

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC held on Tuesday 7 July 2015 at 7.30pm in All Saints', Chilton

Present

Jean Barton (Chair)	Jane Woolley (Secretary)	Frances Taylor
Jonathan Mobey (Chair & present where "JM" is indicated in the item heading)	Christina Wood Mel Gibson Tony Hughes (from item 3)	

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1, 2 and 6 (item 6 being taken out of order). The PCCs then dispersed into separate meetings to cover item 3 onwards.

1. Opening & Prayer (JM)

The Rector (Jonathan Mobey) read 1 Corinthians 3.

This passage starts with a warning from Paul about the tendency for divisions in the church and he urges us to have unity of purpose. This is something we on the PCCs should strive for in our current deliberations about various matters. This passage also goes on to say that ultimately it is the people who are God's temple and we are in the business of temple-building, or growing God's church.

Jonathan then led the PCCs in prayer.

2. Any items of joint business (JM)

Item 6 on the agenda was covered here.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Peter Barclay-Watt, Gordon Gill, Pam Rolls, Jan Radford, Monika Buxton, Andrew Keene, Hazel Connelly, Lizi Bowerman

4. Minutes of the May 2015 meeting

The footnote on page 7 of the minutes of the PCC meeting on 5 March 2015 was corrected as follows:

From:

"Joan Impey and Jean Barton are licensed clergy but not licensed to the benefice so they are not included in this list."

To:

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

A copy of the minutes was then signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

I. 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. There are two names with first names still to find. Kath Luker has agreed to research them using parish records, etc.

6. Reducing the burden of PCC meetings (JM)

Jonathan Mobey reiterated what had been agreed at the Combined PCC meeting in June.

Jonathan Mobey said that he had not yet talked with the churchwardens to agree what will be dealt with under the churchwardens' remit, but that he intends to do so.

Hazel King (All Saints' PCC) requested that, wherever possible, a paper is circulated in advance where there is information to absorb and reflect on, prior to being asked to make a decision at a PCC meeting.

7. Decisions between meetings by Standing Committee

There were none.

8. Finance reports

The Income & Expenditure report to end of June 2015 and the Finance Commentary report were noted.

Tony Hughes commented that we need to see an increase in giving if we want to avoid dipping into reserves to fund the Children & Families Worker's three year contract. Tony Hughes understands from a conversation with the Treasurer that the amount we would need to fund from reserves remains substantially undiminished.

Action: Jane Woolley to consult with Jonathan Mobey to put an item on either the September Combined PCC meeting or the October St Matthew's PCC meeting agenda to discuss ideas to increase giving.

Items were then taken in the following order: 10, 12, 13, 9, 14, 15, 11, 16, 17

9. Mission Giving – proposed budget allocation

The proposal in Paper L was agreed unanimously.

The following comments were made:

- Tony Hughes: It would appear that the Missions Group has taken into account some of the comments previously made by St Matthew's PCC, and it has moved forward in a more strategic way.
- Christina Wood: Perhaps St Matthew's could consider awarding some money to Prayer Spaces next year, as All Saints' have done this year.
- Jane Woolley: The equivalent All Saints' mission giving proposal paper usefully divides the recipients into "overseas" and "home" categories. Perhaps the St Matthew's one could do the same next year.

- Tony Hughes: (following on from the above comment) A majority of PCC members indicated at June's Combined PCC meeting that they would like to see some convergence of the St Matthew's and All Saints' missions giving budget allocation. In this vein, it would be helpful if in future years the proposed allocations were to be in a similar format/layout to each other.

10. Letter from Betty Pyke about proposed alterations to choir stalls

The meeting noted the content of Betty Pyke's letter.

The Secretary and Tony Hughes confirmed that Betty had told them that she was merely responding to a request in the notice sheet for comments and that she did not expect a formal response from the PCC.

11. Improvements to St Matthew's building (JM – present for chancel re-ordering, seating and heating sub-sections)

Chancel re-ordering

Tony Hughes gave a verbal update as follows:

He has had a meeting with a joiner, who was recommended by the Church Architect. The joiner was confident that it is feasible to remove the choir stalls in mind safely and without damaging anything else.

The DAC sent Tony Hughes a note following the meeting with them in April to confirm what had been said. This note did not quite tally with Tony's understanding about what sort of chairs the DAC would be happy with in the chancel. So Tony has queried this with the DAC and is waiting for clarification from them.

Tony Hughes thinks that the DAC gave us to understand that they would be happy for us to put in the chancel for 6-12 months the chairs we already have in the church, to allow us to try out using this area with chairs in it before buying new seating.

Tony Hughes has also consulted The Victorian Society and Historic England about removing the choir stalls.

The Church Architect, the DAC delegation who came in April, The Victorian Society and Historic England have all said that they would prefer it if we did not remove all of the choir stalls, and in particular left in place the seats attached to the walls and rood screen. The DAC and the Church Architect have both said that they would prefer to keep the fronts of those stalls as well. This would have quite a large impact on the number of chairs which could flexibly fit into the remaining space – reducing it from about 50 to only about 30. As such, Tony Hughes said that he did not think that this option provided St. Matthew's with the outcome that we are seeking.

Whilst the DAC is formally advisory, a Certificate from the DAC is required in order to apply for a Faculty. So our proposal to the DAC risks being opposed if it is not in line with their preferences. Tony Hughes felt though that we should put forward our preferred option if it is what we really want and can support our case with a sound rationale. Despite the risk, PCC members agreed unanimously that our proposal should not include keeping the fronts of the choir stalls attached to the walls and to the rood screen. It should only include keeping the seats and ends of those peripheral stalls.

Tony Hughes clarified that we could not use a Temporary Archdeacon's Licence to remove choir stalls or parts of them in a trial because it would not really be possible to put them back once removed.

<p>Action: Tony Hughes to prepare a proposal and resolution accordingly for the October PCC meeting</p>
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Seating

Tony Hughes gave a verbal update as follows:

There is not much progress to report since the PCC meeting in May, following the consultation over the three chairs in April. However, there is not as much urgency now, given that the DAC seem to be willing to allow us to put existing church chairs in the chancel for a trial period (see above).

Tony Hughes reported that Mandy Birkinshaw is trying to obtain some more chairs on loan of a type which would have a combination of features which the congregation seems to prefer e.g. wooden rather than metal legs. If Mandy is successful, it would be possible to have another round of consultation.

Jonathan Mobey pointed out that in such a consultation, three “good” chairs might split the vote, but that doesn't necessarily mean that any of them is unacceptable.

Jonathan Mobey asked PCC members to confirm that they are in favour of removing the pews in the main body of the church and replacing them with chairs. All PCC members said they would support such a proposal in principle.

Heating

PCC members discussed the recommendations in Paper G about heating options, namely (i) to draw up a specification for installing a gas boiler system, which could then drive either gas fired radiator central heating or gas fired underfloor central heating, and then obtain proposals and quotations from suppliers and (ii) to seek quotes for the option of simply replacing the existing radiant heaters with more modern ones.

PCC members unanimously agreed with the recommendations and confirmed that they understood the sort of sum of money that would need to be raised from church reserves, from donations and from grants to pay for some sort of gas fired heating system.

During discussions, Tony Hughes confirmed/explained the following:

- Underfloor heating is expensive to install but relatively cheap to run once installed. The reason that the running costs of radiators vs. underfloor heating options are not massively different in Paper G is because we cannot install underfloor heating in the chancel or in the extension. This means that we would have to have radiators or electric heaters in those areas, so the “underfloor heating” option is not actually 100% underfloor heating, which then erodes the efficiency gains of this option.
- Tony Hughes sent a draft of Paper G to everyone in the heating working group. Tony has had comments back from most of the group, which he has incorporated.
- Underfloor heating is slow to warm up and cool down so it is best suited to buildings where you want to leave it on, even if only ticking over, more or less full time.
- We can decide later if we opt for gas fired radiator central heating or gas fired underfloor central heating. What we would be asking for in quotes is the common mechanism to power either and also more information about the options for both types of heat delivery. There would be quite a few issues to sort out just to get a gas supply and boiler in the church, so that is where we should start our specification and quotations process.
- The main issue with radiators is how to heat the central area of the church, especially if there are no pews to hang radiators on
- We would hope to have quotations and more information by spring 2016.
- The timescales are what they are partly because of the relatively limited resource within St Matthew's available to progress the work.

- The book about improvements to other churches shows that grants generally funded a minority of building improvement costs. In the past we've typically got about 25% of costs from grants e.g. for the Tower and AV system. Mel Gibson said that he was optimistic that many in the congregation would be prepared to donate towards improving the heating, but less so for replacing the pews with chairs.

Jonathan Mobey left the discussion at this point.

Strategy for handling the progression of the heating & seating improvements

Paper H refers.

Part of Paper H explains that we have to decide about seating in order to properly progress the heating and the re-decoration. This is because these projects are affected by whether or not we keep the pews because this affects where radiators and/or pipes can go.

Specifically Paper H includes a recommendation that, in parallel with doing the groundwork on heating explained above, the PCC should set up a small group to plan a process of proposal and consultation over whether to replace pews with chairs, and if so which chairs. This needs to come to a firm conclusion by mid-2016 at the latest.

Christina Wood said that she feels that making the case face to face with the congregation will need to be included in the mix in order to best win hearts and minds. Christina indicated that she would be willing to be involved in presenting such a case, provided others helped to write it.

Jane Woolley suggested that the small group meet soon to draw up a communication and consultation plan for a chairs proposal, involving various occasions and channels, which would be implemented autumn 2015-spring 2016. She would be willing to help with this.

Tony Hughes said that he anticipated that Mandy Birkinshaw would be willing to participate in such a group, but not to head it.

Action: Jane Woolley to convene a small group to draw up a communication and consultation plan for a chairs proposal, leading to a paper for the October PCC meeting.

12. Buildings Committee report

Paper I was noted.

Point 3 of Paper I: Tony Hughes confirmed that the cost of repairs to the aisle lead roofs is already included in the 2015 church maintenance budget.

Frances Taylor thanked Tony Hughes and the Buildings Committee for all their work.

13. Church Hall Management Committee Report

Paper J was noted.

Action: Jane Woolley to convey the PCC's thanks to Tim Roberts for all his efforts, and that it hopes that the next meeting of the Committee is able to make some progress with the task of replacing Roz Shipp and Anne Gill.

14. Proposed production of “Godspell” in the church (JM was present for the conclusion of this item)

PCC members discussed the various issues to do with staging a production of Godspell in the church.

The conclusion was that PCC members were supportive of this idea, provided that the following issues are addressed/information about them is provided to the Rector's satisfaction:

Adherence to Canon F16(1)¹/religious sensibilities

1. Production to make clear reference to the Resurrection.
2. Production not to ridicule/appear to ridicule Jesus e.g. through appearance or behaviour. For example, one PCC member said they would find it offensive if Jesus were to be depicted as a clown, as he is in some productions.

Practical issues

1. Production to provide proposed rehearsal and performance dates in the church; resolve any clashes with services or other scheduled activities.
2. Production to detail what equipment, props, set, etc. will be in the church, and what will happen to it between rehearsals/performances.
3. Production to be aware that they would need to clear away equipment, props, set, etc. during the daytime if there were to be a funeral. Production to confirm how they would do this.
4. Production would need to fund the heating & lighting costs for rehearsals and performances.
5. Production would need to fund church concert manager fees.
6. Production would need to adhere to St Matthew's Concerts Policy.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to arrange a meeting with Janice Markey, Janet Spence, Fiona Brennan-Scott and Jean Barton to discuss the above issues.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to ask Liz Roberts if she would be willing to be the concert manager

15. Plans for distribution of welcome leaflets/visiting new residents at Greenwood Meadows (JM)

Jonathan Mobey reported that the updated Welcome to Harwell leaflet has just been finalised and a batch printed. A small handful of houses are currently occupied.

Jean Barton reported that Peter Barton is keen to help visit these newcomers.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to liaise with Peter Barton about visiting Greenwood Meadows' new occupants.

¹ “When any church or chapel is to be used for a play, concert, or exhibition of films or pictures, the minister shall take care that the words, music, and pictures are such as befit the House of God, are consonant with sound doctrine, and make for the edifying of the people.”

16. Future dates to note

11 July – fundraising concert in the church for the Village Hall.

17. Any other business

None

The meeting closed at 9.50pm with Jean Barton leading in prayer.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE