



Minutes of the Parochial Church Council

Wednesday 20th July 2022 at 19.30

By Zoom

In the chair: Joan Ridgway (JR)

Secretary: Jill Mather (JMM)

Present: Caroline Adams (CA), Tim Bayton (TB), Susan Coombs (SC), Jill Mather (JMM), Andrew Mimmack (AM), Mike Payne (MGP), Marilyn Pegg (MP), Pat Read (PR arrived 19.45), Joan Ridgway (JR), Nigel Ridgway (NR), Louise Spencer (LS), Fr Steve Turner (Fr S), Jim Weeks (JW), Nigel Williams (NW). Observing: Josh Chesworth (from St Matt's)

1. Welcome

Fr S opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Apologies for absence: Anita Atherton (AA), Mark Davie (MD), Stuart Macwilliam (SM), Rachel Martindill (RM), Fr Henry Pryse (Fr H)

3. Correspondence (previously circulated by email).

- i. Note 2: the purchase of a baby grand piano – PCC approval had been sought by email on 30.06.22. The purchase was agreed with 13 “yes” responses by the deadline with 2 further ones later.
- ii. Note 7: an email of thanks had been received from Rowan Alcock of the City Community Church after the joint Evensong held on 17.07.22. JR said that it had been a joyful event with 35 people attending. MP and TB agreed but asked that in future music from both churches might be included.
- iii. Note 3: JMM drew the PCC's attention to the news in *Roots and Shoots* that Grace Davie will receive a St Boniface award at the Cathedral on 23.07.22. Congratulations to Grace!
- iv. Devon Historic Churches Fun Day: **JMM to investigate and advertise this event** and to send information to TB for inclusion in the bulletin.

4. The minutes of the last two PCC meetings (11.05.22 and 15.06.22) were approved and the notes from the Standing Committee were received. (Proposed SC, seconded AM)

5. Matters arising from the PCC meeting

From the PCC meeting on 11.05.22

Minute 7ii: **Email addresses for church officers and clergy**

Several church officers now use church email addresses or the generic church office email address and TB suggested that external communications might reasonably be conducted through St James' accounts. The

intention is gradually to move towards church email addresses for all officers and clergy. The discussion will continue at Standing Committee.

Minute 12xv: **Safeguarding documents to PCC members**

- a) The revised safeguarding policy and section 7 from the diocesan handbook on reporting concerns and allegations have been sent out to all PCC members.
- b) NR raised the need for a **complaints procedure** in the parish. **Action: NR to discuss with CA.**

Minute 14vi: **Tree planting for the Queen's platinum jubilee**

AM had investigated the need for a faculty and confirmed by email that this would not be necessary. Once final arrangements have been agreed by the PCC, an online application to the Archdeacon's office will be required.

NR asked whether enough consideration had been given to this major decision and asked that advice be sought from an external arboricultural expert before a tree is planted in the winter. He offered to find a suitable person and report to the next meeting.

Minute 15: **Meetings in person or by Zoom**

A request for a Zoom meeting this time had been received in the light of rising Covid infections and the approaching holiday season. JR said that there had previously been a preference for face-to-face meetings at least in summer; PR said although she preferred Zoom in the winter, she felt that in-person meetings were more productive and TB added that as we meet in church services regularly he saw no reason for not meeting as a PCC. As the committee room is a much smaller space, he suggested meeting in church. CA proposed that decisions should be made before each meeting but with the preference for in-person meetings where possible.

From the Standing Committee meeting on 06.07.22

Note 6: **Dogs in church**

JR summarised the discussion at Standing Committee (see the note from 06.07.22 included as Appendix 1 to these minutes). JMM has sent this note to the person who made the complaint. TB asked whether dog owners had been spoken to; Fr S responded that he had ascertained from one that she had received no direct complaint. NW reported that he had had to clear up urine in the middle of a service. JW pointed out that this was a new venture, not a long-standing tradition, and felt that dogs were potentially dangerous and unpredictable and a distraction in services; he believed that owners should be asked to leave them at home. SC, TB and JMM agreed. Discussion followed about dogs attending some of the smaller services, and CA raised again the suggestion of a dogs' area away from the main body of the congregation. It was also suggested that current dog owners be asked *why* they were choosing to bring their pets.

JW said that it was becoming apparent that the PCC needed to adopt a clear position, with no halfway measures. He asked: are dogs welcome in church services or not?

SC proposed and NW seconded the proposal: dogs (except assistance dogs) should not be brought to church services (except the pet service). Carried with 11 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention.

Action: AM will explain the decision to the dog owners.

Note 7: **Parish profile and vision**

Standing Committee had agreed that it is time to start drawing up the parish profile. NR asked PCC members to consider and pray about this over the summer. JMM spoke of the importance also of a vision for the parish within the profile: a sense of direction as well as a description of the context. TB suggested starting discussions with several members of the congregation over the summer and PR agreed that membership of a group should not be restricted to PCC members.

Agreed: SC (on 31.08.22) to agree a working party to meet in September. In the meantime, the matter will be held in prayer and discussions held over the summer.

6. Questions and matters arising from the Rector's report

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

The PCC was told that the Harvest Supper is likely to be different this year, perhaps a ploughman's; the Social Committee will confirm arrangements soon.

7. Questions and matters arising from the Assistant Curate's report

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

8. Questions and matters arising from the Treasurer's report

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

NR reiterated his concern voiced at Standing Committee that giving has dipped in recent months. He will prepare a letter to communicant members asking them to reconsider their giving.

9. Questions and matters arising from the Churchwardens' report

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

10. Questions and matters arising from the Safeguarding report

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

She drew attention in her report to:

- our safeguarding dashboard with no red areas, most green, and just a few amber areas which are in hand
- progress on the training of PCC members
- the in-person training at St Mark's
- changes in the safeguarding team at the diocese
- Safeguarding Sunday: 20.11.22
- "Do everything in love" – from the diocesan safeguarding newsletter

11. Questions and matters arising from the Young People's report

The PCC received with thanks the report previously submitted by CA, JMM and JW (see file).

- All three groups (Messy Church, JAM and 11-ups) have reconvened this year, with numbers starting to grow and a sense of a community of young people starting to emerge.

- Some young people are also interested in singing in the choir, serving in the Eucharist and helping with the streaming of services.

12. Questions and matters arising from the Health and Safety report

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

CA drew attention to the need to renew white lines at emergency exits and in the carpark, raising a concern about the number of cars parked in the middle on Sunday mornings. She requested that a hashed area be painted to ensure that the route to the hall is not blocked. JW said that people needed to be reminded that the carpark should be reserved for those less mobile, and AM added that the Mount Pleasant Health Centre car park is available for extra parking on Sundays.

NR will explore costs of renewing lines in the carpark.

13. Questions and matters arising from the Fabric report

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

He summarised the main points:

- Utility bills will be rising.
- A team effort had effected the repairs to the vandalised bench.
- The west door has been affected by heat.
- The church will need to be closed for three days in September to sand and re-polish the floor.

14. Any other business

- Pat Cockman has asked to start a coffee morning in the church hall on the last Friday of each month, starting on 30.09.22. The PCC were supportive of this venture and AM asked how it might be advertised: TB will include it in *Contact*; it will be posted on the website and mentioned at Messy Church; it can also be advertised by posters. CA will check with Pat over the safeguarding arrangements. TB mentioned to the PCC that volunteers would be welcome.
- AM reported that Simon Lygo had joined the Communications Group.

15. Dates of next meetings

- Standing Committee on 31.08.22 at 9.30.
- PCC on 21.09.22 at 19.30.

16. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with the Grace at 20.54.

Jill Mather
PCC Secretary

Appendix I: Standing Committee note on dogs in church

I. Dogs in church

Having received a complaint from a member of the congregation, AM had asked SC to discuss the issue of increasing numbers of dogs in church.

JM's opinion was that for people with severe allergies, the presence of dogs was exclusive, whereas dog owners would still be included if they were asked to leave their dogs at home. This would not apply to assistance dogs.

TB agreed with JM, adding that those with phobias, particularly children, are also excluded by the presence of dogs. He also wondered if dogs were a distraction in services.

NR suggested that dogs and their owners should sit in a separate part of the building to avoid interaction during services. JM thought that a corner could cause more problems between different breeds of dogs!

CA agreed adding that not all dogs are kept in complete control, one even having relieved itself in church. Some small dogs are a trip hazard, moving in and out of the aisle; several members of the congregation have sticks and are wobbly on feet. She did, though, recognise that a dog can be a talking point for some and thought it would be sad to ban all dogs from church, hoping that a compromise might be found.

RM said she personally didn't have a problem and there had only been one complaint. She reminded SC that there had been other dogs attending in the past. The point was made, though, that there have recently been several concerns and conversations about the increasing number of dogs, even if those concerns have not become formal complaints.

Fr H was definitely of the opinion that dogs shouldn't be taken up to communion – unanimous agreement.

Fr S said he had hoped his dog might be a "bridge" for people uncertain about coming to church. He supported the idea of having a specified dog area and said that owners should be considerate to others, but he felt that dogs are very important companions for some people.

MD, in recognising that dogs are good companions, was also concerned about possible exclusion of some people. He pointed out the pastoral challenge of asking people to stop bringing their dogs at this late stage.

TB wondered if the dog owners were aware of the issue. He suggested a conversation was started with the owners and JM agreed, saying that conversations should be held with both sides so that all knew the matter was being taken seriously.

Actions:

Fr S, as a dog owner himself, will have a conversation with one of the owners and the church wardens will discuss the matter with others.

JM will share the SC note with the person who had made the complaint.