



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 19.30 by Zoom

In the Chair and Zoom host: Joan Ridgway

Secretary: Jill Mather

**Present:** Caroline Adams (CA), Anita Atherton (AA), Tim Bayton (TB), Susan Coombs (SC), Stuart Macwilliam (SM), Rachel Martindill (RM), Jill Mather (JM), Charlotte Payne (CP), Mike Payne (MGP), Marilyn Pegg (MP), Fr Henry Pryse (Fr H), Pat Read (PR), Joan Ridgway (JR) Nigel Ridgway (NR), Cherie Snell (CS), Fr Steve Turner (Fr S), Jim Weeks (JW), Nigel Williams (NW)

Fr H opened the meeting with prayer, keeping in mind Fairtrade Fortnight and the church community and neighbourhood of St David's on the day after the tragic fire in the parish.

**1. Apologies** were received from Mark Davie (MD), Anne Killingback (AK) and Stuart Macwilliam (from 20.00)

### **2. Correspondence**

The PCC received the record of correspondence received between 30.11.20 and 22.02.21 noting that letters of thanks had been received from each of the charities to whom the PCC had made donations.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

- i. The Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 30.11.20 were approved as a correct record. (Proposed SM, seconded TB, passed nem con)
- ii. The notes from the Standing Committee meetings held between 30.11.20 and 22.02.21 were received.

### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes and the notes of the Standing Committee**

- i. *PCC Minute 4ii and SC notes 6v (09.12.20) and 3ii (16.12.20): Being an Eco Church, a presentation from Chris Keppie*

The Chair reminded members that, although the original proposal had been to invite Chris Keppie to speak to the PCC meeting on 22.02.21, the arrangement now was to hold a separate, dedicated meeting to hear a presentation on becoming an Eco Church. Chris Keppie had offered two dates, 10.03.21 or 15.03.21, and had sent suggestions of pre-reading and preparation on the eco church website: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>  
It was agreed:

- to hold the meeting at 19.00 on 10.03.21 by Zoom
- and that it be an open meeting, advertised in the bulletin (Action: TB)

- and that the church gardening team specifically be invited (Action: RM)
- ii. *SC finance note 3i (20.01.21) and Treasurer's Report to PCC: the surplus of £4000*  
The PCC approved the proposal that the 2020 surplus of £4000 in Unrestricted Funds be held in Restricted Funds during 2021 to be repaid to the Diocesan Common Fund if finances continue to show a surplus.  
(Proposed RM, seconded PR, passed nem con)
  - iii. *SC finance note 3iii (20.01.21): internal controls for internet banking*  
The Standing Committee asked the PCC to approve TB as independent PCC overseer of the online banking system.  
(Proposed JW, seconded RM, passed nem con)
  - iv. *SC finance note 3iv (20.01.21): donations to the Devon Historic Churches Fund (DHCF)*  
Currently the PCC makes an annual donation to the DHCF of £20. The Standing Committee asked the PCC to approve raising the amount to £30 to become an annual subscription.  
TB questioned the reasoning for this decision as he did not believe St James' to be an historic church. JR said that, although she agreed that St James' was not an historic church, the annual subscription of £30 would go towards the maintenance of the many historic churches in need of support.  
(Proposed SC, seconded SM, passed nem con)
  - v. *SC note 4ii: contact with Christians Together Across Exeter (CTAX)*  
TB reported that, having been elected by the PCC as executive member of CTAX, he had concerns about the lack of financial planning, clear accounting or organisation in this body which collects funds from its local member churches but appears not to have a clear vision and direction. Fr H remarked that his own experience of ecumenical work in central Exeter was with a different organisation, Churches Together in Central Exeter. MP, though, felt it was important to support ecumenical initiatives such as these. CA asked if CTAX was the organiser of the central Exeter Easter events and was informed that it was not.  
Action: as NR had already taken this matter to Sheila Swarbrick (who chaired CTAX in the past) the PCC agreed to consider the matter when she has replied.

(SM left the meeting 19.59)

## 5. Questions and Matters Arising from the Rector's Report

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by Fr H. (See file)  
In addition, Fr H drew attention to:

- i. Looking Back 13: his thanks to the clergy, servers, monitors and administrators for their work in providing services during the pandemic
- ii. Looking Back 9: his thanks to the children's leaders for the Zoom gatherings

and

- iii. NR asked about the possible placement for Liz Grier (Looking Forward 6). Fr H replied that it was still to be confirmed.

## **6. Questions and Matters Arising from the Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts**

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by the finance team and approved the annual accounts. (See file)

(Proposed TB, seconded SC, passed nem con)

## **7. Charities to be supported 2020 – 2021**

- i. JR reminded members that in making decisions PCC members should refer to papers circulated before the meeting: the Charity Giving report (August 2020), the PCC Minute 7 (30.11.20), the Charitable Giving 2021 proposal and the two proposals to support Traidcraft and Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI).
- ii. With regret, the PCC acknowledged that the Melanesian Mission, Compassionate Friends and Balloons did not meet the agreed criteria and would not receive a donation in 2021.
- iii. The PCC agreed to continue to support USPG, Mother's Union, Tearfund, Hospiscare, ICE, St Peter's Malawi Education Trust, the latter dependent upon receipt of their annual accounts.  
(Proposed SC, seconded MGP, passed nem con)
- iv. The proposal to support Traidcraft was agreed, but with clarification to be brought to the PCC by CP about the specific branch of this charity.  
(Proposed CP, seconded AA, passed nem con)  
*(CP's clarification after the meeting: the recommendation is to support The Traidcraft Exchange (Charity number: 1048752) which is the branch of the charity which provides practical support/is operational in developing countries.*
- v. The proposal to support ECI was agreed.  
(Proposed MP, seconded TB, passed nem con)
- vi. It was proposed by RM that letters of explanation be sent to the three charities no longer to receive donations. Action: JM

## **8. Questions and Matters Arising from the Safeguarding Report and Action Plan**

The PCC received with thanks the report and Action Plan (Dashboard) previously circulated by CA. (See file)

- i. CA explained that the urgent red flag action – to review the list of non-church activities for children and vulnerable adults taking place on church premises – was overdue, having been reviewed last in October 2019. The non-church groups require annual approval by the PCC to hire and meet on church premises, although these groups had not met for the greater part of 2020.

- ii. The PCC agreed that these groups should continue to meet in the church hall when regulations allow, submitting their risk assessments in the usual way.  
(Proposed TB, seconded SC, passed nem con)
- iii. CA drew attention to the amber flags in the Dashboard, assuring the PCC they were in hand.
- iv. JR thanked CA for her work to ensure safeguarding procedures at St James' are rigorous, in fact are seen as exemplary by many in the diocese.

## **9. Questions and Matters Arising from the Assistant Curate's Report**

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by Fr S. (See file)

## **10. Questions and Matters Arising from the Churchwardens' Report and Approval of Annual Statutory Report**

The PCC received with thanks the report previously circulated by NR and NW. (See file)

- i. NR explained that the Annual Statutory Report is prepared by the churchwardens and is a document sent to the Charity Commission and open for public scrutiny.
- ii. CA said that the report should include a Safeguarding statement:

*The PCC is committed to the safeguarding of our young people and vulnerable adults and reviews its safeguarding policy annually. Details of safeguarding contacts can be found on St James' Church website and on the notice boards in the church and church hall. In July 2020 the PCC signed up to the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, an online tool introduced by the Diocese of Exeter, which helps with the management of policies, procedures and training. A safeguarding report is submitted to each PCC meeting throughout the year, with updates on training, the action plan produced by the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and information from the diocese.*

- iii. The PCC approved the Annual Statutory Report with the addition of the Safeguarding statement.  
(Proposed NR, seconded TB, passed nem con)

## **11. Questions and Matters Arising from Committee reports**

The PCC received with thanks the reports previously circulated by NR (Fabric Report) and by CA (Health and Safety Report). (See file)

- i. Fabric Report Item 4: NR asked if the PCC was happy for him to approach the "nomadic" churches to offer the church hall for their use during the pandemic whilst some of their regular buildings were unavailable to hire. TB thought it an excellent way to support our ecumenical friends.

- ii. Although there was no report from the Communications Group, TB reported that the Contact magazine was in production and due to be delivered to homes in the parish from Palm Sunday (28.03.21).

## **I2. Any other business**

- i. TB asked if dates had been agreed for PCC meetings after the APCM. RM replied that they could not be set until the APCM had been held after which the churchwardens and the Rector would bring dates to be approved by the new PCC.

## **I3. Date of next meeting: APCM 21.03.21 at 12.00.**

TB expressed concern about holding the APCM by Zoom alone fearing it might exclude some. The diocese has ruled, however, that APCM's must be held by online or postponed and Fr H was unwilling to postpone saying that the churchwardens and the new PCC must be elected. It was agreed, however, that the Standing Committee should discuss ways of including as many people as possible.

Action: SC to discuss arrangements for holding the APCM by Zoom.

## **I4. Closing prayer (Fr S)**

Fr S concluded the meeting with the prayer from his report to the PCC:

Lord, in this holy season,  
give me the grace to change, to believe I can be changed,  
to take small steps towards my true self –  
from selfishness to service,  
from judgement to mercy,  
from anxiety to faith.

In this holy season,  
help me to give time to prayer  
as you did so often: before a major decision,  
at the end of a long day of coming and going,  
in the time of trial.

Help me to spend time with you every day,  
to set aside my relentless thoughts,  
and abide in you in silence and trust.

In this holy season,  
help me to fast from what is holding me back  
from becoming my true self: my addictions  
to the pleasures of the body,  
to the mental habits which dull my attention,  
to the habits of a lifestyle  
which could never be shared with everyone on the planet.  
Help me to choose my fasting wisely,

and to persevere, with your grace.

In this holy season,  
help me to give alms to my neighbours in need,  
and not just my spare change,  
but to better understand their needs,  
the pain, hidden in plain sight,  
to give of my time and imagination  
to help those who are vulnerable,  
to build the Kingdom in my community.

And in this holy season, Lord,  
help me not to despair when I fall at the first hurdle,  
but to remember your generosity to the labourers  
who came along at the end,  
as much as to those who were there  
from the beginning.

May we all be blessed with the grace to 'give alms to our neighbours in need', the  
time to 'better understand their needs' and the ability to see their 'pain, hidden in  
plain sight.'

**Amen**

Jill Mather  
22.02.21