

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN
Registered Charity No.1145155
Minutes of the 738th meeting of the Parochial Church Council
at 8 p.m. on
Tuesday, 6 April 2021
by Google Hangout, with members attending 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, Lisa Down, Deborah Harris, Sally Josolyne, Anthony Pullen, Liz Pullen, Lynn Sanger.

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

The Vicar opened in prayer.

7377 1 - There were no apologies.

7378 2 - NOTICE OF ESSENTIAL AOB

Alastair had draft end-of-year accounts and February figures, which could be added to item 6.

7379 3 - MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MEETING

The Vicar corrected the spelling of Rivarola. Richard asked for a small change to 7373: 'may have access' instead of 'had been given access'. With these amendments, the minutes were approved, signed and would be published in the usual ways.

CWs/Amy

Matters arising were all covered on the agenda.

7380 4 - SAFEGUARDING

The Vicar said they had been checking the lists. Marie had received some information from the Diocese, but not all she had hoped for. Apart from the Ministry Team only six others had current DBS clearance, with some, including Lisa and Jo Hill, due to expire soon. They have to be renewed after five years. Marie and Vanessa should deal with the renewals. More people ought to be added. The Vicar would add a note about this in his next mailing.

Margaret and Liz both had current DBS clearance elsewhere but should have it for St John's too. Margaret added that the renewals were all done online now, which was easier than dealing with the lengthy forms previously required. The officers needed to confirm that they had checked current proofs of identity and addresses. They should be notified if anyone on their list had been caught offending.

Lynn would send the spreadsheet about this to the Vicar. He would contact Marie and Vanessa. All the checks needed to be completed before any activities recommenced.

As well as children's work, DBS checks were needed for other activities with vulnerable people, like the Bereavement Café, and Tea and Chat. Those leading all such work should have DBS clearance. The Ministry Team should check when theirs needed renewal, and other leaders should also be cleared. **Vicar/LS/MM/VS**

7381 5 - VICAR'S REPORT

a) *Worship* The online Lent Courses had been appreciated, and Lent Compline had been used around the parish. Services in church had resumed on Maundy Thursday, with further Eucharists on Good Friday, Easter morning and Easter afternoon. The booking system for the spaced pews had been reinstated for these. The Wednesday midday Eucharist - 'Jab Church' for over-50s - would resume next week.

Studying Church of England guidance carefully, the Vicar thought a fuller congregation should be possible for the patronal festival on 27 June, followed by a barbecue, making this a family event. There should be some fun activities for the children. There could be some stalls too, but it was about restoring the church family rather than fundraising.

The PCC should be able to meet together in July.

b) *Pastoral* The funeral for Chris Hembrow would be on 23 April. 30 people could attend, but these would be invited by the family. His friends should not be hurt if they were not included.

The much delayed Memorial Service for Helen Rivarola was now scheduled for 26 June.

On 21 April he would take the funeral of someone who had died of covid in a care home. Her family were finding it hard to take in her death, having been unable to see her for the previous few months, an added complication of grief.

Jill Barker was adjusting to the diagnosis of terminal cancer in a sanguine spirit. He had been able to take her communion. Some friends from St John's were doing what they could in support. She did not want to take much of her son's time, as he lived and worked at a considerable distance.

c) *Toddlers' Group* Jo Hill was eager to restart the Toddlers' Group as soon as possible. This would involve a number of mothers and carers with small children. Technically such groups were allowed with up to 15 adults, but the coffee lounge would allow little spacing, and it could compromise other regulations as they would need to use kitchen and toilet too. Margaret added that parents were being told to minimise the number of groups their children joined. The general feeling was that it was wiser to wait until the end of June. Sally thought this ought to be reconsidered at the May PCC, as waiting till the end of June would reduce the opportunities to reconnect with mothers before the summer break. A further complication was that

the usual time for Toddlers, Wednesday afternoon, might be complicated with a Wednesday Eucharist. The Vicar would tell Jo the PCC's wish to wait. **Vicar**

d) *Bereavement Café* Again this could begin now, with a limited number, but he would prefer to wait, not risk having to turn vulnerable people away. Tony wondered if something might begin in small groups and/or online. Milly observed that online did not suit some older people. Michael said not all those struggling with bereavement were older. He had found it strange that he was able to visit Chris and take him communion, but was not at present allowed to visit the widow.

e) *Home Church* Some things had been happening on this front for those no longer able to get to the church, with worship resources distributed to those who could not get them online, and Easter cards sent with the Sunday lunch. The Vicar would welcome someone to help him coordinate these contacts and ensure a pattern of regular communion. Anthony volunteered for this.

7382 6 - CHURCH TREASURER

a) *Draft accounts and treasurer's report for 2020* Alastair presented this 17-page document, necessary to meet Charity Commission and Diocesan requirements. Full discussion would wait until May, by which time the accounts would have been examined. Earlier last year a deficit of £16,000 was predicted, and this had reduced to a deficit of £6000 in December, and had since fallen to £294, a remarkable achievement. This was partly due to the change into accruals accounting, Gift Aid for the last quarter, and the grant (£1700) for covid-related costs (£1200 spent on this in 2020). The Balance Sheet on p.3, is then analysed by funds of the three kinds, unrestricted, restricted and endowment. Three small funds, Library, Vicar and Parish Computer would be better amalgamated.

Donations included three significant appeals, the Angel Project, Harvest and Bibles for parochial school leavers. These needed to pass through the accounts as they involved Gift Aid, but then went straight out: they were part of mission.

There were no immediate questions. Alastair was happy to receive any later, preferably by phone, or else email, as soon as possible. He was seeing the Examiner on Saturday and would be away for a week or two from 12 April.

Marilyn voiced the PCC's thanks to Alastair for all his work.

Richard observed that when one remembered that the profit in 2019 (£5,600) was only possible because of a donation of £10,000, that made the small deficit on 2020 all the more remarkable.

Alastair observed that while he remained unhappy with reliance on fund-raising, that had not been able to contribute as much as usual last year.

b) *February figures* January and February had been difficult months, but these were cash-based figures which skewed them a little. With two successive months

unusually ending at weekends, various transactions regularly in the last days of each month had to be carried over to the next. March should benefit from that, and there was still the first quarter's Gift Aid to come.

c) *Honoraria* Marilyn left the meeting for this item. Alastair explained that the church employed Amy as Administrator, with due recording of her pay and reporting to the authorities. The organist and choir director had been given 'honoraria', but that strictly applied to one-off gifts in gratitude for services rendered and not expected by the recipients. These were regular, monthly payments of amounts formally agreed by the PCC each year, with no pay slips, etc. Diocesan Human Resources had assured Alastair that such arrangements were not unusual as a way churches paid for music, but would not satisfy HMRC, should they decide to check the church. The risk of this might be low, but it would be prudent to regularise the arrangements, especially as the church clearly knew about proper practice in regard to the Administrator. The relationship with the individuals providing these services should be clear, whether they were employees or self-employed.

The options were to do nothing but be aware of the risk or to talk to Marilyn and Barry. There was not a contract with the PCC, yet there was provision for the organist to have some Sundays off each year. Jane said any contract was with the Vicar. The formal arrangement was certainly vague.

The Vicar observed that Barry was effectively self-employed, with his fees for weddings and funerals etc. Many churches had a legal 'Sitting Organist' who chose tunes. Here the Vicar chose the hymns and Marilyn the tunes. Marilyn could be seen as employed or self-employed: she put in much time and energy with little obvious return and he needed to talk to her about this.

The role of the PCC in this was not clear. The Diocesan Director offered no answer. If checks were made, it would certainly be embarrassing, and could be difficult for Barry and Marilyn. There should be some discussion with Barry and with Marilyn, explaining why it was not a proper honorarium and needed to be put on a proper footing.

Vicar/RB

7383 7 - ST JOHN'S HALL

a) *Scout headquarters agreement renewal* Mike said there was little to report. There had been further conversations with the surveyor. The ball was in the Scouts' court now.

b) *Pre-school* [Mike - I think I lost this completely. My notes get the heading and then a squiggle as though I'd dozed briefly. Can you kindly supply?]

7384 8 - SECURITY PROJECT

Richard reported that Esotech and the architect had looked again at the site and were sorting out some questions. He had duly paid Esotech. A faculty was needed for work in the church, but that application awaited response.

7385 9 - BUILDING REPAIR PROJECT

Chris Shepherd had been very helpful, but he was soon to retire and hoped his son would take over. Chris expected to do the quinquennial survey next year.

[Was there something about the Church Hall here too? My concentration was clearly flagging at this stage - or I have a mental block about the Hall]

7386 10 - ST JOHN'S WEBSITE

Deborah was eager to modernise the site once her son was allowed into her room. At the patronal festival she would like to get a fresh photo of the congregation. When more formally launched, Home Church would need to be added to the site.

Sally said that over the year usage of the site had risen by 435%. In March the most visited aspects were the Sunday services, the PCC minutes (!), the shop, *Old Malden News*, and the Easter Draw. Numbers had risen for the streamed services both live and later visits, especially for Mothering Sunday and the Easter services. She would circulate the detailed analysis.

Warm thanks were expressed to Sally and Harvey and their helpers for all the effort they had put into this provision, especially the extras for special occasions, and also to Chris Beales for the spring photos.

7387 11 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Vicar expressed thanks to Lisa and Debra for arranging the Easter Draw which had raised £216, and for the fund-raising online shop. Franklin had arranged the Easter egg hunt for the children, a good use of the churchyard.

Pauline expressed the joy felt at being able to return to the church.

Marilyn mentioned the Organ Recital, to be streamed at 7.30 on Saturday evening. Donations for this were to go to the Building Repairs Fund. The Vicar said he would draw attention to it in his mailing this week.

Vicar

There being no further business, Milly closed the meeting with prayer at 9.35.

The next PCC meeting would be at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 4 May 2021.