

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council by Zoom

19th July 2021

at 19.30

In the Chair and Zoom host: Joan Ridgway (JR)

Secretary: Jill Mather (JM)

Present: Caroline Adams (CA), Anita Atherton (AA), Mark Davie (MD), Stuart Macwilliam (SM), Rachel Martindill (RM), Jill Mather (JM), Andrew Mimmack (AM), Charlotte Payne (CP), Mike Payne (MGP), Marilyn Pegg (MP), Fr Henry Pryse (Fr H), Joan Ridgway (JR), Nigel Ridgway (NR), Louise Spencer (LS), Fr Steve Turner (Fr S), Jim Weeks (JW), Nigel Williams (NW)

1. Opening Prayer

Fr H opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Apologies for absence: Tim Bayton (TB), Susan Coombs (SC), Fr Martin Poolton (Fr M), Pat Read (PR)

3. Correspondence (see file)

JR drew attention to the CTaX correspondence and the discussion of the future of Celebrate Together. She also noted receipt of Barbara Morris's communication and the training report from Liz Grier.

4. Approval of Minutes of the last PCC meeting (10.05.21) and receipt of the notes from the standing committee (Proposed SM; seconded AM. Approved nem con)

5. Matters arising, not dealt with elsewhere in the meeting (JR)

i. Appointment of assistant wardens and sidespersons: Minute 3.iii.

It was agreed to postpone the appointments once more and to continue with the monitors for the present.

ii. Becoming an Eco Church: Minute 15 (CP and MGP)

CP apologised for the delay and assured the PCC that she would be placing a message about Eco Church in the bulletin soon.

6. The way ahead: from 19.07.21

i. What might look the same?

ii. What might, could or should change?

JR asked CA to give the PCC a summary of the discussions between Fr H, the churchwardens and the standing committee up to the lifting of national restrictions on 19.07.21. CA started with some key moments:

- Standing committee discussion on 14.07.21 – before detailed advice was available from the government and the Church of England (see file)
- Advice from the diocesan webinar on 15.07.21 with over 260 participants from around the diocese (see file)
- Updated advice from the Church of England late on 16.07.21
(<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance>)

The Church of England made clear that ***the decision on what happens in church settings and events held in church buildings lies with the incumbent***. This applies to acts of worship, to events run by the PCC or Church community and to decisions on hiring out spaces or allowing events to proceed.

Advice from the Church of England, recognises the current increase in Covid-19 infections:

- “At present, incidence of the virus continues to increase with the probability that during the summer numbers will reach or surpass those experienced at the peak of the second wave of the pandemic at the start of the year. Largely due to the success of the vaccination programme, hospitalisations and deaths are much lower, but these too are beginning to rise substantially.”
- It also estimates that 10% of fully vaccinated people will not produce a robust immune response.
- Emphasis is being placed on ventilation, good hygiene practice, wearing of face coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces to protect others and distancing.

CA reported that Fr Henry, in consultation with the churchwardens and the standing committee, would like to recommend that:

- i. Members of the congregation be asked to continue to wear face coverings in the church (unless they are exempt), in order to protect others. Disposable face coverings will be available at the door.
- ii. Hand sanitiser will remain available at the entrances.
- iii. The windows and doors will be left open for ventilation. This is unlikely to be a problem during the summer but it will need to be reviewed for the autumn.
- iv. The chairs in the nave will be set out in rows approximately 1m apart. Additional chairs will not be added to the rows, in order to maintain wider aisles.
- v. There will be an area set aside for socially-distanced individual and pairs of chairs for those who feel particularly vulnerable. Areas will also be set aside in the side chapels and children’s corner for families with young children.
- vi. Booking will no longer be required for the 10.00 Parish Eucharist.
- vii. The orange chairs in the nave will continue to be used for the 8.00 Holy Communion service on Sundays and for Morning Prayer on Thursdays, but they will be arranged slightly differently.
- viii. Live streaming of the 10.00 Parish Eucharist on Sundays will continue.
- ix. Service cards and bulletins will be handed out by monitors, who will take appropriate precautions.
- x. Those who lead or read in the service will remove their face coverings when speaking.

- xi. Hymn books and kneelers will once again be used at the 10.00 Parish Eucharist on Sundays. There will be no singing or use of hymn books at the 8.00 Holy Communion service on Sundays or the 12.00 Holy Communion service on Wednesdays.
- xii. Sharing of the Peace will continue without handshakes or movement around the building, except between those in the same household or support bubble.
- xiii. Holy Communion in one kind will be administered at the nave altar, with one single, stewarded queue in the central aisle. Holy Communion will be taken to those unable to walk to the altar.
- xiv. The sung Mass setting will be led by the choir. There will be a final hymn, which the congregation may sing whilst continuing to wear face coverings. Members of the choir, socially distanced, will remove their face coverings when singing.
- xv. Coffee will be served after the service on the 25.07.21 and people will be encouraged, where possible, to socialise in the grass area outside the hall.
- xvi. The cake for St James' Day will be displayed and blessed in the church, and then cut and served in a Covid-safe way. Those serving refreshments will wear face coverings and gloves.

CA assured the PCC that these measures would be monitored over the coming weeks and reviewed in the light of further guidance and local data. A risk assessment for services from the 19.07.21 had been undertaken. Separate risk assessments for life events (funerals, weddings and baptisms) would be conducted with the appropriate people.

Discussion and questions:

- a) NR felt it was important to continue the Covid monitor system for the time being.
- b) CA added that the track and trace system for the Parish Eucharist on Sundays would be continued. Fr H asked whether the system for Holy Communion at 8.00 am on Sundays would also continue; CA assured him that a member of the regular congregation would continue to keep a list of names.
- c) AM asked whether cards could be issued to give to people who wanted to sit alone. CA said that a note in the bulletin would ask people to be sensitive about sitting next to those not in their bubble or family. JR said that the area set aside for those wishing to maintain more than a 1m distance could resolve that fear (see 6v).
- d) AM asked whether there was a plan to shut the building for 48 hours and to deep clean, or to shut the building for 72 hours if a Covid case were reported. CA assured him there is a procedure in the risk assessment. She advised that funerals might be scheduled midweek where possible.
- e) MD asked about ways of communicating the information to ensure wide coverage. JR replied that the bulletin was distributed widely and CA added that word of mouth is also effective after announcements in church.
- f) Fr H asked about lifts to church. CA said that friends could now give lifts but that there was no current guidance from the Church of England on reinstating the transport rota. LS and MP indicated that they would be willing to give lifts where needed but would keep the car windows open and ask passengers to wear face coverings. CA felt that there should be a cautious approach to reinstating the transport rota but that lifts organised in an unofficial, friendly way would be quite acceptable. Fr H recommended some informal information-gathering on who might need lifts and be willing to offer them.
- g) CP suggested that those on the coffee rota be contacted to ask whether they were willing to start helping with serving refreshments again. It was recommended that this request be sent by email and so

CP will send details to the Office accordingly as CP does not have the email addresses nor the time to contact the various members individually.

- h) MD requested a review date. It was agreed that the standing committee should review arrangements on 01.09.21 and that JM would contact PCC members during the previous week to ask for their views.

- iii. Our vision for the longer term:

JR observed that, although there was not time in *this* meeting, now might be a good time to look more widely at the way ahead, to take stock and review our mission and vision as we move out of the pandemic. Several people mentioned topics to discuss, such as: streaming services and events, work with children, house groups, evening services, Eco Church, coffee mornings for certain community groups. Fr H noted that a dedicated, single-topic meeting could be useful. NR and JM thought that August would be a good time to start the discussions with a conversation after the Parish Eucharist on a Sunday morning. CA agreed that it was important not to wait too long, especially as young people's activities would be starting with the new term.

- It was agreed that an initial, open meeting would be held on 15.08.21 at 11.30.
- PCC members will also seek the views of members of the congregation beforehand.

7. Rector's Report

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by Fr H (see file).

In addition:

- i. Fr H had delivered a card from St James' to the retiring Headteachers at Stoke Hill Infant and Junior Schools.
- ii. Fr H said that Ben Bradshaw MP had sent his good wishes to St James' for the reopening.
- iii. He thanked CA, RM, Hannah Martindill, Anne Killingback and JM for the family party on 18.07.21.
- iv. Fr H asked the PCC to give its consent to an application by Joan Ridgway for Admission and Licensing as a Reader at St James'.
 - The PCC supported the application of Joan Ridgway for Admission as a Reader and for licensing to this parish. (Proposed SM, seconded MD, agreed nem con)
 - The PCC acknowledged that Reader ministry is a voluntary ministry and accepted its responsibility in agreeing a basis for the payment of all reasonable ministry expenses.
 - Fr H confirmed that he would support this application and will participate actively in the supervision, support and pastoral care of the Reader.
 - Fr H said that he looked forward to JR's ministry and explained that a Working Agreement had already been submitted to the diocesan office.

8. Treasurer's Report

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by NR (see file).

- i. NR said that he was grateful to God and to the people of St James' that the finances were sound.
- ii. NR flagged up the unsustainability of the work on the hall administration.

- iii. The quinquennial inspection: Mark Ledgard was particularly concerned by the flat roofs on the church, which are reaching the point at which bitumen repairs will no longer be sufficient. NR invited PCC members to join him in his meeting with Mark Ledgard on 20.07.21.
- iv. NR asked the PCC for permission to launch an appeal to raise funds for streaming equipment. (JW proposed, SM seconded, agreed nem con)

9. Churchwardens' Report

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by AM (see file).

- i. AM reported that he and RM had attended the Archdeacon's Visitation in Crediton with Fr H on 07.07.21.
- ii. RM asked members of the PCC to volunteer to help with serving refreshments on 25.07.21.

10. Committee Reports, including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Fabric Report.

The PCC received with thanks the reports previously submitted (see file).

There were no further comments or questions on these reports.

11. Any other business (to be notified to Jill Mather 48 hours in advance)

- i. Fr S said it was "an absolute joy" to be able to join the Zoom and see everyone tonight. He reported, though, that he was still in much pain and is very grateful for everyone's support. He said that he was missing everyone a lot – and had found it very tough when his progress towards recovery had seemed to be backwards. He ended by saying, "I can't wait to be back".
- ii. Fr H thanked Fr S for coming to the meeting and for sharing his thoughts with us.

12. Dates of next meetings:

- i. Open PCC discussion on "Our vision for the longer term" on Sunday 15.08.21 at 11.30.
- ii. Standing committee meeting to review reopening arrangements on Wednesday 01.09.21 at 17.00.
- iii. PCC meeting on 04.10.21 at 19.30.

13. Closing prayer: Fr H held in prayer Fr S and his family as well as all those on our hearts. He closed the meeting with the evening collect and the Grace.

Jill Mather
PCC Secretary