

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN
Registered Charity No.1145155
Minutes of the 737th meeting of the Parochial Church Council
at 8 p.m. on
Tuesday, 2 March 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, Lynn Sanger.

In attendance: Faith Bowers (clerk), Alastair Harris (church treasurer) for items 6,7 and 8.

The Vicar opened in prayer.

7367 1 - APOLOGIES were received from Lisa Down.

7368 2 - NOTICE OF ESSENTIAL AOB

Brian wished to add to item 6 on the Church Hall.

Richard did not have a Finance Report tonight, but was pleased to report that he had just gained access to Barclays online which should be helpful.

7369 3 - MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MEETING

Kirstie Tong's surname had been supplied, and Franklin asked to add 'people' to 'disadvantaged' in 7359 5d. 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.

7370 4 - SAFEGUARDING

The Vicar said that before any of the church's activities could be re-opened, there must be current DBS for all those who should have it. These were last updated in July 2019. Vanessa and Marie needed to address this now. **Vicar/MM/VS**

7371 5 - VICAR'S REPORT

a) *Opening the church* The Vicar last week attended a course for new incumbents. Half those attending had had their churches open through this lockdown, but they had large buildings and small congregations. There had as yet been no further advice from Diocese or Government. Southwark Cathedral hoped to reopen on 28 March, Palm Sunday, with a booking system. That would allow nearly three weeks to assess the impact of schools' reopening. For weddings 6 people would be allowed from mid March, 15 from mid April, 30 from mid May.

The Vicar had already had to refuse to hold two funerals in church, and a memorial service for Helen Rivorola has been postponed three times. As the family want to have tea in the hall afterwards that probably means late June at earliest.

He hoped a full service in church might be possible for 27 June, to mark the patronal festival.

Meanwhile he wondered how people felt about reopening in Holy Week for distanced services as before. The infection rates in Malden Manor and Motspur Park were now lower, but he did not want people to attend the church unless they really felt happy to do so.

Pauline said she had felt safe with the precautions taken before with pews allocated to 'bubbles', sanitising etc. Richard agreed. 'Vaccinated church' had been mooted but did not seem the right approach. Tony observed that a good proportion had now been vaccinated and with the bubbles and booking it seemed reasonably safe. Milly was inclined to trust the vaccines. Mike observed that children at school were now being tested twice a week, and the latest rules expected hotels to open indoors in mid May. Before then just six people could meet outside. Places of worship were free to decide for themselves.

Franklin observed that the worst problem seemed to be from aerosol transmission and it was harder to ensure fresh air supply indoors. The churchyard would therefore be safer. Singing would still be banned, livestreaming outside would be difficult, and there would need to be a new risk assessment. Chairs could be arranged to ensure social distancing. Jane wondered whether the school playground might be used.

The consensus was to see what happened after schools reopened, but hope to reopen, with bubbles as before, on Palm Sunday and Easter Day. That should be planned for - it could always be cancelled, as at Christmas, if by then it seemed unwise.

The Vicar hoped to celebrate the Patronal Festival in church, but Debra had concluded that the Maeldune Fair would present too great a risk, with too many to distance even though outdoors. With the Government's current schedule, it should be possible to meet rather more normally by then and he would like to follow the service on 27 June with something social as such occasions will be needed to rebuild relationships.

7372 6 - ST JOHN'S HALL

a) Brian reported that the preschool had continued to serve children of key workers and those with special needs, and the hours had been extended, so letting income from them had increased. The floor in the main hall was very worn and giving problems, so Beth had got quotations for dealing with that. The income was adequate to cover this expense.

There would be a working party during the Easter break to deal with other matters inside and out.

b) *Scout headquarters agreement renewal*

Mike said the matter was now with the Diocesan and Scouts' surveyors and solicitors. The rental had been £140 p.a., whereas at St James Scouts paid £4000 p.a. to use the Church Hall, not a dedicated Scout building. The Scouts recognized that a higher rent would be required in future.

7373 7 - SECURITY PROJECT

Richard was pleased to report that St John's had been approved for funding. Esotech was getting quotations. Various permissions were required and Esotech needed to

know about these next week. They also required a payment of £3,544.57. The PCC agreed to instruct Alastair to make that. **RB/AH**

The PCC needed to authorise application for a faculty, which might incur some cost. The PCC authorised the application. This might well take 3 months. **RB/CWs**

There might be a need for permission from the Planning Authorities.

Richard would respond to Esotech, about the permissions sought, after showing a draft to the Vicar, Churchwardens, Finance and Maintenance Committees. **RB**

Realistically he thought work could not be done till the summer, and would then take about three weeks, but he was keen to get into Esotech's schedules as St John's was one among what was likely to be a lot of such projects, as they had originally had 150 such approaches.

Pauline asked about the neighbours. Richard had been given helpful camera shots showing the coverage of the car park area, so they could be shown that this would not invade their privacy, and Merton College had agreed in principle. They still had to speak to people in the cottages further along the lane. **RB**

Sally observed that the Data Privacy Statement would need updating. The Information Commission Office also needed to be informed. Signs would be needed for the church yard too

7374 8 - BUILDING REPAIR PROJECT

a) The DAC had been in contact with concern about digging, archaeology, etc. and had offered a site visit. Nothing, however, is permanent at this stage, just investigative work, apart from moving earth close from the walls. The Manor House people say they also have damp problems, perhaps from drains.

b) The Vicar was pleased with progress in the grant-seeking group, who had already met and listed 23 most likely grant bodies to approach. The group wanted a schedule of works needed, broken down into sections of about £100,000 each. They did not have explicit terms of reference but were asked to liaise with the Maintenance Committee and report to the PCC. Their job is to raise money, not to spend it.

Asked about congregational fund-raising, the Vicar said the sums were far too great for congregational input to make much difference. He would prefer appeals to the congregation to be for specific projects that seemed more manageable, e.g. stripping the main door back to the oak beneath, renewing the faded faces in the Lady Chapel stained glass, or general redecoration.

7375 9 - ST JOHN'S WEBSITE

Sally said Steve was asking for Electoral Roll to be done online. The Bishop's Lent Appeal would appear soon. There had so far been little response to the Food Bank Appeal put out on social media. **SJ**

Deborah hoped they could update the site later in the year to current standards. It already looked dated.

Sally said usage had dropped since January, but she hoped would pick up now services were being livestreamed again. The YouTube Sunday services had 15-20 regular viewers, with others viewing the recording later. Most of the traffic was around the services, followed by the church's history and the online shop.

7376 10 - FUNDRAISING

Lynn reported the decision against holding the Fair in June. It might be feasible later, in August or early September, times usually avoided because of holidays but this year was different. A Council licence was needed to hold it on Plough Green. Geoff was asking the Council and the insurers about the possibility.

They were wondering about one or two stalls in the churchyard, e.g. plant sales, after a Sunday service, and whether a raffle would be possible online.

They needed to find other ways to raise funds. The online shop was proving useful. She would ask Amy to publicise the need for more items as well as for buyers.

Pauline hoped there might be another Quiz evening as that had proved so enjoyable, and raised £400. The PCC was grateful to Mary Golletz and Alastair Daniel for arranging this.

Marilyn observed that the Fairs are a time when the wider parish engages with the church. What else might be done to help that? The Heritage weekend is another opportunity and more might be made of that in September with stalls in the churchyard, churchyard tour, etc. The churchyard had proved popular with walkers in the past year.

c) The Vicar had suggested to Barry that he might like to have an organ recital, with some uplifting music, in Easter week, and fundraise for the organ. Harvey had offered to film this. The organ tuners were expected before then, now they were able to resume work.

7376 11 - AOB

a) The Vicar said the Bishop had sent clergy a Christmas gift, so he was responding with a simnel cake for Easter, saying it was from the people of St John's.

b) Liz queried whether the next PCC date would be kept, given that it was in Easter week. The consensus was that this year that would not matter as few would be going away. The business would include the Annual Accounts and the APCM arrangements.

There being no further business, Tony closed the meeting with prayer at 9.22.

The next PCC meeting will be at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 6 April 2021.