



Minutes of the Parochial Church Council

Wednesday 23rd November 2022 at 19.30

Committee Room

In the chair: Joan Ridgway (JR)

Secretary: Jill Mather (JMM)

Present: Tim Bayton (TB), Susan Coombs (SC), Mark Davie (MD), Rachel Martindill (RM), Jill Mather (JMM), Andrew Mimmack (AM), Mike Payne (MGP), Marilyn Pegg (MP), Fr Henry Pryse (Fr H), Pat Read (PR), Joan Ridgway (JR), Nigel Ridgway (NR), Louise Spencer (LS), Fr Steve Turner (Fr S), Nigel Williams (NW)

1. **Opening prayer** and welcome

Fr H opened the meeting, holding in prayer the people of Ukraine and Fr S and his family preparing for the move to Torrington.

2. **Apologies** for absence: Anita Atherton (AA), Caroline Adams (CA), Stuart Macwilliam (SM), Fr M Poolton, Jim Weeks (JW)

3. **Correspondence** (previously circulated by email) was received.

4. The **Minutes** of the PCC meeting (21.09.22) were approved and the notes from the Standing Committee were received. (Proposed NR, seconded MGP, approved nem.con)

5. **Matters arising** from PCC Minutes and SC notes

- i. SC note 5i: wardens to bring a date to PCC for a **welcome event for new people**. RM wondered whether breakfast in the hall on a Saturday in January might be preferable to a late afternoon gathering in winter, but it was pointed out that many young people have commitments on Saturday mornings which could impact on the several new families to be invited. After discussion, and checking the hall diary, **it was agreed that the PCC would cater for and host a Sunday afternoon tea party at 15.30 on 29.01.22 in the hall.** (Prop MGP, seconded JMM.)

Action: JMM to create an invitation; wardens to draw up a list of names; PCC be asked in the new year to provide contributions to the tea.

- ii. SC note 2ii: there has been no further progress on **white lines** in the car park.
- iii. SC note 5ii: adopting **Hall Master system for hall bookings**. NR reported that he was due to speak later in the week to Gary Stone, who runs the system for St Sidwell's community project. MD proposed a vote of thanks to RM and NR for managing the hall bookings up to this point.
- iv. **Parish Profile and Vision** – with the retirement of Philip Sourbutt we are expecting to have a meeting with the Revd Mike Clark in March (see SC notes 01.11.22).
- v. Dogs in church: AM reported that a set of guidelines have been agreed by the Rector, the church wardens and CA (Health & Safety representative).

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

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

- i. He added:
 - that he has updated his safeguarding training (Leadership Pathways)
 - that he was looking forward to visiting three Year 4 classes at Stoke Hill Junior School
 - that the harvest supper has been rescheduled to 18th February 2023
- ii. Fr H concluded his remarks by saying what a "very good companion" **Fr Steve** has been to him while at St James': he is his last curate and he "will miss him when he leaves". Fr H stated that he was particularly grateful for Fr S's support after his surgery and during the early months of Covid lockdown, when he facilitated the online services as well as updating the service cards, thereby bequeathing an important legacy. He wished him well in Torrington – a job he felt was made for Fr S.

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

Fr S shared his reflection on presiding at St James' as a priest. He hoped that Fr H might feel some pride in having guided him to the progress he had made – and expressed the hope that members of the congregation might feel they had also been part of his process in becoming a priest. He **thanked everyone at St James'** for all the support and friendship during his curacy.

8. Questions and matters arising from the safeguarding report

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

It was noted that the Action Plan showed only one red area – indicating some members of the PCC yet to complete the training.

9. Questions and matters arising from the treasurer's report, including charity giving

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

- i. NR highlighted from his report his continuing **concern over income and levels of giving** – although he believed it was not the time to launch a stewardship appeal as many are facing difficulties with increased costs of living. A diocesan grant of £1040 for heating will help to address some of the shortfall and the revenue from hall lettings contributes largely to our ability to break even.
- ii. For 2022, our **Common Fund** charge is over £88,000 and would have increased by 7% to over £94,000 in 2023. However, we have benefitted by people leaving and joining. Although more than 25 people have left, almost as many have joined. A number of those joining are “new or returning to faith”, and therefore exempt in our submission of participating adults. As a result, our Common Fund charge for 2023 will be under £82,000.
- iii. **Ecclesiastical Insurance** are continuing the scheme whereby if home insurance is taken out with them, they will donate £130 to the church. NR requested approval from the PCC to make people aware of this again – granted.
- iv. **Contactless giving** (see SC notes 01.11.22): RM had met Ed Hodges from St Matt’s and had seen their SumUp system in action (<https://www.sumup.com/en-gb/solo-card-reader/>). Although intended for small business, it has worked well on 3g internet and wifi at St Matt’s, with its easy-to-use touch screen allowing both card and contactless giving. It could be attached to a stand with a friendly sign to make it more visible and placed near the church wall safe, but it is also small enough to be free-standing and movable, therefore useful for events in the hall and the occasional services, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. The company takes a 1.69% transaction fee so it is better for small transactions and is good value at a one-off cost of £79.
 TB said that a local church had reported less use than expected in church but had had good responses through a link on the website; he asked for information from other churches, with a similar demographic to St James’ and SC asked if donations could be gift aided to offset the transaction fee. RM and NR agreed to ask other local churches (for example, St Michael’s, Heavitree) and the **PCC approved the purchase** before the Christmas season as long as similar churches reported it to have been a sensible investment. (Proposed RM, seconded MD, approved by majority).
- v. **Charitable giving**
 - NR explained the background – that we give at least 5% of our Unrestricted Income to charities, splitting it between Overseas (60%) and Home/UK (40%). Criteria for charities to be accepted and the split for our donations were established in 2020. Using the criteria established by the PCC, NR provided an analysis and assessment of the charities supported last year, and the additional charities added for consideration at the February 2022 PCC meeting. (See Charitable Giving Assessment)
 - From this analysis, NR was able show which charities met the criteria and to recommend donations to the PCC.

PCC discussion:

- In answer to NW's point that charities might have reasons we don't know to explain why they don't meet our criteria, NR explained that he had given them the chance to explain – which is what the Melanesian Mission had done (see file report).
- TB felt it would be incongruous to favour some charities, in particular the Melanesian Mission, over others; he was also concerned that much of their money is staying in this country. JMM added that she was not convinced their statement explained their over-spending on salaries and administration. MD thought their explanation was satisfactory, that one of their employees was researching climate change and monitoring sea levels in Melanesia. He said that the church has become the main monitor of climate change in the area. TB felt it was a problem that this does not show up in the report.
- **The PCC agreed to accept the Melanesian Mission as a charity for 2022** (proposed MGP, seconded MD, approved by majority).
- **The donation % split as suggested by NR was agreed so that payments could be made for 2022** (proposed MGP, seconded RM, approved by majority).

10. Questions and matters arising from the churchwardens' report

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

11. Committee reports

Fabric Report

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

- Tree planting:** (see Correspondence). The PCC agreed (proposed NR, seconded RM, approved by majority) that a 40-litre root ball flowering cherry tree be purchased to be planted in the northeast corner of the church grounds and marked by a Queen's Green Canopy plaque. **Donations towards the cost** (£900) will be sought from church members and a blessing ceremony will be held in January.
- Warm Bank and Hot Food Project** – NR has made several enquiries to the HFP without success. The PCC remains committed to the idea of collaborating on this project.
- The organ: recommendation from Standing Committee to commission repairs**
 - Michael Farley (our current organ specialist) has estimated £15,528 for repairs and Lance Foy, who inspected the organ with TB, has estimated £12,120 to do similar repairs with some additional work. Nigel Guthrie, an experienced organist who knows our organ, employs Lance Foy and is happy with his work at St David's and St Michael's. Although not recommending one quotation over another, he did say that the work Lance Foy suggests is "sensible" and the estimate "reasonable". After consideration of the two reports and information from TB and the organists at St James', **the Standing**

Committee recommended to the PCC that it accept the estimate from Lance Foy.

- b. NR reported that since the SC meeting, Michael Farley had questioned the lower estimate submitted by Lance Foy. TB agreed to check with Lance Foy that all the necessary actions were included in the estimate.
 - c. **The PCC approved by a majority awarding the work to Lance Foy**, subject to confirmation from him that all work is included.
 - d. **MP and MGP will apply for a grant from Deanery Synod.**
- iv. NR reported that he has asked a rough sleeper, who regularly sleeps in the church grounds, if he has a warm place to stay when the weather gets worse. Assurances have been given (apart from one day a week) and NR and CA will continue to check in with him to be reassured he is warm and safe over winter.

Health and Safety

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

Communications

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

Young People

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

12. Any other business

- i. Update on the electoral roll from Liz Holland: 158 (one person has left and one joined).
- ii. APCM 2023 documents received and sent to Fr H, AM, RM and Liz Holland.
- iii. Permission was granted to advertise in the hall a singalong community event in Rosebank Crescent on 19.12.22.

13. Date of next PCC meeting: 15.02.23 at 19.30 in the Committee Room.

Date of next Standing Committee at 23.01.23 at 9.30 in the Committee Room.

14. Closing prayer

Jill Mather
Secretary to the PCC