



Minutes of the Parochial Church Council by Zoom
Monday 7th February 2022 at 19.30

In the chair: Joan Ridgway (JR)
Secretary: Jill Mather (JM)

Present: Caroline Adams (CA), Susan Coombs (SC), Mark Davie (MD), Stuart Macwilliam (SM), Rachel Martindill (RM), Jill Mather (JM), Andrew Mimmack (AM), Charlotte Payne (CP), Mike Payne (MGP), Marilyn Pegg (MP), Joan Ridgway (JR), Nigel Ridgway (NR), Louise Spencer (LS), Jim Weeks (JW), Nigel Williams (NW)

MD opened the meeting with prayer.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Anita Atherton (AA), Tim Bayton (TB), Fr Henry Pryse (Fr H), Pat Read (PR), Fr Steve Turner (Fr S)
2. **Correspondence** (previously circulated by email).
 - i. JR drew attention to the letters of thanks received from charities supported in 2021.
3. **The minutes of the last PCC meeting** (29.11.21) were approved and the notes from the Standing Committee (21.01.22) received. (Proposed NR, seconded CA, approved nem con)
4. **Matters arising from the PCC meeting**

- i. Minute 5 ii Emmaus course

Action: JR will speak to Fr Martin about the possibility of running this or a similar course in 2022.

The Standing Committee had discussed this and recommended that an Emmaus course might be run after the welcoming month. It had also discussed possible Lent courses (see SC notes 21.01.22).

JR reported to PCC that since the Standing Committee meeting two Lent courses using the USPG materials had been planned and advertised in the bulletin.

- ii. Minute 5 iv Funeral planning advice

Action: Fr Martin will be asked for his thoughts, perhaps looking at a date in spring 2022.

TB had spoken to Fr M, who had offered to start a course on Wednesday 27th April at 2.00 pm. TB had checked that the hall was free and proposed that the date be booked, and the event publicised via the normal channels, including in the magazine.

The PCC extended thanks to Fr M.

- iii. Minute 11 ii Steriliser in hall

NR said that Sue Pinn had recommended that the ancient steriliser should be scrapped as it would need substantial repairs costing in the region of £370. MP wondered whether wider appeals for help to repair it might be made. NR pointed out that as it is not a dishwasher everything needs to be washed first before being sterilized. Now that Lunch Club no longer meets and is to be replaced by cooperation with the council-run event in Summer Lane, a steriliser is unnecessary as occasional hall-users wash up by hand.

It was agreed it should be removed to create more space in the small kitchen.

- iv. Minute 8 Domestic Abuse online course to be completed by PCC members

CA reported that Anita Atherton, Tim Bayton, Susan Coombs, Rachel Martindill, Jill Mather, Andrew Mimmack, Charlotte Payne, Mike Payne and Joan Ridgway had completed the course on 'Raising

Awareness of Domestic Abuse. She offered to email the link directly again to those who hadn't yet completed it.

v. Minute 9 iv Repair to pathway to the hall

NR reported that the quotation from Kennford Tarmac for £8,310 (including VAT) had been accepted and the price secured by payment in advance. The work will be carried out in the week before Easter, to be completed before Good Friday, 15.04.22.

vi. Minute 9 v Donations made to charities in 2021

The payments were made. Letters of thanks had been received from all except the St Peter's Malawi Education Trust. RM volunteered to follow this up, reporting that the treasurer was currently on leave.

vii. Minute 12 Welcoming Month to be discussed by Standing Committee

Ideas discussed by SC:

- a. An all-age service with children participating and inviting their friends with refreshments and games on the grass after the service. *Action: JAM and 11-ups leaders*
- b. A Big Cream Tea in the Platinum Jubilee year. *Action: RM and Social Committee*
- c. A Songs of Praise event to which neighbours and friends could be invited, possibly in combination with the Big Cream Tea event, with a poll taken to choose favourite hymns.
- d. The PCC heard that TB had planned to offer Choral Evensong on 15.05.22.
- e. Printed invitations to hand out for events.
- f. More ideas and volunteers to be sought through the bulletin.
- g. Also planned is a quiz night in the hall on 28.05.22. JM offered to coordinate and CP, MGP and LS offered to help.

Matters arising from the Standing Committee meeting

viii. Note 5 - the SC recommended a vote between Monday and Wednesday evenings for PCC meetings in 2022 – 2023.

The PCC approved the move to Wednesdays. (Votes: Wednesday: 11, including 4 proxy votes; Monday: 6, including 1 proxy vote; abstentions: 3.)

Meetings will avoid the first Wednesday of the month when Messy Church meets.

Dates will be brought to the first meeting of the new PCC.

ix. Note 6iii – church email addresses for clergy team and officers

To keep church business and private business separate, it had been suggested that church email addresses be used by church officers. CA thought it was worth exploring. AM asked if other churches used their organisation's email addresses. JW said that in his experience about 75% of them do.

Action: NR and CA to investigate and bring a proposal to the next PCC meeting.

5. Questions and Matters Arising from the Rector's report

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

6. Questions and Matters Arising from the Assistant Curate's report

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

7. Questions and Matters Arising from the Treasurer's report and approval of draft accounts

- i. NR was pleased to report that finances were sound and that St James' is one of the parishes in Devon paying a substantial Common Fund. Although £15000 had been generated from hall lettings, he made the point that each participating adult member of St James' would need to give £60 a month to ensure the Common Fund payments could be made and the running costs of the church met.
- ii. *The draft accounts were approved by the PCC. (Proposed JW, seconded RM, agreed nem con)*

8. Charities to be supported 2021 – 2022

- i. JR reminded the PCC of the criteria agreed on 30.11.20 to assess in an objective and transparent way the charities deserving of our donations.
- ii. These were:
 - a. The objectives of the charity should be in line with our objectives as a Church.
 - b. There should be a current connection between St James' Church and the charity concerned.
 - c. The charity should spend no more than 25% of its income on operating and fundraising.
 - d. The cash and short-term investments held by the charity should be no greater than 50% of its annual income.
- iii. The list of charities supported in the past had been circulated to PCC members before the meeting. The assessment of charities previously supported showed that Hospiscare, The Melanesian Mission and ICE did not meet the agreed criteria.
- iv. Members of the Church family had been invited to submit other charities for consideration to the PCC. Submissions had been received in support of Christians Against Poverty (TB) and The Fairtrade Foundation (CP and MGP). Both charities meet the criteria.
- v. There had been two submissions to the PCC in response to the failure of some charities to meet the criteria.
 - a. Fr H wished it to be known that he found it "painful", "embarrassing" and "awkward" to be the Rector of a church in the Exeter diocese which had withdrawn its financial support from the Melanesian Mission, an Anglican mission agency. Katie Drew, its Chief Officer, is one of his colleagues and he had been invited to visit Melanesia with the charity. He asked that a way might be found to support this charity.
 - b. MD was concerned by the way our criteria for deciding the charities we support seemed to be producing some perverse results in our decisions for 2022. Many charities had seen their income fall drastically since the start of the pandemic: charity shops were closed for long periods, sponsored events were cancelled, social events such as coffee mornings couldn't be held, while at the same time the needs of those they exist to help had often increased. Charities can't cut their costs at the same rate as their income, and this had meant that the criteria we adopted in more 'normal' times no longer appeared to reflect the reality they were facing. Given this new situation, MD submitted that we would be wrong to apply the criteria inflexibly and to make a hasty decision about the charities we support. He suggested that the decision be deferred to a future meeting when we have time to consider the new situation these charities were facing. He added information about The Melanesian Mission and Hospiscare. (See Correspondence)
- vi. A reply to MD's email had been received from TB:
 - c. He agreed with MD that our criteria may be having an unanticipated effect in the light of recent changes in economic circumstances. However, he was strongly against the idea of applying agreed criteria flexibly. It would be better to defer the decision on charities until the November meeting of the PCC, by which time we would also have access to more recent accounts from each of the charities suggested.
 In the meantime, if anyone is no longer happy with the existing criteria, the solution would be a concrete proposal of a revised set of criteria for the charities we support. He was of the opinion that flexible application of our criteria would be tantamount to having none, and we would run the risk of bias in favour of certain charities that don't correspond to the standards we have set after careful consideration. As he believed it would be unwise to return to a situation in which there were no adopted criteria, he proposed that the PCC should maintain the present criteria until such time as a revised set might be adopted.

With regard to the Melanesian Mission and Hospiscare in particular, as these charities seem to be especially dear to St James', he suggested we ask them directly for justification of why their income has risen, yet the amounts they spend on their charitable objectives have not grown in line with this increased income. When the criteria for our giving were proposed initially, it was agreed unanimously that our gifts must go to those charities that will use them most beneficially; our gifts should be neither hoarded nor spent predominantly on running costs rather than on the stated objectives of the charities. He firmly believed in upholding this principle and averred that the present criteria represented a sound basis for doing so.

- vii. In discussion, MD accepted the need not to be woolly in decision-making but spoke in favour of being human, recognising that in a pandemic new criteria might be needed. CP and MGP supported the points made by MD and Fr H.
- viii. NR acknowledged the problem of judging accounts ending in March of the previous financial year and proposed the decision be deferred until November 2022.

Actions

- a. *Decision deferred. (Proposed NR, seconded JW, agreed nem con)*
- b. *Revised criteria should be brought to the first PCC meeting of the new PCC.*

9. Questions and Matters Arising from the Safeguarding report and Safeguarding Dashboard

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

In addition:

- i. CA reported that Jane Williams had completed the basic safeguarding course since she had submitted her report.
- ii. Although the dashboard had been up to date until recently, CA reported that there were some new orange areas in the RAG ratings to be addressed. *Action: CA to report to next PCC meeting.*
- iii. CA has completed the annual review of safeguarding policies and documents of the non-church groups of children and vulnerable adults who use the hall: Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Isca Voices. RM added that children were present at the City Community Church event in the hall. *The PCC approved CA's proposal to allow these groups to use the hall, their safeguarding policies having been checked. (Proposed CA, seconded NR, agreed nem con)*

10. Questions and Matters Arising from the Churchwardens' report and approval of Annual Statutory Report

The PCC received with thanks the reports previously submitted by RM and AM (see file).

- i. The Churchwardens recommended the Annual Statutory Report to the PCC. The Chair thanked AM, RM and NR for their work in compiling this important publicly accountable document. *The Annual Statutory Report was approved by the PCC. (Proposed MD, CP, nem con)*

11. Questions and Matters Arising from Committee reports: Health & Safety, Fabric, Young People

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

12. Any other business

Update from Social Justice Group

- i. Fairtrade Fortnight (21.02.22 – 06.03.22): on Sunday 06.03.22 there will be a Traidcraft stall and Fairtrade snacks donated as refreshments in the hall after the Eucharist. Sue Errington will speak briefly about Fairtrade coffee and the challenge to producers posed by climate change.
- ii. Becoming an Eco church: CP proposed a morning event to launch our commitment by filling in the survey together. Saturday April 2nd was agreed and will be advertised in bulletin to encourage wide participation.
- iii. NR suggested a regular "Did you know?" fact in the bulletin to highlight Eco issues.

- iv. CP and MGP are keen to work with young people on social justice and climate issues, offering to run the occasional session with them. This was warmly welcomed by the PCC.

13. Date of next meetings

APCM on 20.03.22 at 12.00 in the hall.

14. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with the Grace at 20.55

Jill Mather
PCC Secretary

