

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN
Registered Charity No.1145155
Minutes of the 739th meeting of the Parochial Church Council
at 8 p.m. on
Tuesday, 4 May 2021
by Google Meet, with members attending from their homes

PRESENT: The Vicar in the chair, Pauline Armour, Franklin Barrington, Margaret Barrington, Brian Bowers, Mike Broome, Milly Broome, Marilyn Burkett, Richard Burkett, Deborah Harris, Sally Josolyne, Liz Pullen, Lynn Sanger.

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

The Vicar opened in prayer.

7388 1 - APOLOGIES were received from Jane Bransgrove, Lisa Down, Anthony Pullen.

7389 2 - NOTICE OF ESSENTIAL AOB
There was none.

7390 3 - MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING
After three small corrections, these were approved and signed, and would be published in the usual ways. **CWs/Amy**

7391 4 - SAFEGUARDING
Lynn had obtained from the Diocese a list of all those who had previously had DBS checks for St John's. Only those for the Creche were still current. Only Marie had access as an approved checker, so Vanessa needed to be added. Marie and Vanessa should ensure all who needing checks are done quickly, ready for activities to reopen. Lynn had also a list covering training, which needed attention. Once the list was complete, the Safeguarding Officers should keep it up to date. **MM/VS**

Margaret asked whether training in other contexts was acceptable. The Vicar thought not, as there church specifics would be included in the diocesan training. At present only foundation training was available online. Lynn would ask Uzma about that and ask her to arrange Vanessa's approval. **LS**

No safeguarding concerns had been raised.

7392 5 - VICAR'S REPORT
a) *Reopening*

'Normal life' in future would have to include management of ongoing Covid risks. The current intention was to reopen fully on St John's Day, 27 June. A special committee with oversight of this comprised the Vicar, Wardens and Debra Barrett.

The Vicar was concerned about loss of contact with young families. Margaret Barrington, keen to resume ministry to children, had suggested Children's Church out of doors. People would need to book, but it would be something to give children a break as services are too long to expect them to sit quietly. Margaret personally prefer this at the 9.45 service, but the afternoon might suit others better.

Pat Lovegrove was willing to restart Tea and Chat and Sunday Lunches at the Hall, but that might not be till late June. Meanwhile helpers should have DBS checks.

b) *Malden Parochial School*

Happily there was now a full complement of governors from St John's. Peter Wickenden and Franklin Barrington had joined the Vicar and Mike Broome. Brenda Mitchell, churchwarden at Holy Cross, is also a governor. As full schooling resumed, outside affirmation would be important for the teachers.

c) *Sunday Worship*

This continued with social distancing limiting numbers. Some younger families were returning in the afternoon.

The next twelve months would be critical in determining whether the numbers would recover or dwindle. Better provision for children would be important.

d) *Communication*

The Vicar found his role difficult when there was little feedback, as with the poor response to his letter about Free Will Offerings. Ministry for him was not about earning a stipend but being a father to his people, which was difficult at a distance. Working to a camera was not like engaging with a congregation, and did not energise him in the same way.

Franklin asked about information from analytics. Mailchimp analytics show little more than number of clicks, so are less useful than those for the website or YouTube.

7393 6 - FINANCE REPORT

a) *2020 Accounts* Alastair presented the revised draft, with a few adjustments since last month. He had now allowed an accrued figure of £600 for clergy expenses and corrected the interest on the Bank Account. The accounts had now been independently examined and approved.

People's generosity and reduced expenses during lockdown had helped: the deficit (£905) might have been much worse. He rejoiced in the response to appeals. St John's had benefited from *not* being dependent on lettings income, a loss hitting many churches hard.

The Vicar observed that the coming year would be crucial, as people saw what they got for their money. From this perspective too it was important to restore activities.

The PCC approved the draft accounts for presentation at the Annual Meeting, with thanks to Alastair and the finance committee (Richard Burkett, Sheri, Jane, and Pauline).

b) *Budget for 2021* Richard observed that these accounts gave reason to be thankful, but analysis of 2020 figures showed giving down a little, but greatly offset by donations and legacies. In 2019 there had been 124 in the Freewill Offering Scheme, but this had dropped to 115 in 2020. Slow erosion of the giving base was a matter of concern. The 2021 budget had been approved by the PCC November, but had omitted

a small increase in Honoraria and salary for the Administrator. He presented the revised figures, and said he would circulate this to PCC members.

The PCC approved the revised budget.

c) Management to date

March had proved a better month than January and February and April looked good too. The Coop had sent the first £206 for the Bereavement Café. There was a moderate surplus of £763. The deficit on the year to date was £2103.

Sally asked about contactless payments. Alastair said he was working on an analysis, but the overall sums were not high.

Alastair reminded the PCC that donations made direct to the bank account do not incur charges, unlike those made as donations via the website.

Alastair asked whether he should continue to present monthly figures to PCC or just quarterly. Monthly was judged wise while everything was so uncertain.

The Vicar suggested a short picture of the financial state in July might help people to focus again on the need. The PCC was grateful for the money, time and energy given to the church finances.

7394 7 - APCM, 23 May

This could now simply be called The Annual Meeting. It would again be held online, but those attending the 9.45 service might attend in person. Voting would be done subsequently, as last year. Questions should be sent in advance.

New PCC members were urgently needed. Four last year were not replaced, although Sally who was coopted to retain her IT skills. She was now eligible and willing to stand again. Jane, Brian, Lisa and Margaret were completing their term. Chris Benson had expressed willingness to stand. Lynn had completed her six years as churchwarden. There had been no guidance from the Diocese this year; and it seemed reasonable to extend those willing for a further year, but more volunteers should be sought. Three new members of Synod were also needed. Only the Vicar, Milly, Marilyn, Churchwardens, Marie, Pauline, Franklin, and Richard would otherwise be left. Those who left last year (Louise, Martina, Sally and Steve) might be approached again.

7395 8 - ST JOHN'S HALL

a) Scout headquarters agreement renewal

Progress on reaching an agreement with the Scouts has been slow with concerns about the efficiency of the Diocesan Surveyor. These concerns will be discussed with the Deputy Diocesan Secretary.

The lease needed renegotiation but there is understanding between the church and the scouts, so it should be possible to reach an agreement.

Franklin asked about the interim situation and emergency cover. The solicitor had been briefed and said he had dealt with it.

Alastair observed that the £140 income has never gone to the church but to the Hall charity. Margaret observed that it was all being run by volunteers for the good of the local community.

b) Pre-school licence

There was nothing to report.

7396 9 - SECURITY PROJECT

Richard reported that Esotech had visited on 24 March, and talked about cameras, lights and cable runs. The architect, Charles Sheppard, was in attendance. Esotech would take advantage of the trench for the buildings investigative work. Richard was concentrating on information required for the Faculty. Signs are required to warn people of the CCTV system, on the lychgate, vestry gate, coffee lounge door and possibly in the car park. It was hoped to choose signs that would be in keeping with the building, especially on the lychgate.

7397 10 - BUILDING REPAIR PROJECT

Mike said that this investigative work was delayed by the Diocese and may involve archaeological investigation.

7398 11 - ST JOHN'S WEBSITE

Deborah reported that she had set up a Christian Aid page on the website for Christian Aid Week with a St John's e-envelope for donations. The e-envelope link was also posted on both Facebook pages. Once Covid restrictions were fully lifted, she hoped in due course to run a Big Brekkie event to raise additional funds for Christian Aid.

The worship services remain popular. Numbers had dropped a little, but that might reflect resumption of physical attendance at the church.

The Organ Recital had drawn 140 listeners.

7399 12 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

There being no further business, Faith closed the meeting with prayer at 9.48

The next PCC meeting would be at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 1 June 2021.