

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN
Registered Charity No.1145155
Minutes of the 736th meeting of the Parochial Church Council
at 8 p.m. on
Tuesday, 2 February 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, Deborah Harris, Sally Josolyne, Anthony Pullen, Liz Pullen.

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

The Vicar opened in prayer.

7355 1 - APOLOGIES were received from Lisa Down, Marie McGuire, Lynn Sanger.

7356 2 - NOTICE OF ESSENTIAL AOB
The Vicar was adding one small item.

7357 3 - MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MEETING
With four small amendments, the minutes were approved, signed and would be published in the usual ways. **CWs/Amy**
Matters arising from these minutes were all covered on the agenda.

7358 4 - SAFEGUARDING
The Vicar had heard nothing and needed to contact Marie and Vanessa. There were at present no diocesan courses. The officers could get on with the updates, with Amy's assistance. **MR**

7359 5 - VICAR'S REPORT
a) *Worship* It was hoped to resume live-streaming of services from 21 February, the first Sunday in Lent. Harvey and Sally were both happy to film the Vicar from a distance. He would preach from the altar. Other preachers might do so at the church only if they were happy with going there, and otherwise provide scripts for circulation. The same applied to intercessions. Anthony said he would be happy to go to the church now. It was still too dangerous to have a congregation present: St Mary's, Mortlake, had had an outbreak of the covid virus in the choir following their carol service, which underlined the need for caution.

The present hope was that by the end of June it might be possible to gather together, perhaps out of doors, to mark St John's Day. When the church is able to reopen, there should be a special Evensong and celebration.

Barry should be given something to look forward to, which could be an opportunity to livestream an organ concert. *The PCC approved that suggestion.*

There had been six more deaths in the parish, two with St John's funerals. More people were experiencing anxiety and depression.

The Vicar was upgrading his Zoom facility with the hope of reaching more

people supportively, for example with a regular Tea meeting.

The police had twice stopped him when delivering *Old Malden News* as hand deliveries were currently banned. There should be some check on whether more could receive it online. Otherwise it would need to be posted.

b) *Initiative 2022*

This paper was not a 'road map' but intended as a spur to get people thinking. *Gathering around the Lord's Table* - how to make this a eucharistic ministry for all - the congregation has been predominantly white and middle-class: was this a matter of gathered community or a special interest club, doing things for those who come or attracting outsiders? Need to consider how to open up the worship experience and build bridges.

What was done for children and young people? There was a limited window of opportunity to instil in the young an understanding of faith.

What about the elderly, especially those who had long worshipped at St John's but were now housebound? There could be more effort to create Home Church, with worship materials delivered and monthly visits from a member of the ministry team, gifts at Christmas and Easter, etc.

Other possibilities should be considered - Messy Church, Eco Church, etc.

c) *Sustainability*

This was not just about nature protection, but also finance and care of the building. Stewardship needed to be addressed when people were able to gather again.

As custodians of a fine building that required £700,000 spent on repair work, the church needed to consider fuller use of this asset.

Chris Beales puts much effort into care of biodiversity in the churchyard, but who will follow him to maintain this? And what might be done to maximise the value? It is potentially a good teaching resource. A dedicated noticeboard with changing displays about the natural life and other features, e.g. an interesting tombstone, is desirable.

d) *Mission*

This includes advocacy for the disadvantaged in the parish, the Food Bank, the Angel Project, with the various charity collections. There are two refuges in Kingston for those escaping domestic violence. Support needs to be co-ordinated with that being done by other churches in the deanery. Perhaps clothing and toys might be collected for children, and their mothers would appreciate toiletries.

Various outreach activities, old and new, should be considered: Tea and Chat, Sunday Lunch, Bereavement Café, Saturday morning Open Church, Home Church, other interest groups. Whatever is done will only work if there are enough volunteers who are excited about getting involved, so there is need to discover what people are drawn to. Tea and cake can work wonders because they help people to bond and then talk about things on their mind: too many suffer in silence.

Pauline observed that most of those who had gone regularly to Tea and Chat were widowed, and Marilyn that the Knitting and Crochet Group had more from beyond the congregation than St John's regulars, and there was only a small overlap with the similar group that had met at Old Malden Library. Anthony believed more

could be made to work.

The Vicar urged people to think about these ideas. He reckoned that if people were to be won back there would be a critical period of six to eight months after people are able to return to the building and the church must not waste that. It had to be ready, with plans in place.

He was concerned about the lack of contact with young families at present, feeling his efforts had met little response. Marilyn and Deborah suggested that teaching was tiring enough for those trained to do it, and parents trying to meet the demands of home schooling, often on top of their own employment, were exhausted. When life returned to something more normal, they might be glad to return to church.

7360 6 - FINANCE

a) *Management Accounts*

Alastair presented the end-of-year figures which were appreciably better than had originally been anticipated. December had been helped by several donations, gift-aided, and by the fundraising efforts including £400 from the Story Tent pantomime. The online shop was proving useful too. PCC fees were for a funeral at the church. He urged people tell him about expenses, even if they chose not to charge them to the church, because they could legitimately be counted as donations on which he can claim Gift Aid. The last quarter's Gift Aid was still to come.

Costs included £2,000 Mission Giving to local charities, all of which had acknowledged them with gratitude. Unexpected costs were over £6000, but there are always some.

There were no questions on this.

A deficit of £15,000-£18,000 had earlier seemed likely, but with donations amounting to £8,000 and careful control of costs the eventual deficit was £6,000. January had brought a microgrant of £1,725 for covid costs, associated with opening the church safely and livestreaming.

There had been much to encourage but the income from Free Will Offerings and associated Gift Aid was £74,000, of which £72,000 was committed to the Parish Support Fund. There was still too much reliance on fund-raising efforts and generous donations.

He had yet to arrange the independent examination of these accounts.

Anthony thought the appeals for other causes ought to be included, which would not affect the overall totals but it is part of the mission giving and about the church's presence in the community. He thought the church, but not the ultimate recipients, might claim Gift Aid on these.

Marilyn thanked the treasurer for all his work.

Richard said the figures needed to be seen in perspective. They had proved better than anticipated but underlying problems remained. Several Free Will Offerings had been lost or reduced; more new regular contributors were needed.

When the church was closed there were problems over giving by envelope, but some had reached Sheri or Pauline, and others were likely to catch up when the

church reopened. The overall numbers contributing this way were now under ten, with most people using bankers' orders etc.

When asked, Alastair said it was complicated to sort out giving that came by web donation from the other donations. Contactless donations were proving useful.

Richard said the 2020 Budget had been based on having a successful appeal, but it had not been possible to make that. The Finance Committee had wondered about revising the 2021 Budget but had decided it was realistic as it stood. He would like to write something for OMN and thank supporters.

7361 7 - OUTREACH REPORT

Deborah reported that this committee had met online. The Vicar had already covered much of the ground. The Co-op had so far collected £113 towards the Bereavement Café.

The Bishop's Lent Appeal would be done online, as would another Food Bank appeal. The response to such appeals online had been good.

She was anxious to ensure that something happened for Christian Aid during the year, as nothing had been possible in 2020.

They would continue to draw attention to domestic violence, with MU help.

7362 8 - ST JOHN'S HALL

a) Brian said he was resigning from the Hall Committee as he expected to move away from the parish before they met again. (Faith added that she could continue to minute meetings while they were held online).

b) Scout Headquarters Agreement Renewal

There had been a Zoom meeting with the solicitor and surveyor, who is also in touch with Emma Mitchell. It all looked positive. The church made it clear they wanted a fair and reasonable lease, as the church supported the Scouts. It is the surveyor's job to maximise church assets. The Vicar had attended a Scout Executive meeting to answer questions and reassure those for whom the process has prompted unease. Mike had kept Beth informed of the present position.

Asked by Franklin about the deadline, Mike said that would not be met but there would be agreements month by month until it was fully resolved, so there should not be problems over ownership.

c) Agreement with Preschool Playgroup

The Vicar had yet to talk to the leaders.

MR

7363 9 - SECURITY PROJECT

Richard had not yet heard from Esotech. He was advised to chivvy them. **RB**

7364 10 - BUILDING REPAIR PROJECT

a) Grant seeking

The Vicar now had a team of four grant chasers: Kirstie , Steve Clark, Peter Wickenden, and Detlev Golletz. They all have experience and are keen. Kirstie seeks large sums for the Natural History Museum.

b) *Repairs*

Mike said the architect judged the investigative work essential and the need to damp proof was basic. Two quotations had been received: Capitol for £7,000, Universal Stone £9,000, both inclusive of VAT. Capitol was therefore chosen. There was £11,000 available at present, aware that the exact figure could change as the work proceeds, according to what is found, but it should not exceed £8,500.

The Vicar had spoken to the Archdeacon and awaited diocesan response as whether a faculty was needed, but probably not as it did not involve a change to the building fabric. The work would probably be done in late spring or early summer. The earth outside the wall should not be above the interior floor level. The drains required camera inspection. Chris Beales thinks from old records that the damp is coming from the same area as in the past. He had also been checking the amount of rainfall on the churchyard and the strength of the pump, which ought to be adequate. Marilyn said Barry who also monitors rainfall had recorded nearly 4 inches in January.

As this involved a substantial sum, PCC authorisation was required.

Richard therefore proposed that this work should be undertaken by Capitol. Marilyn seconded this and it was passed unanimously.

Alastair noted he should expect a bill by early summer.

7365 11 - ST JOHN'S WEBSITE

Deborah said that although the current site was only two years old it was already out of date, fashions change so fast, but it was important to present well as an online community. Professional services were expensive, but her son, who works in IT, has offered to help, working with Sally.

Sally had little to add to this, though noted that there was more traffic on Facebook recently.

7366 AOB

Pauline thanked Outreach for the donation to AFIA, the MU scheme to provide holiday breaks for disadvantaged families. Deborah added that she would put something about the donations in OMN. **DH**

The Vicar mentioned that he had dropped the coloured backgrounds to the sermons on learning that this made it harder for some people to read. He himself had difficulties with serif fonts so would like to adopt Calibri as the parish font.

There being no further business, Brian closed the meeting with prayer at 21.30.

The next PCC meeting will be at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 2 March 2021.