

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 6 October 2015 at 7.30pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

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| Jean Barton (Chair) | Jane Woolley (Secretary) | Hazel Connelly |
| Jonathan Mobey (present where "JM" is indicated in the item heading) | Christina Wood | Lizi Bowerman |
| | Mel Gibson | Monika Buxton |
| Andrew Keene | Tony Hughes | Frances Taylor |

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1, 2 and 12 (item 12 being taken out of order). The PCCs then dispersed into separate meetings to cover item 3 onwards.

1. Opening & Prayer (JM)

Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey opened the meeting by reading Psalm 121.

A few minutes of contemplation followed, and Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Any items of joint business (JM)

(i) Proposed 2016 PCC meeting and Annual Meeting Dates

The list of proposed dates had been circulated. After some discussion, it was agreed to hold separate meetings in January, to allow for St Matthew's finances to be drawn up, and to avoid clashes with both churches' Ladies' Groups. All Saints' would meet on 5th January, and St Matthew's on the 12th. (After dividing, All Saints' agreed to also meet on 19th January, to discuss the possible changes to service pattern at All Saints').

(ii) Sunday 27th December

It was agreed to cancel the 8.00 am Holy Communion Service at All Saints', and the evening Service at St Matthew's on 27th December, this Sunday being so soon after Christmas Day, which will fall on a Friday.

(iii) Ideas to Prompt Increased Giving

Currently, St Matthew's giving has taken a down-turn, as members of the congregation have died, moved away, or experienced changed circumstances. All Saints' giving had a dip a few years ago, but is now starting to show an increase, with the influx of new church members.

Recent sermons have been on the subject of using gifts and talents, and Jonathan felt the New Year would be a good time to expand this to using finances. February would be halfway through Peter Shield's term of office, so this would also be a good time to promote further funding for the CFW.

Jean Barton spoke about TRIO (The Responsibility Is Ours) which encourages people to budget for incremental rises in their giving each year, it being easier to achieve small increases regularly than large ones every few years.

Hazel Connolly suggested we produce Gift Cards, as in charity catalogues, where Gifts of, say, £5 to sponsor lighting the church can be given, in a similar manner to charities sponsoring animal welfare. Stuart Gibson said these ideas could be considered by the stewardship committee.

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| Action: Stewardship Committee |
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Item 12 on the agenda was also covered here:

(iv) Harvest

Jonathan gave a summing-up of the recent Harvest events:

- Harwell School had come to St Matthew's on the Friday.
- There had been a wedding in St Matthew's, and a golden wedding in All Saints' on the Saturday.
- Sunday had seen Chilton School years 1 and 2 choir in All Saints', with a very full church, and Harwell Young Singers and Scouts parading in St Matthew's. Cubs and Beavers had gone out to Kid's Church, bringing numbers to 44 there.
- Rev Jan Radford had preached, and her talk had been appreciated, with a plaudit from one non-churchgoer.
- 4 people had joined Alex Reich on the afternoon ramble in Chilton, and perishable produce had been sold at the Rose and Crown at 5.00 pm.
- 40 meals had been consumed at the Monday Lunch in Harwell, with £322 raised
- Chilton's plated collection had been £181, (with subsequent donations raising this to £291.)
- All cash raised had gone to TearFund's Refugee Crisis Appeal, and all non-perishable food offerings had gone to Didcot Foodbank.

Special thanks were to go to the Burbages for transporting food back and forth between the villages on the Sunday.

Discussion followed. The Harwell Lunch was a good social event, but this needed to be reconsidered for next year. There is a lack of personnel to run the lunch, and also fewer potential diners, with businesses moving away.

Alex Reich had been thinking of organising a Barn Dance in Chilton next Harvest-time. If this was a Benefice event, with a local band (£275 to £400 plus village hall hire) and optional hot food e.g. fish and chips from a local supplier, perhaps ordered in, a decision would need to be made at the November CPCC.

Action: Secretaries to put Harvest on Nov CPCC and January PCC agendas

3. Apologies for absence

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

4. Minutes of the July 2015 meeting

There were no amendments or corrections. A copy of the minutes was then signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

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.

DONE – all first names obtained and list supplied to Church Office

Church Hall Management

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.

Action: DONE

Godspell production in St Matthew's

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

Action: DONE. Liz Roberts happy to be involved; Jonathan Mobey has spoken briefly to Janice telling her that in principle the PCC are happy for the conversation to proceed and left the ball in her court.

Welcoming new residents at Greenwood Meadows

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

Action: DONE. Jonathan Mobey has visited a few of the houses already, and asked Peter Barton to visit when he can; many of the homes are still unoccupied, including a number purchased by the MoD; one new resident has attended the 8am service a few times. (Visiting itself is clearly an *ongoing* action, though).

6. Decisions between meetings by Standing Committee

It was agreed that Harvest Sunday offertory collections would be for TearFund's Refugee Crisis rather than for Church general funds.

7. Finance reports

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

Jean Barton pointed out that the Deanery grant of £2,000 would reduce the c.£8,000 shortfall in the 3 year CFW fund to c.£6,000.

Tony Hughes commented that we haven't managed to increase our general income.

Lizi Bowerman observed that we are receiving one-off donations for specific uses (e.g. the £6,000 donation for general outreach). Tony Hughes pointed out that we have always been fortunate in receiving one-off donations, but they do not alter the deficit of regular income against recurrent costs. Monika Buxton said that donations for specific purposes can enable us to divert money which would otherwise have been spent on those purposes from the general income.

Lizi Bowerman wondered if people are particularly motivated to donate to issues which they feel are directly linked to improving other people's lives, and so giving might improve once we communicate more extensively about the church's vision.

Mel Gibson pointed out that we need to decide at some point what the donation for "general outreach" can be spent on. He went on to say that it's all well and good if we allocate it to the CFW fund, but that doesn't help once the initial 3 years of the post are up. What we need is regularly pledged income for that.

Jean Barton wondered why no one seems to have responded to the campaign in the spring to increase giving for CFW fund. Christina Wood wondered that perhaps it was too low key a campaign.

Mel Gibson informed the meeting that the Finance Committee will be meeting again in November and that increasing the general giving and giving for the CFW fund will be on the agenda.

Tony Hughes noted that expenditure in 2015 on church maintenance is likely to exceed budget because of a) one of the large items of work (repairing the aisle lead roofs) is going to be more expensive than expected and b) because of the cost of the Quinquennial Inspection, which is c.£1,500.

8. Buildings Committee Report

The Buildings Committee Report was noted.

9. The Quinquennial Inspection Report on the main church building

The Quinquennial Inspection Report was noted. Various PCC members expressed satisfaction that nothing was identified as requiring immediate attention.

The PCC expressed its thanks to Tony Hughes and members of the Buildings Committee for their thorough and conscientious work, which is reflected in various places in the Report e.g. the references to the good state of the building and to meticulous record keeping.

10. Improvements to St Matthew's building

Chancel re-ordering

Tony Hughes explained that at the July PCC he had conveyed the impression from the DAC that the sort of chairs that the PCC was considering for the church as a whole would be suitable for the Chancel also. The DAC is now saying that the chairs in the Chancel need to be "bespoke". This essentially means rather traditional in appearance, of a higher quality and somewhat pricier than the chairs we had been looking at previously for the church as a whole.

Tony Hughes explained that he had also initially got the impression that the DAC would allow us to use some of our existing chairs in the Chancel in the first instance whilst we try out the practicalities of using chairs there. Tony now understands that the DAC would like us to specify upfront the chairs which will be in permanent use in the Chancel and that these need to be of a "bespoke" type.

Paper H is a draft paper for the DAC, and takes into account this new understanding of DAC requirements i.e. it includes a section about exactly which model of chair would be used for the 18 permanent chairs for the Chancel. PCC members made no additional comments on the case for re-ordering the chancel made in the paper.

Tony Hughes had obtained quotations from three manufacturers of "bespoke" church chairs, and these are detailed in Paper I.

In answer to a query, Tony Hughes said that he believed that we would not need to use the same chairs in the rest of the church as in the Chancel.

The meeting then discussed the chair options. The meeting agreed that “bespoke” benches would be rather heavy to move and inflexible. The meeting agreed that it was minded to go with one of the two “St Wilfrid” models of chair by Treske, these being competitive in price and perfectly pleasant in appearance. It was agreed that a book box on the back would be a good idea as well as a shelf beneath the seat.

The meeting agreed it would be sensible to see the “St Wilfrid” chairs and to try them before finally deciding. Tony Hughes is arranging for the supplier to lend us some. Given that the timing of this was uncertain, the meeting agreed to delegate the decision to the Rector and churchwardens about whether one of the “St Wilfrid’s” chairs was indeed suitable, and if so, whether the one with the rush seat or with the wooden seat would be best.

The meeting expressed its thanks to Tony Hughes for all his work on the Chancel re-ordering.

The meeting then passed the following resolutions:

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| Resolution | To proceed with the project to re-order the Chancel, removing all but the peripheral seating and replacing the removed choir stalls with Treske chairs. | | | | |
| Moved | Tony Hughes | Seconded | Mel Gibson | Passed | Unanimously |

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| Resolution | To delegate final selection of the new permanent flexible seating in the Chancel to the Rector and churchwardens. | | | | |
| Moved | Tony Hughes | Seconded | Mel Gibson | Passed | Unanimously |

Seating

Tony Hughes gave a verbal update as follows:

In the trial in late July/early August of the wooden leg versions of the “40/” chair, the responses indicated that these wooden leg versions were preferred over the metal leg version in the previous trial. However, there was no significant difference in preference ratings between the wooden leg chair with a bare wood seat and the one with a padded seat.

Tony Hughes observed that the “St Wilfrid” chair (see Chancel re-ordering above) might become a candidate for seating for the church as a whole as it is hardly any more expensive than the wooden leg “40/4” chairs.

Heating

Tony Hughes gave a verbal update as follows:

In July we agreed to:

- Pursue gas fired heating as the method of significantly improving the church heating

- Draw up an outline specification to ask suppliers to submit scoping proposals against
- Obtain quotes to upgrade the radiant heating system as an alternative

Tony Hughes has asked three electrical contractors to quote for upgrading the radiant heating system and has had one quotation back so far, which was for around the sum which Tony gave as an estimate at the July meeting.

Tony Hughes has updated the church architect on heating options and in particular has spoken with him about the best way of pursuing gas-fired heating. He advised that underfloor heating would have to be on all the time to work properly and would therefore be unsuitable unless the church was being used for many hours a day, every day of the week. The architect suggested asking a consulting engineer or specialist contractor to come in to talk through the issues e.g. boiler rating and where to site a boiler, radiators and pipes. Tony Hughes has therefore asked a firm called Dunphy to come on 3 November. They specialise in church heating and put in the system at Sutton Courtenay church, who were very pleased with it. Dunphys are very willing to attend such a meeting to give their advice and a scoping quotation.

One of the key issues is siting a boiler, and in particular how far it would need to be from the source of gas at the entrance to Princes Manor Farm. The further away it is, the higher the installation cost. Last year, Tony Hughes asked Southern Gas to quote for bringing a gas pipe as far as the Chancel and to behind the organ. The costs quoted are now out of date but give an idea of the impact of the distance from the gas source on costs. The costs quoted then were c.£3,000 and c.£6,000 respectively, and would extrapolate to c.£15,000 to reach the extension. In the paper in July Tony Hughes had assumed that this element of the cost would be £6,000. Another issue to consider with siting the boiler is security i.e. access to the control panel.

Church seating consultation & communication plan (JM)

This item was discussed after Item 11, but is minuted here in its original order on the agenda.

Paper J was discussed and the detailed plan in it was agreed. A member of PCC, though, was sceptical as to whether members of other congregations would agree to be interviewed on video about their experience of improving their church building. It was also agreed that the exhibition didn't need to be (and probably shouldn't be) too sophisticated.

The meeting then turned to the question of resourcing the activity involved. Jonathan Mobey said that he had someone in mind who might pull together displays. Tony Hughes said that he would be willing to supply text about intended improvements and background if requested. When coordination of the activities was discussed there was no volunteer to lead the overall project, but Christina Wood offered to see how some of those who had contributed to the generation of Paper J might continue to be involved. Hazel Connolly offered to think about questions for the consultation and analyse feedback.

The meeting noted that the first publicity deadline to be met is as soon as w/c 12 October.

The meeting noted the need to involve someone with the skills to create an online version of the exhibition.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to meet with a church member not on the PCC on 13 October whom he thinks might be willing to pull together the displays for the exhibition, if given the raw content.

Action: Christina Wood to contact Liz Roberts and Mandy Birkinshaw to see if they would be willing to help in various possible ways.

Action: Hazel Connolly to co-ordinate the consultation side i.e. draft the consultation questions and to analyse and report the feedback elicited in time for the 12 Jan PCC meeting.

11. Church Hall Management

Paper K about the recent purchase of a music licence covering the main church building and the Church Hall was noted.

Paper L – Church Hall Management Committee Report – was noted. The meeting expressed its thanks to Anne Gill and Tim Roberts for their work.

Future day to day management arrangements for the Church Hall

The meeting considered Paper M. Tony Hughes reminded PCC members of the background. Four years ago the PCC agreed to change the basis on which the Church Hall was run. Previously, usage was limited to church-affiliated groups. The PCC then took the decision to widen its use to non-church groups. The reasons were a) to extend links with the wider community; b) to reduce the cost to the church of running the hall by offsetting the fixed costs against increased income. Those two aims have been met. This has largely been made possible by two people – Roz Shipp and Anne Gill. They took on the work involved in hiring out the hall and managing its use. Roz Shipp has now moved away and Anne Gill needs to stand down from this role. So we are now faced with a decision about how to operate the hall in future. Even if we revert to only church-affiliated groups using the hall, the hall still needs a fair degree of day to day management.

Paper M lists the tasks involved. It also lists some criteria against which future management options should be judged. It then lists five possible options for the future.

Lizi Bowerman commented that there could be a sixth option, namely to sell the hall and use the money to further improve the main church building so that it could accommodate all the activities currently using the hall. Tony Hughes pointed out that whatever its merits this is not really an option in the short term. Such a project could easily take many years to bring about. In the meantime, we still need to manage the church hall.

Hazel Connelly wondered if it is correct to assume that there are no replacement volunteers for Roz and Anne. Tony Hughes said that we don't know for certain because there has not yet been a direct recruitment drive, but Anne Gill had mentioned one person who might be interested. Monika Buxton suggested that the first thing to do is to carry out a recruitment drive and see if anyone comes forward. Tony Hughes said that he agreed with this suggestion, and that we could allow until the end of November to have a big push on trying to recruit one or two new volunteers to take over from Anne. Then if that doesn't work, we'll have to pursue another option.

Mel Gibson said that if it were possible to allocate some of the duties to the Church Administrator instead, then this might encourage a volunteer or two to come forward to handle the rest of the work. Christina Wood wondered if it might help to be able to specify to any interested parties how many hours per week the work involves.

Action: Tony Hughes to liaise with Tim Roberts and:

- Advertise for volunteers in the service notice sheets, in the Broadsheet and in a flyer for Flegelings attendees.
- Talk to Jonathan Mobey about the scope for the Church Administrator to carry out some of the church hall management duties

Action: Monika Buxton to advertise for volunteers on Bob's TV, liaising with Tim Roberts about the wording.

Action: All PCC members to pray for volunteers and also to personally ask any possible candidates they can think of.

12. Reflection on the Harvest service & Harvest lunch

See item 2 (iv).

13. Hands Free service (JM)

Paper N looked at the decline in attendance at this service.

Mel Gibson commented that he has been involved in Hands Free from the start, and has definitely noticed the decline in attendance described. He feels the current format has had its day for the present, and that the service is unsustainable at the moment.

Frances Taylor commented that she would not like to see there being no evening service at all on the second Sunday of the month. Jonathan Mobey said that he was not inclined to fill the slot immediately with another type of service just for the sake of filling it. There is no rush and we could simply wait and see how we feel in due course. Two PCC members indicated that they would be in favour of re-introducing some kind of evening service on the second Sunday of the month. Five PCC members indicated that they were undecided about this as yet and would like more time to consider the matter further.

The meeting agreed the recommendation to continue Hands Free in a “fellowship” group format in October and November 2015. Hands Free would then cease and the PCC will re-visit in January the alternative options for the evening of the second Sunday of the month.

Action: Secretary to put the second Sunday of the month evening service on the January PCC agenda.

14. Future dates to note (JM)

There were none.

15. Any other business (JM)

None

The meeting closed at 10.20pm with Jonathan Mobey leading in prayer.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE