



East Preston with Kingston: St Mary the Virgin

**Meeting of the PCC
via "Zoom" and Telephone
2 February 2021 at 7.00 pm**

Minutes

Present were Fr. Andrew Perry (Chair), Wendy Allen (Sec.), Vivien Ayling, Nova Brookes, Jacky Collett, Stella Collier, Colin Crane, Mary Darby, Revd. Emma Ham-Riche, (Curate & Host), Charis Harbidge, Claire Hind, Lucy Hornby, Peter Lewis, Kathy Lockyear (Treasurer), Pauline McLelland, Joe Padfield, Gloria Russell, Helen Smith, Lois Townsend and Chris Wood.

From 7.00 pm instructions for those joining "Zoom" were being given.

1 Opening Prayers

The formal meeting opened with prayer at 7.05 pm.

2 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence. All PCC members were present.

3 Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the PCC meeting on 10 November 2020 were passed as an accurate record, without redactions, and all were in favour.

Proposer: Nova Brookes Seconder: Claire Hind

4 Matters Arising not covered on agenda

There were no matters arising.

5 The decision to close the church for regular worship

20 votes had been cast. 19 were in favour and 1 was against the motion to close the church for regular worship.

Fr. Andrew explained that it was our decision as a PCC to close and it would be our decision with regard to when we re-opened. However, our decision would be based on Government Advice, Church of England advice, local statistics and the restrictions, operating at that time, with regard to the opening of premises. Revd. Emma and Fr. Andrew will keep up to date with the Church of England website and news. Members of the PCC will be emailed when it is considered appropriate to re-open.

6 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Kathy Lockyear took us through the figures. In summary, the total in unrestricted bank accounts at the end of December was £76,498.11 (including approximately £15,000 in restricted legacies). Total incoming monies were £4,278.11 and total outgoings were £8091.56 which included £1,612.50 to FoSM in owed gift aid to them. Total losses in December were therefore £8,813.46.

The average monthly loss is approximately £2,600 and the current income is not sufficient to sustain the minimum vital costs (those costs which are needed for the church to continue functioning.)

The PCC has agreed to increase our Parish Quota, commencing in January 2021 and so the loss is likely to be about £3,200 per month. Without increasing our monthly income, our church will run out of funds in December 2022. Erica Hussey has agreed to continue to look at our accounts.

Ideas about how we can reduce our costs have been explored and put into practice. There are no more cuts which can be made.

Fr. Andrew explained that, with the church closed, we do not have plate or visitors' donations. We also lack wedding fees. There are no opportunities for fund raising from social gatherings or the holding of events. We cannot rely on legacies and donations. In answer to questions, Fr. Andrew said that the only concession which could be made for us would be a deferment of paying our quota to the diocese and this could mean that we would be considered an unviable church.

It was agreed that many non-attenders rely on the church for weddings, baptisms and funerals and might be prepared to make donations. People who are not regular church goers really need to know our current situation. A comment was made that secular village people were perhaps more inclined to give to Friends of St. Mary's.

Suggestions to bring in further income:

- * Having a church card machine (Chichester Cathedral have a card machine available for donations of £5 or more)
- * Donations via our QR Code
- * An article in a local magazine
- * Letters to "free givers"

Our treasurer said that a general letter could be sent.

Asked about the Gift Aid given to the FoSM, Kathy explained that the church received about £8,000 in Gift Aid. Some people's membership of FoSM is Gift Aided and therefore the Friends are given their appropriate share of the total Gift Aid amount. Answering an enquiry about monies due after people's purchases with the Amazon Smile Service, Kathy explained that nothing had yet been received. The system is set up under Fr. Andrew's email and is paid quarterly. We probably haven't yet been using the system for a full quarter.

ACTION: Fr. Andrew will convene a Standing Committee Meeting to consider our finances.

7 Safeguarding Update

There had been no reported allegations or incidents during the last two months.

Joe leaves us officially in June 2021. Tracy Hammond is taking over Joe's role. A DBS form has been submitted for her and when this is passed she will be able to work alongside Joe.

At our meeting on 10 November 2020, a question had been raised with regard to para. 2 of the document titled "Responding to Safeguarding Allegations" as correct process was unclear. Fr. Andrew and Joe Padfield had agreed to seek clarification and report back. Joe reported that he had been advised that incidents were not really "extraordinary circumstances" and that the diocesan team should always be called to report incidents or allegations.

Joe was thanked for all the work he has done.

8 Reports from Groups: Deanery Synod Report

Lucy Hornby and Pauline McLelland are our Deanery Reps.

Lucy reported on the Deanery Synod meeting held, via Zoom, on 19 November 2020. The aims of the meeting were to receive a talk from the Rt. Reverend Ruth Bushyager, Bishop of Horsham and to receive a report from John Stirland, Chair of Deanery Finance Group.

The Bishop shared her life story of where she is today in her position as Bishop. John Stirland presented the pledges for the Parish Share 2021, for approval and explained the position for the deanery this year in the light of uncertainty, due to the length of the pandemic.

In answer to a question, Lucy replied that many parishes are paying under their quota. Some are paying over. Parishes were encouraged to pay more or to pay as near to their quota as they were able. Every parish is experiencing problems.

Lucy was thanked for her report.

9 Reports from Sub-committees

Standing, Finance, and Mission Committees had not met.

Fabric Committee

A leak had been solved by Fr. Andrew clearing out guttering.

Sunday Club

Charis Harbidge added to her report which had already been circulated. Christingles had been taken round to families and a rapport was being established by going from door to door.

Regular Saturday emails continue to be sent out to nine households. There had been little response to these. A PCC member affirmed that they **were** appreciated. Services had been very successful although not many attended.

Sunday Club continued.....

Charis and her team were thanked for all they do.

Social and Fund Raising Committee

Chris Wood reported that many donations of DVDs had been received to await sale and Revd. Emma had provided excellent flyers to go inside the cases. However, to date, there have been no sales. Emma has a list of the DVDs.

"Woody's Weekly Weigh-in" had two sponsors for those losing weight.

Kathy reported that she had "Ideas for Fundraising" booklets and it was agreed that Chris would collect them.

Chris Wood was thanked for being creative and thinking about how to do things and raise funds in a different way.

Friends of St. Mary's

On behalf of Malcolm McLelland, Fr. Andrew reported that FoSM have £39,000 in their combined bank accounts.

The Terms of Reference (required when bringing them under the auspices of the PCC) have been finalised and circulated to PCC members for their approval.

With regard to making a Grant Application, a Zoom meeting has been organised to identify topics to be covered, to select potential guarantors and to form a small team to put together the application.

The Quinquennial Inspection is due in March and the architect has been asked to provide a suitable date.

With regret, the fourth Christmas Tree Festival has been deferred to 2022 due to the uncertainty of the times.

Acceptance of Terms of Reference:

Proposer: Malcolm McLelland

Secunder: Wendy Allen

The terms were unanimously accepted.

10 Eco-Church Report

Revd. Emma Ham-Riche reported that the Eco-Church scheme was set up five years ago and was a national scheme. Participating churches could fill in a survey and obtain Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. Full details are found in the link below: <https://ecochurch.arocho.org.uk> Criteria on which the awards are based are:

Worship and Teaching
Community Building
Community Engagement
Lifestyle

Mary Jeavons and Emma have worked through the survey and hope to launch the idea at Lent this year. In the EMU's letter there will be a monthly eco-tip. There is an Environmental Initiatives Group set up by East Preston Parish Council. Mary Jeavons is going to regularly attend meetings and Revd. Emma has previously been involved.

Eco-Church Report continued.....

One possibility, with regard to environmental initiatives, is to make use of the churchyard in putting up bird boxes and establishing feeding stations.

11 Piano Proposal (Dan Paine)

Daniel's request to have a new piano was carefully considered and much discussion ensued.

Points were:

THE PIANO:

- * Dan's contribution to our church's worship is much appreciated. Dan's choice of piano is a good product with a wide range of pipe organ sounds.
- * Helen Smith has done considerable research herself, contacting five dealers in the south of England and one in London. She has spoken to her contacts at Bonners music shop in Eastbourne. Yamaha run an Agency Scheme which includes VAT and delivery. They may be able to do something special with required accessories.

THE ORGAN

- * Our organ is very old, outdated and difficult to play.
- * It will be expensive to fully restore.
- * The last annual service was on 20 October 2020 and cost £198 (inc. VAT)
- * Few are qualified to play the pipe organ now.
- * People have not requested that the organ be played at their special events.
- * Some churchgoers might attend our church partly because they enjoy the organ. One man applied to play the organ. He was 70 and was wanting to play 70 organs in 70 days.

The motion proposed by Fr. Andrew was that, based on the temperature of the meeting, we'd like to provide Daniel with a new piano in the future but the time is not currently appropriate due to the difficult financial times. We'd like to re-visit the idea when the monetary climate is better.

Proposer for this motion: Fr Andrew

Seconder: Pauline McLelland

The proposal was unanimously accepted.

12 Brown Sign Update

It will cost £2,000-£3,000 to erect 8-10 signs in different places within the village.

It was mentioned that this idea had been discussed for two or three years. In the past it had been found that insurance had to be paid for the person erecting the signs. Some People **had** become lost searching for our church. Signs may pick up occasional visitors but many people now use mobile phone navigation.

If we postpone paying for this at this difficult time, in the future we will not need to go through the process again.

The feeling of the meeting was that it was a good idea which we'd like to support in the future but wish to currently put "on hold" until the financial climate is better. Just now, it can't be a priority.

Brown Sign Update continued.....

Thanks were extended to John Harbidge, Lynne Brunton, Brian Cooke and Brenda Shaw for all their careful work with regard to the Brown Sign project.

13 AOB

There was no further business.

Especial thanks were extended to Mary Darby and Lois Townsend for joining the meeting via telephone link.

After a final prayer and blessing, the meeting finished at 8.55 pm.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 16 March 2021

AoB must be notified to the Chair 24 hours before the PCC Meeting.

Please submit any reports to the PCC Secretary by Tuesday 9 March. Thank you!