

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 11th July 2006 at 7.45pm in Harwell Church Extension

Present

Jean Barton	Nancy Preston	Martin Speed (Secretary)
Kate Evans	Tim Roberts	Chris Stott (Chair)
Sid Gale	Clive Silver	Frances Taylor
Georgina Greer	Stephen Tunstall	Jane Woolley
Clive House	Ruth Slatter	

1. Opening

Chris opened the meeting with a reading from Philippians Chapter 2, reflection and prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cathy Convery, Madeleine Gibson, Vicky Macarthur, and Wendy Sinclair.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 9th May 2006 were amended to remove the square brackets around the last sentence of item ten and to remove the word 'subsequently' from the same sentence. They were then signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

- a) **Pew sale:** Tim reports that the PCC now needs to pass a resolution to proceed with the disposal of the pews, and to post a notice for 28 days informing the congregation of this.

Resolution	To proceed with the disposal of the pews as described in the notice posted in the Church.				
Moved	Nancy	Seconded	Clive H	Passed	Unanimously

Action: *Tim* to continue to progress.

- b) **Changing table:** A suitable table has been selected and the purchase is being taken forward as described in the buildings committee report.

- c) **Disposal of items in the annex:** Chris has not yet had an update from George Laing who continues to work towards selling the speakers through e-bay.

Action: *Chris* to progress and report back.

- d) **Songs of praise:** Kate reported that the event had received many positive comments and was well attended. She expressed her thanks to George Laing for the providing the sound equipment. The PCC thanked Kate very much for her hard work organising this event.

- e) The item '**Graves.com**' was included on the agenda by mistake – finished at the last meeting.

- f) **Including PCC minutes on the new website:** the issue was discussed again, with concerns about publishing views before they were agreed being balanced against the desire to provide up to date information. It was noted that the draft minutes would be marked as 'draft' – not yet agreed by the PCC' as they were when published in the porch, and that the agreed minutes would also be made available after each subsequent meeting, so that the website had an archive of the final minutes. The issue was put to the vote:

Resolution	That the (draft) minutes of PCC meetings be published on the church website.				
Moved	Clive Silver	Seconded	Clive House	Passed	Unanimously

- g) **Timetable for reporting:** this item was carried forward.
Action: Martin to report at the next meeting.
- h) **Church weekend:** No progress to report yet.
Action: Frances to report progress at the next meeting.
- i) **Trip to the Holy Land:** Chris reported that 15 had booked.
- j) **Church web-site:** Kate reported that the new site had attracted positive comment. She thanked David and Naomi for their contributions and reminded everyone that it needed to be kept up to date (by submitting contributions to Naomi). On behalf of all the PCC, Chris thanked Kate for her work leading this project.
- k) **Altar Frontals:** Ruth reported that whether a faculty was needed was still being investigated.
Action: Ruth to report progress at the next meeting.
- l) **Childrens' Society fundraising:** it was agreed that there would not be an opportunity to provide a fundraising event this year to replace the Christingle service collection. (A question raised at the annual meeting.)
- m) **Christingle service:** It was, however, agreed that a Christingle service would be held this year on the 7th of January. Suggestions to improve attendance were: (1) to publicise the event well before Christmas (2) to invite the Harwell Young Singers or the School Choir (3) to promote the event at the toy service and (4) to distribute via Childrens' groups some 'phials' for coin collection to boost fundraising for the Childrens' society and to provide further publicity.
- n) **Ordination of Rob Thomas:** It was noted that the ordination service was very well attended and reported to be a very good service. Chris expressed thanks on behalf of the PCC to Tim for organising the coach.

5. Financial report

Clive H presented a report on the current financial position.

- He noted that we were now half way through the year, so expenditure below 50% and income above 50% would both represent positive situations – and that many account lines were in this state.
- It was noted that Thames Water had put in a charge for 6 year's worth of water rates for the hall.

Action: Clive H to investigate whether anything can be done to counter this claim.

- Clive drew the attention of the meeting to the final charge from PCC funds to balance the account for the toilet access work which was higher than expected.
- It is now projected that the deficit for the year will be between £6 thousand and £7 thousand. (Against a budget of a £8 thousand deficit.)
- Nominations for local giving are now required.

Jean queried the rise in the heating cost. It was suggested that this was because (a) the spring was colder than normal (b) Harwell Young Singers had increased their rehearsal times, and possibly (c) that the heating was on earlier on Sundays.

It was agreed that Tim would check the timing and investigate whether a later start would be sufficient, and that he would ask whether the Harwell Young Singers could practice in the extension rather than the main church.

Jane asked whether it was possible that heating was being left on by mistake (her experience of the Village Hall being that sometimes a group would forget and the heating would be left on overnight. Tim is confident that this is not the case.

6. Fees for weddings (and other services)

Increasing fees charged for services were discussed, and the following increases agreed:

Weddings

Item	Old fee	New fee
Organist	£40	£60
Choir	£40	£40
Bells	£70	£80
Video taping of the service		£30 (£15 for the organist and £15 for Church funds)

In addition it was agreed that any new music that was requested should be either supplied by the wedding couple or paid for by them.

Funerals

Item	Old fee	New fee
Organist	£40	£50

It was agreed that we would not follow the example of some churches and make a charge for heating and lighting in winter unless there are very special circumstances (such as an extensive rehearsal for musicians hired by the wedding couple.)

It was noted that on some occasions the choir were very few in number and that it was not reasonable then to charge the £40. It was suggested that the charge would only apply when at least 12 choristers were present, but Chris is to investigate this issue further.

Action: Chris to consult on this issue and report back.

7. Buildings report

The written report from the buildings committee was noted – particular attention being taken of the dates for the working weekend – 15th and 16th of September.

It was also noted that arrangements were being made with the parish council to remove the fir tree in the church yard that had died.

8. Funding strategy for Tower project

Tim talked the meeting through the funding strategy paper he had circulated. The main points he emphasised were:

- That grants would probably be available to match local fundraising – i.e. that it would probably cover around half the value of the work
- That an appeal group would need to be formed very soon if fundraising was to start in November and continue over the Christmas period
- If fundraising went did start in November and applications for grants were made at the same time fundraising would be in place before contractors were appointed, which could be early in the new year, depending on the detailed survey outcome and PCC approval of the estimated cost.

The funding strategy was formally adopted:

Resolution	To adopt the funding strategy outlined in the paper prepared by Tim Roberts.				
Moved	Tim Roberts	Seconded	Kate Evans	Passed	Unanimously

9. Team time meeting

Jean told the meeting that at the last team time meeting the following topics had been discussed:

- A suggestion from the Lent groups that a directory of those willing to help with specific tasks be drawn up
- The possibility of creating a 'drop in' on Gaveston road (ideally in a flat provided by the local authority)
- A suggestion that PCC meetings should be jointly held with Chilton
- The 'because' approach (an approach to developing church strategy derived from the book of the same name)

As a result of the discussion of the 'because' approach Nancy had invited Jane to facilitate a two sessions of group discussion of strategy issues, and that she had invited: Jane (as facilitator), Chris, Tim, Margaret Hughes, Stuart Gibson, and Pam Rolls.

10. Jean's working agreement

The meeting noted the key changes to Jean's working agreement which she had outlined in an e-mail to the PCC. In essence it represents a small reduction in hours to allow Jean more time for finishing her studies.

In the e-mail Jean also pointed out that she should be retiring next year. Clive S expressed concern about this prospect and Jean said that she had not yet made firm plans. She also

mentioned that she would be licensed for a further five years – and this was therefore not a barrier if she chose to continue her work after retirement age.

Nancy expressed on behalf of the PCC and the Church as a whole our thanks for all the hard work that Jean puts into her role.

11. Positive parenting course

Nancy reported that she was starting a day time parenting course (primarily aimed at parents of pre-school children) led by herself and Sarah Fishburn which would be supported by a crèche led by Church members.

12. Seat in the Churchyard

Ruth raised the possibility of replacing the seat in the Churchyard to the right of the door. The meeting supported an investigation of the costs involved.

Action: Ruth to investigate costs and report back.

13. Becoming a Fair Trade Parish

The PCC was asked by Chris to consider signing up to a 'fair trade' pledge supported by the Diocese. This would involve: only using tea or coffee with the fair trade mark at Church events, using other fair trade products where possible, and promoting fair trade products (for example with a stall at the Harvest lunch.)

The discussion raised three issues: firstly that the issue had been discussed previously (with a general endorsement for the concept, but no willingness to ask others to commit to spending any particular sum of money on fair trade products); secondly that some people had a negative reaction to fair trade coffee and the restriction to *only* use these products would mean they couldn't have alternative products (though it was suggested that there were now so many varieties of 'fair trade' mark product that it was probable that an acceptable version could be found); and thirdly that there would be no impact from the PCC making this pledge if there was no-one in the church to act as champion and promote the concept and monitor compliance.

Action: Chris to try to identify a 'fair trade champion'.

14. Standing committee business

Martin reported that since the last meeting the standing committee had authorised Rob Thomas to promote the Barnabas fund petition to Governments in our church.

15. Future dates

30 th July at 7:00pm	Praise in the pub
5 th to 12 th August	Scouts camps in Wales and in France
8 th – 10 th & 15 th – 17 th August August	Pyramid Rock Children's Holiday club after playscheme in the school
15 th and 16 th September	Church working days
29 th October	Bible Sunday – missions group to be involved in marking the day and to obtain handouts from the bible society
29 th October	Young people's service in Chilton Village Hall at 4:00pm in place of 6:15 service

16. Other Business

- a) **Twins' group use of the Church hall:** The PCC agreed that this group was a community service that the Church was happy to be associated with and should be able to make use of the church hall for meetings.
- b) **Deanery Synod request for a skills register:** Chris explained to the meeting that the Deanery Synod had suggested building up a register of skills that churches could share with others. Clive S had made a list of some suggestions for skills Harwell may be able to share which was added to at the meeting to form the following list:
 - Locum clergy
 - Music
 - Youth work (youth fellowship and Childrens' Activity days)
 - Bellringing
 - Website
 - Marriage preparation
 - Alpha

Chris welcomed these first thoughts, but recommended that the issue be addressed more fully at the next meeting after everyone had more time to consider it.

Action: **Martin** to include on the agenda for the next meeting.

- c) **Pig roast:** Jane thanked Tim and his helpers for organising the Pig Roast contribution to the feast, but said that she thought there were not sufficient helpers this year and that more should be done next year to ensure there were. There was also discussion of whether next year there should be a vegetarian option.
- d) **The coach to Rob's ordination:** There was discussion about whether the funding of the trip was missing some payments, and whether if this were the case, it should be raised through the notice sheet.

Action: **Tim** to investigate whether there was a shortfall.

17. Close

The meeting closed with prayer at 9:50 pm.

18. Next Meeting

Tuesday 26th September at 7.45 pm in the Church Extension.

..... Chris Stott, chairman

..... Martin Speed, secretary

PAPERS

PCC06M1	Minutes of previous meeting	Attached
PCCP6-2-01	Finance report	Distributed separately
PCCP6-2-02	Buildings report	Attached
PCCP6-2-03	Church Tower Funding Strategy	Attached
PCCP6-2-04	Memo from Jean (about working agreement)	Attached
PCCP6-2-05	E-mail from Rob Thomas re: Barnabas Fund Petition	Attached
PCCP6-2-06	E-mail from Naomi Gibson regarding the Deanery Synod	Attached