

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 12 May 2015 at 7.45 pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey (Chair)	Mel Gibson	Andrew Keene
Jane Woolley (Secretary)	Tony Hughes	Jean Barton
Christina Wood	Hazel Connelly	Lizi Bowerman

1. Opening & Prayer

The Rector (Jonathan Mobey) read Luke 16 v1-12 – the parable of the Shrewd Manager.

Jonathan explained that Jesus is not encouraging us to be dishonest. Rather he is encouraging us to be shrewd and careful about how we deal with our resources and use them for eternal purposes: *"I tell you: use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings"*. We should be mindful of this as a PCC when managing the church's resources.

Jonathan then led the PCC in prayer.

2. Resignations and co-options

Jane Woolley reported that she had received notification from Roz Shipp of her resignation from the PCC due to her impending move away.

Jane Woolley explained that there are two further prospective PCC members who may be co-opted on to the PCC. These are Jean Barton and Andrew Keene. Jean Barton is unable to be elected to the PCC because she is ordained. Andrew Keene's election at the recent annual church meeting was not valid because he was not on the church electoral roll.

Jonathan Mobey proposed that Jean Barton and Andrew Keene be co-opted on to the PCC. This was agreed unanimously.

3. Welcome to new PCC members

Jonathan Mobey formally welcomed the new members present: Christina Wood, Andrew Keene and Hazel Connelly.

4. Reminder of the duties of trustees/PCC members

Jane Woolley reminded PCC members that they are charity trustees and therefore bear the responsibilities of charity trustees. All PCC members had been sent in advance of the meeting a copy to read of the document called "The Essential Trustee – what you need to know".

Jane Woolley read out to the meeting the section called "Trustee Duties at a Glance" from pages 8-9 of this document.

5. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Peter Barclay-Watt, Gordon Gill, Pam Rolls, Jan Radford, Frances Taylor and Monika Buxton.

6. Minutes of the March 2015 meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 3 March 2015 were signed as a correct record.

7. Matters arising

I. Archdeaconry Mission Action Plan

Action: PCC Secretaries to collate a resume of feedback to send to the Archdeaconry

DONE. Email acknowledgement from Archdeacon on 30/3/15 says: *Many thanks for your response to the Archdeaconry MAP, which we will take to the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee. It is very helpful to have comments from parishes so that we can see what else we need to include. I should point out though that most of the MAP has been taken from the needs that deanery MAPs have flagged up, so it might well be that a conversation in your deanery about the issues you raise could be useful.*

II. Stewardship – Friends Scheme

Action: Liz Roberts to forward the email she received from Vicky Johnston to Tony Hughes

DONE

Action: Tony Hughes to liaise with Vicky Johnston about what sort of photos are needed and how many

DONE

Action: Liz Roberts to work with Vicky Johnston to set up a FB page

DONE – Liz Roberts email to churchwardens of 26/3/15 explains that:

- Liz Roberts and Vicky Johnston have met to set up the FB page, aimed at the U.S.A “Harwells”.
- Vicky will be the primary administrator of it; Liz will take over if Vicky is away or unusually busy
- Vicky will post a couple of “heritage” photos per week from the CD provided by Tony Hughes. This allows a dry run of managing any initial comments posted by those who either find it by accident or congregants who have been prompted to look at it by church notices, etc. Any inappropriate postings can then be removed, and their senders blocked from posting again, before the page is promoted in the U.S.A.
- At the moment, those visiting the FB page are not immediately assailed by a fundraising message. Instead, the page simply refers to “anyone interested in the yesterday, today, and tomorrow of St Matthew’s Church, Harwell, Oxfordshire, England.” This will be amended if it isn’t attracting “likes”, commenters or sharers of our Friends fundraising brochure when it is uploaded.
- After Easter, Vicky will add the Friends brochure to the FB page, as well as continuing to post a couple of photos per week. There will also be a link from the FB page to a new page on the church website about how people can look for genealogical records. This will also serve to reduce ad hoc requests for help with finding such records.

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- At this point, Liz will inform Tony Hughes that it is safe to alert the U.S.A. contact, Jan Jenkins, to the FB page and to ask her to spread the word in the U.S.A. Liz will also arrange for a notice to go in the pew sheet in May. This notice is not intended to generate donations to the Friends; its purpose is as a courtesy to keep congregants up to date with the official launch of the Friends scheme and to tell them about the archive photography now readily available to view via the FB page. As well as generating traffic to the site from local people, the notice might also prompt readers to share items of interest with the FB page.
- Recommended follow up action: To review the manageability and success of the Friends Scheme by May 2016.

Tony Hughes explained that since Liz Roberts' email above, the Facebook page has gone live. Tony alerted relevant contacts in USA to it on 11/5/15. Tony has also spoken to a member of the Village Hall fundraising committee to reassure them that the Friends scheme is initially targeted at US citizens with Harwell connections rather than Harwell residents.

III. Stewardship – general giving & for C&FW

Action: Jonathan Mobey and Peter Barclay-Watt to organise an appeal to increase general giving and giving for the C&FW fund.

DONE. Finance commentary report covers the outcome.

IV. Remembrance Day

Action: Jane Woolley to contact Peter Cox to ask RBL whether they would support first names rather than initials being read out to accompany surnames, and if they know all the first names.

RBL do support this. Peter Cox has a hard copy list of names. Peter will scan this and email it to Jane to pass to Jonathan/church office.

V. Trial of coffee before 11am Sunday service on first Sunday of the month

Action: Liz Roberts to work with Mel Gibson to talk to the sides people, and **Monika Buxton** to work with Anita Pepper to talk to the coffee servers about the trial of serving coffee before the service, e.g. to explain the rationale, to make the necessary re-arrangements to the time they turn up, and to discuss with them how they can best contribute to a good welcome when coffee is served before the service.

Then, if the trial goes ahead:

Action: Liz Roberts to arrange publicity to explain the trial to the congregation, and to ensure that as many likely attendees of the first of the month service as possible are aware that coffee will be served before rather than after the service.

Jonathan Mobey reported that a possible date for a trial is the first Sunday in July. However, service arrangements for that day still under discussion and might not incorporate this. If not, the leadership team/churchwardens will revisit in the autumn. This action to come off PCC actions list.

VI. **Year-end financial statements**

Action: Jane Woolley to provide Peter Barclay-Watt with two hard copies of the year-end financial statements signed by Jonathan Mobey and Peter Barclay-Watt

DONE

VII. **Buildings Committee**

Action: Tony Hughes to relay the PCC's thanks to David Pyke

DONE

VIII. **Reducing the burden of PCC meetings**

Jane Woolley reported that this would be the subject of a paper to the June Combined PCC meeting.

IX. **Harwell Songs of Praise**

Jonathan Mobey explained that a Songs of Praise will not now be held in Harwell this year. It had been mooted for the Harwell Feast weekend, but no one had been identified to lead it. Also, Chilton Festival is two weeks after Harwell Feast and it has requested a Songs of Praise. Jonathan decided that the Chilton event should take priority this year. However, the intention is to have a Harwell Songs of Praise at the 2016 Harwell Feast weekend. Jonathan has communicated this to the Feast Committee via Monika Buxton.

8. Decisions between meetings by Standing Committee

TRAIN

Jonathan Mobey explained that TRAIN is an organisation working with youngsters aged 11+ in Didcot which was set up by Didcot churches. St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints' Chilton had supported the idea of TRAIN but, to the best of his knowledge, had not supported it via financial or human resources.

TRAIN's two key workers have recently moved on to do other things and it has lost some of its trustees. The trustees are consulting with churches in the local area about whether TRAIN should a) try and carry on as is; b) close down; c) be taken over by a secular organisation, and if so, whether the churches would continue to support it.

The Standing Committee agreed to respond to this consultation by saying that St Matthew's could not provide significant financial or human resources to TRAIN and that option c) would be better than b).

Chairs trial

The Standing Committee agreed to a request to a trial of various possible designs of chairs which might eventually replace pews. This is covered in item 14.

9. Reflections on APCM

Jonathan Mobey reminded the meeting that this year's annual meeting was held after a Sunday service in April and was shortened to just the essential business. Some of the reports were summarised and verbally presented during successive services in March.

PCC members then debated the pros and cons of this format compared to holding the annual meeting on a weekday evening in the Church Hall.

Some advantages of this year's format were felt to be:

- Higher attendance/better representation.
- Much less boring not to go through all the reports in turn at the meeting.

Some drawbacks of this year's format were felt to be:

- There was a gap of a good few weeks between the presentations relevant to the annual meeting and the annual meeting.
- Possibly a rather perfunctory feel to the meeting due to people wanting to get home for lunch.
- No questions from attendees, which suggests a lack of true engagement (although turning up is a form of engagement). This lack of questions/debate could be due to variety of reasons, and the cause is not clear. It would be unwise to conclude that no questions mean that church members have no concerns or queries.
- Less emphasis on thanking the large numbers of people who help in various ways.

The general conclusion was that the format should be repeated in 2016 but with some improvement to try to elicit questions/greater engagement e.g. asking people to submit questions in a box in the preceding weeks, planting a "starter" question, or prompting discussion after the presentations in the preceding weeks instead.

Lizi Bowerman repeated her previously expressed support for holding a lunch after the annual meeting. It was pointed out that if this is to be seriously considered the issues need to be discussed by the PCC in good time (i.e. well before March 2016).

10. Election/appointment of officers

The Secretary had circulated a list of existing officers. This list indicated whether or not the incumbents were willing to continue.

Jonathan Mobey invited the meeting to propose or suggest any other candidates for any of the posts listed. None was forthcoming.

The meeting then voted on the following resolution, which was proposed by the Chair (Jonathan Mobey) and therefore did not need to be seconded.

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following roles:				
	Vice Chair		Tony Hughes		
	Treasurer		Peter Barclay-Watt		
	Secretary		Jane Woolley		
	Churchwarden deputies		Tim Roberts Ruth Slatter Frances Taylor		
	Bookkeeper		Brenda Pyke		
	Electoral Roll Officer		Mike Pepper		
	Gift Aid Secretary		Peter Barclay-Watt		
	Stewardship Secretary		Ruth Slatter		
	Social Secretary		Monika Buxton		
	Concerts managers		Monika Buxton Liz Roberts Tim Roberts		
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Vice Chair has to be a lay person and Tony Hughes is formally appointed to this position. However, Jonathan has asked Jean Barton as a 'Clerk in Holy Orders' if she will chair PCC meetings when Jonathan is absent. Jean cannot be appointed Vice Chair because she is ordained. There was no objection to this arrangement.

11. Election/appointment of members of committees

The Secretary had circulated a list of existing committee members. This list indicated whether or not the incumbents were willing to continue.

Jonathan Mobey invited the meeting to propose or suggest any other candidates for any of the posts listed. Juan Bowerman was added to the list of those willing to serve on the Buildings Committee and Tony Hughes was added to the list of those willing to serve on the Church Hall Management Committee.

The meeting then voted on the following resolution, which was proposed by the Chair (Jonathan Mobey) and therefore did not need to be seconded.

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following committees:				
	Finance & Budget	Peter Barclay-Watt (Chair) Brenda Pyke Mel Gibson			
	Buildings	Tony Hughes (Chair) David Pyke Philip Roberts Mandy Birkinshaw Juan Bowerman*			
	Church Hall Management	Tim Roberts (Chair) Anne Gill Monika Buxton Tony Hughes*			
	Standing Committee	PCC Vice Chair, Tony Hughes PCC Secretary, Jane Woolley PCC Treasurer, Peter Barclay-Watt Other clergy licensed to the benefice: Pam Rolls and Jan Radford (Churchwardens and Rector are automatic members of the Standing Committee)			
Joint PCC	PCC Vice Chair, Tony Hughes PCC Secretary, Jane Woolley (Churchwardens, Treasurer and any clergy licensed to the benefice ¹ i.e. Jonathan Mobey, Pam Rolls and Jan Radford are automatic members of the Joint PCC)				
	*new members				
	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

¹ Joan Impey and Jean Barton have permission to officiate but are not licensed to the benefice so they are not included in this list.

13. Finances

The meeting noted Papers G and H.

Hazel Connelly queried whether it is sustainable to set a budget deficit.

Christina Wood commented that a fresh approach to increasing giving would be preferable to simply repeating the message about what the church's income is, that we need more income to achieve what we would like to achieve, so please increase giving. Lizi Bowerman suggested running the CAP money course in home groups as a possible different approach.

The following resolution wording is required by the bank to add Peter Barclay-Watt and Christina Wood as a signatory to cheques and to remove Tony Hughes and Elizabeth Gill:

Resolution	It was resolved that the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in Section 2, be changed in accordance with Sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

14. Improvements to St Matthew's Building

Heating

Tony Hughes explained that there is a small working group which is looking into improving the heating system for the church. Tony gave a written update from this group at the January PCC meeting. There has not been much progress since then. This is because the optimal system both in terms of technical specification and investment appraisal depends on projected building usage. For instance, the most effective and efficient system for transferring heat to the building's occupants is almost certainly underfloor heating. However, this is difficult and expensive to install, and is only optimal if the building is in use nearly all the time because it takes a long time to warm up. So we need to be reasonably confident of the extent of the building's use and its intended configuration (the latter determines where to run pipes) before we can specify the required heating system.

The group has continued to fact-find e.g. by looking at other churches' heating systems in situ. It will continue to do so.

Seating

Tony Hughes explained that the big question of whether we replace all the pews with chairs also depends on projected building usage, although less critically than the extent to which the optimal heating solution is driven by this. There is also a small working group looking into chairs, and this is able to move a little faster than the heating working group because the choice of chairs is initially linked to the question of how the chancel might be re-ordered.

Tony reported that the congregation has been given the opportunity over the last three Sundays to look at three possible models of chair. The DAC were shown eight models of chair and the three shown to the congregation were the only ones which the DAC thought were suitable. All are stackable.

The three chairs were:

Chair A – the one with the curved surfaces, wooden seat and metal legs. Many churches use this one including St. Mary's Wallingford and St. Aldate's Oxford.

Chair B – a plain wooden chair

Chair C – as B but with a fabric seat

Members of the congregation were invited to complete a feedback form about the chairs. This included a question asking people to rank the chairs from 1 (best) to 3 (worst). 57 feedback forms were completed. Over half of them were completed anonymously so it is not very easy to work out how representative of the congregation the respondents were.

Tony Hughes said that his initial impression from reading the feedback forms is that no one model of chair was greeted with enormous enthusiasm. Seven people's feedback forms included comments to the effect that they would rather keep the pews. Three people's feedback forms included comments to the effect that they would prefer chairs to pews. In previous such exercises 5-10% of the congregation has expressed a strong preference for chairs over pews and c.10% has expressed a strong preference for pews over chairs.

The most common response on the feedback forms on this occasion was to reject both Chair B and Chair C on the grounds that the seat back is too low. Using a transferable vote system of analysing preferences, Chair B emerges as the least popular model and Chair A as the most popular. Chair C is the second favourite, being slightly less popular than Chair A.

Chair A's metal legs attracted some criticism from an appearance point of view. Some respondents commented that they needed a chair with arms to get up and down easily. Chair A does come in various options – it can have wooden legs instead of metal and it can have arms.

Hazel Connelly reported that she had experienced Chair A at a meeting at St Aldate's church recently and found it quite uncomfortable for that length of time.

Tony Hughes will write a short report on the chairs trial for the notice sheets. Tony commented that it is by no means clear yet what chair should be recommended for the chancel.

Chancel re-ordering

Tony Hughes reported that, since the March PCC meeting, the Church Architect and a DAC delegation (that included the Archdeacon) have come to look at the chancel and our proposal to replace the choir pews with chairs.

The DAC suggested that, as well as the peripheral choir pews attached to the wall and rood screen, we keep the book rests in front of the peripheral choir pews. The church does not have to follow the DAC's suggestions, but we do have to have a Certificate from the DAC to make a petition for a Faculty. So if we don't follow the DAC's suggestions, we may have more problems making our case and obtaining the necessary approvals. This will have to be weighed up in deciding how we proceed.

Tony Hughes is waiting for a call back from the Victorian Society in order to get their views.

Tony Hughes is about to ask a joiner recommended by the church architect to look at the practicalities of removing the various sections of the choir pews.

Market Study

Jonathan Mobey introduced Paper I. Various sections of the paper were then discussed:

Section 1: Key principles – comments were:

- It is a good thing if the building were to become a greater focus for the community
- One PCC member reported having had a conversation with a member of the congregation who expressed resistance to the church being used other than for worship. So it will be important to get the rest of the congregation on board with this concept.
- (In response to the above point) The idea of widening the use of the building does need to be debated with the wider congregation. However, it has to start with the PCC being behind the idea.

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- The idea of employing a C&FW was embraced by the PCC and then by the congregation. We would want the same for the idea of widening the use of the building.
- (In response to the above point) The idea of employing a C&FW is very specific and not as controversial as widening the use of the building.
- We would need to make sure somehow that funerals, which are by nature unpredictable, can still take place when needed.
- Improving the building rather puts the emphasis on the community coming to the church rather than vice versa. We should think about the relative priority for this against the need to invest in church activities outside the building i.e. in places that people in the community are already to be found.
- Will the church get wider use if the village hall is also being redeveloped and providing community facilities?
- (In response to the above point) The village hall is over-subscribed and the population is expanding. There is a growing need for community facilities.
- There is money available from developer contributions to fund the renewal/expansion of community facilities such as the church building.
- We have to pay out quite a bit to hire community facilities e.g. for Alpha, for Chilton Fledgelings, etc. As we expand our activities outside of just Sunday worship, this sort of requirement will increase. This expense could be avoided if we had a more suitable church building.
- We are stewards of this building and have a responsibility to future generations to make it fit for purpose.
- What can we learn from other churches who have modernised their facilities but then not seen them used as much as expected. Someone suggested that this was the case for Cholsey church.
- (In response to the above point) Cholsey did buy non-stackable chairs, so we must learn lessons from that.
- In the book by Becky Payne which reviews 25 refurbished Oxfordshire churches, the churches which have been most successful at community use of their building are in small villages with no other facilities, or in larger towns where the central position of the church has attracted people in for concerts etc. The main additional uses described were for community uses rather than for additional worship uses.

Jonathan Mobey asked PCC members if they are broadly in favour of the principles as set out in Paper I. PCC members confirmed that they are.

Section 3: Possible extra uses – comments were:

- Many of the possible extra uses listed are existing church activities, re-located to the church building as opposed to only being additional secular uses.
- We shouldn't get too bogged down at this stage in the detail of exactly how the improved building would be used.
- (In disagreement with the point above) We do need to agree some projections about use in order to enable the heating project, in particular, to progress. This is because the optimal heating solution will depend on how many days per week and for how many hours per day the building is in use. The danger is that if we plan for extensive use, but this does not transpire we might end up putting in a heating system that is unsuited to occasional use (or vice versa).

- There is some urgency to come up with more detailed plans because we don't want to miss the boat for applying for developer funding.

Jonathan Mobey asked PCC members if they are broadly in favour of the sorts of additional extra uses of the church building as set out in Paper I. The following qualms were raised in response:

- There are resource implications of extending the use of the building e.g. managing bookings, issuing keys, regular checks on how users have left the building, more cleaning, moving of chairs, etc. So this will need to be addressed at some point.
- We need a projection of the number of hours per day that the building will be in use in order to decide on the optimum heating solution. Key questions arising are: On what basis will we make this projection? Is there enough evidence to suggest that we can reasonably expect a certain level of additional use of the building?

There then followed a discussion about what specific level of additional use of the building we can reasonably expect, and what evidence we have to base that expectation on. Two schools of thought were evident across PCC members:

The first school favoured a pragmatic, optimistic and “finger in the air” approach to the estimation of use, combined with a faith that “God will provide”.

The second school favoured a more systematic and evidence-based approach to any such estimation, based on analysis rather than faith alone, accepting though that this ‘forecasting’ would have to rely on the best judgements of people rather than on rigorous data. This would involve the Market Study group reconvening to assess more carefully the most likely scenario for future building usage. It would show the congregation that we had thought through the rationale and would reduce the risk of being badly wrong when it came to making investment decisions. This latter approach was rejected by the first school as being too difficult and in the end still essentially being reliant on “finger in the air” estimation.

The discussion culminated in a proposal that, for want of anything better, the estimated usage of the building that should be assumed for heating system planning purposes is the optimistic scenario of:

7 days a week, 9 hours per day split as 3 hours morning, 3 hours afternoon and 3 hours evening.

Tony Hughes said that the data he has collected could compare parameters for different potential heating systems for this usage scenario, and that he could bring this analysis to the July PCC meeting

On this basis, PCC members were agreed that they were content to confirm that the first three items in the list of potential changes to the building should progress, namely (1) improvements to the Chancel (2) changes to the heating system; (3) flexible seating arrangements in the main body of the church.

Section 5 – Potential changes to the building

- It would be possible to phase the suggested building improvements.
- Might it be necessary to extend the church building to have enough room for these extra uses, especially if we dispensed with the Church Hall?
- (In response to the above comment) One could argue that the proposed changes are about making more *intelligent* use of the existing space in the church, as there is currently a lot of poorly/rarely used space. The current church building is twice the footprint of the Church Hall so there is plenty of space within the current building if it were arranged better. Putting on an extension would be a far more radical change than what is proposed.
- The Church Hall tends to be in use at times when the Church building is not (weekday evenings, children's parties on Saturdays, etc). They are only used simultaneously when Kids Church is on.

15. Buildings Committee report

Paper K was noted.

16. Church Hall Management Committee report

Paper L was noted.

Jane Woolley clarified that Anne Gill is willing to undertake some of Roz Shipp's responsibilities, but not all, and only until the next annual meeting at most. Anne has explained to Jane that it is possible that her health will deteriorate further and will necessitate her retiring from such duties sooner than that.

Anne Gill has confirmed to Jane Woolley that she will continue to take the Hall bookings. She will also undertake the onerous task of checking the Hall after use to make sure that it has been left in good order. She will wash the towels & tea towels. But she will not manage the cleaner, plan any of the maintenance or hold the keys.

Jonathan Mobey asked for PCC members to think and pray about this situation.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to liaise with Tim Roberts to get a job description for managing the Church Hall, and to decide how to get the required tasks carried out e.g. by recruiting new volunteers.

Christina Wood volunteered to hold the keys, if necessary.

Tony Hughes explained that he had volunteered to join the Church Hall Management Committee as a new member and can continue to help with such things as setting the heating controls. However, he is not able to take on Roz Shipp's / Anne Gill's duties.

17. Future dates to note

Harwell Feast – Monday 25 May

18. Any other business

Jane Woolley agreed to forward a link to be supplied by Hazel Connelly to enable PCC members to vote for the Damascus Project as a worthy recipient of a funding competition run by Aviva insurance.

The meeting closed at 10.45pm with Jonathan Mobey leading in prayer.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE