

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN
Registered Charity No.1145155
Minutes of the 741st meeting of the Parochial Church Council
at 8 p.m. on
Tuesday, 6 July 2021
by Google Meet, with members attending from their homes

PRESENT: The Vicar in the chair, Franklin Barrington, Chris Benson, Marilyn Burkett, Richard Burkett, Deborah Harris, Sally Josolyne, Marie McMaguire and Anthony Pullen.

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

The Vicar opened in prayer.

7410 1 - APOLOGIES were received from Margaret Barrington, Mike Broome, Milly Broome, Liz Pullen, Lynn Sanger. Margaret and Liz were at Deanery Synod.

7411 2 - NOTICE OF ESSENTIAL AOB
There was none.

7412 3 - MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING
These were approved and signed, and would be published in the usual ways.

Chris said the most recent on the website were January's. Deborah said she would look into that.

CWs/Administrator/DH

413 4 - MATTERS ARISING
These were all covered on the agenda.

414 5 - SAFEGUARDING
Lynn had compiled and doublechecked the list of those needing reminders. There had been a few responses to the appeal for more volunteers.
Marie explained that this was now all done online, without paper forms, and is now quickly processed. Individuals had to register, using a unique number that she could provide. The Safeguarding Officers then needed to verify the ID from documents (passport etc). A session for that would be held on Saturday next. Most people would need a separate DBS check for St John's. There was no longer a charge for charities. For those needing checks for several different activities, it was possible to have a transportable registration, at an extra cost with constant updating. Margaret Barrington had this already, and it might be appropriate for others requiring 3 or more.

Richard Burkett and Mike Broome had been checked. Marilyn would need to renew in January 2022, Marie in February, and Tony in March.

Michael had drafted a letter to send to those who responded to the request for more checked helpers.

Vanessa had not been in touch. Michael would ask if she wanted to continue. He would like to see a team of three for safeguarding so should seek another anyway. Marie would be glad of help.

Marie asked whether a hard copy should be kept securely in the office. Only the numbers and expiry dates should be kept. Otherwise the responsibility lies with the individuals.

Marie said training courses should soon resume. Only the foundation courses have been zoomed.

DBS checks may be valid for 3 or 5 years. The various agencies decide what is appropriate, so that needs checking with the Diocese. Tony says the NHS asks for 5 years. Michael would prefer 3 years, which is required of clergy.

MR/MM/VS

7415 6 - VICAR'S REPORT

The latest government advice is that all restrictions will be lifted on 19 July. After that mask wearing and social distancing will be voluntary. Michael would prefer to carry on as at present until 8 September, allowing for more young people to be vaccinated and people to readjust and gain confidence. Limiting services to about 30 people cannot continue for ever but his instinct is to move on cautiously. He doubts whether there will be much guidance from the Diocese or Church of England, except perhaps on singing and the chalice. He feels that the communion queue should continue as it feels safer.

Marilyn agreed that September made sense. More would be vaccinated, some would be eager to get away for holidays in August, and it would give time to prepare the way ahead. Tony said he would prefer to continue with masks, and have a phased return. Richard observed that a club he belongs to was insisting on masks as there was not room to social distance in the club house.

Chris wondered whether the 4 pm service which only draws a few should be kept for those wanting to social distance. Michael said there was more demand to restore the 8 am Eucharist, and he would continue the Wednesday service. Franklin, speaking as a younger person not yet fully vaccinated, would prefer a cautious approach. People are waiting at least 8 weeks between jabs and then it was another 3 weeks to reach maximum protection. He added that it would be important to maintain good ventilation, encourage people to take coffee outside etc.

Michael said Covid was not going to go away so people had to learn to live with it. People had to manage not only their physical health but also the psychological shock of returning to 'normal'. By the end of September activities should be restored and the church would be very busy, so enjoy August! Marilyn said there needed to be a discussion about music.

7416 7 - NEW PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

The advertisement for a new administrator had been drawn up, with help from Amy over things that should be added. In future, half-term cover was sought, and a requirement to minute the PCC meetings. So far there had been one application.

Amy was due to retire on 23 July but was not moving from Worcester Park until the end of the month but was willing to give some help until then. Michael and

churchwardens intended to take her out to lunch and present a gift voucher, to show she had been appreciated, even though not well known to all in the church.

Amy had been engaged for 12 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, though often did more than that. The future time needed to be considered carefully, and the cost would probably increase. Marilyn observed that another parish was advertising for a similar post in the latest Diocesan circular, but comparison was not simple.

7417 8 - FINANCE

Alastair reported on the past month when costs had been greater than income. Envelope giving was keeping up quite well, but the regular monthly giving was only about £4,200 and not increasing. Gift Aid was still to come. There had not been much fundraising this month, but the online shop was doing well.

The church should pay the 'going rate' for the administrator.

He continued to worry that the regular donations were inadequate.

Chris had not been receiving committee minutes but had now been added to the email list. Sally wondered whether this big deficit was part of a downward trend.

Michael offered a little good news: he had just heard from the funeral directors that £800 had been given in memory of Jill Barker, to be divided between St John's and the Mothers' Union.

Alastair said that the matter of 'honoraria' had been resolved happily.

Alastair and Richard were engaged in a tussle with Castle Water over their bills. The Hall Committee were having similar problems. In 1918 Thames Water had disposed of all business accounts to privatised providers. Castle Water were difficult to deal with as they seemed to send bills for random amounts, without specifying their rates etc. The Finance Committee needed to sort this out and then hoped to get water metered. Graham was helping them with this. The Finance Committee had begun formal complaint procedures over Castle Water's lack of explanation.

Alastair added that more information about all PCC members was needed (see Charity Commissioners' website) as part of the anti-money-laundering measures.

Richard said the Finance Committee was compiling a document to inform the congregation about the financial position. For this, he was looking for positive photos of St John's activities. Deborah would also welcome these. PCC members were asked to seek some.

All

The Diocese wanted pledges for 2022 by mid-September. It would not be easy to determine St John's contribution by that date.

7418 9 - LETTING RENEWALS

Michael was hoping to follow this up with Emma Mitchell, rather than the Diocesan Surveyor, but had not yet had a reply from her.

7419 10 - SECURITY PROJECT

Richard reported good progress. He had met on Zoom with the architect and Esotech on 21 June. The electrician visited the site last Friday and sorted much out. He now had a date from Esotech and the architect was working on the plans. There would be two lights less, that at the NW corner and the 'eyesore' over the vestry. A change of cable route helped to avoid a clash with the damp investigation.

Christ was impressed with Richard's efficient documentation. Richard said he had had much helpful support.

He hoped the installation would be done this year, but it awaited DAC approval.

BUILDING REPAIR PROJECT

7420 10 - WEBSITE

There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer.

The next PCC meeting would be at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 September 2021.