. People often walk through it and it could be made an attraction.

The PCC would like to repeat the presents for needy children so the Vicar would contact the Head of Malden Manor School. About 30 gifts were provided last year.

He was concerned about the pastoral care of older people. He and Pat Lovegrove had looked at the possibility of restoring Tea and Chat but sadly concluded that those concerned were too vulnerable so only phone contact was possible at present. Age Concern had decided a similar group could not resume this year.

Franklin asked about updating the notice board. The Vicar said he was aware of both boards. With Amy back in the office this week, they would be addressing this.

The monthly Sunday Lunch had continued, thanks to Iluska Beacon who had prepared and delivered lunch, plus various extras, to regular lunchers in their homes. Iluska had been away in August but expected to resume in September. Lynn asked about expense. In the past lunchers have made voluntary donations, and some cooks have declined

reimbursement. Pat had told the Vicar not to worry about that aspect. Lynn asked about physical help: Iluska's friend provides that. Pauline said Iluska's kindness was greatly appreciated by those receiving lunches.

Might something be done at Christmas, when the usual party would not be possible?

The Vicar said some older people had been meeting in gardens but were not happy to return to church yet. He had arranged to take communion to them there.

Milly wondered whether older people would get to the Wednesday service. Pauline said some were usually dependent on lifts, which were difficult now. The Vicar said lifts were not forbidden but people would want to think twice about the risk in that. Pauline asked Faith to send MU members a note about the midweek services. The Vicar said no-one should feel they *must* go. He asked whether those who had been to communion felt safe with the present arrangements, and there was general agreement that they did.

The Ministry Team would think about what might be done about All Souls and funeral memorial services. The Vicar hoped to offer three Christmas services, all pre-booked, and no-one booking for more than one to ensure access for most people.

7305 **7 - APCM**

This would be a virtual meeting on 25 October. It was not possible to cast votes in advance because the meeting had to approve changed practice. Candidates could be announced in advance but the results would have to follow later. Three Deanery Synod members were completing terms (Deborah, Anthony and Liz) and four PCC (Sally, Steve, Louise and Martina). The present PCC would serve until December. Candidates need to be found and named in October OMN.

The reports had been prepared earlier, covering April 2019 - April 2020. These were ready for Amy to send out now.

CW/Amy

7306 **8 - Malden Parochial School**

Mike spoke again about the need for governors from St John's. This was interesting, important and rewarding work, with good training which could be beneficial in other contexts. It was important to support the school, especially at this time. Mike or the Vicar would be grateful to receive any offers or suggestions.

All

The Vicar said the return to school was stressful for the staff. He had been sorry to have the improving relations between school and church interrupted by lockdown. He missed going into the school but could only do a monthly virtual assembly. To show support, he had given all the teachers a gift of tea and biscuits (cost £10), which he paid for himself. If anyone cared to contribute, that would be welcome.

All

7307 **9 - St John's Website**

Deborah said the live-streamed services had many viewers. She needed more photos. She would be putting Heritage material on the site, with the Open Days coming soon. Heritage receives many hits, including US viewers.

Sally said they were getting over the initial problems with live streaming. 14 had watched the whole service live last Sunday, with about 80 on replays. Most hits are for Sunday services, news, quizzes, keeping in touch, and heritage. There had been two favourable reviews of services on Google. She hoped the heritage days would prompt reviews. Sally would tell the Vicar and churchwardens how to access these Google reviews. They are public so it is important to respond quickly. **SJ**

The Vicar said the web told people how to book for services, but booking had to be through the Ministry Team. They were finding it quite hard to manage, with 4 bubbles kept free for those without computers. That should become easier when there were more services.

Sally said it might help if the school parents were given a link for the mailing and website.

7308 10 - Safeguarding

Nothing had been raised. A letter from the Diocese last week called for updating, but that had already been done.

7309 11 - Any Other Business

a) *Electoral Roll* Steve had posted the notice about updating the Electoral Roll just before lockdown, and had received two new names. He ought to update it now but how should he communicate? The Vicar said they should agree a piece to put on website and facebook. He would ask Amy to put out a reminder. There remained the problem of communication with people not on the web. **Vicar/SC**

b) *Churchyard* Mike expressed gratitude to all those who had worked in the churchyard the previous Saturday.

There being no further business, Marilyn closed the meeting with prayer at 9.33 p.m.

The next PCC meeting will be on Tuesday, 6 October, 7.45 for 8 p.m.