

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 13th May 2008 at 7:45pm in Harwell Church

Present

Sid Gale	Allan Macarthur	Frances Taylor
Georgina Greer	Tim Roberts	Jane Woolley
Clive House	Martin Speed (Secretary)	
Tony Hughes	Chris Stott (Chair)	

1. Opening

Chris opened the meeting by welcoming the new PCC, and particularly Tony Hughes in his return to the PCC. He then began the meeting with prayer and reflection focussed on a reading from Mark 4.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Kate Evans, Vicky Macarthur, and Stephen Tunstall.

3. Minutes of the last meetings

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 11th March 2008 were signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

A full listing of outstanding actions and actions undertaken from previous minutes are recorded at the foot of agendas and at the foot of the minutes and not routinely discussed, leaving more time to focus on the matters where further discussion is needed, though any member of the PCC can raise any of these 'parked' issues at any meeting.

- a) **Low energy bulbs:** The meeting noted the response from Tony Hughes circulated before the meeting that the bulbs used were of an energy efficient type.
- b) **Pew Sale:** Tim updated the meeting with the information that: (i) notice had been given that the 'pig pen' space needs to be cleared, (ii) the Feast was seen as an opportunity to sell them, and Malcolm has offered on behalf of YF to get the pews to the Feast and undertake the sale, (iii) that realistic pricing would be offers in the region of £75. The one former outstanding bid was at a higher price and it was agreed that the new reduced price should be offered instead. The PCC endorsed these actions.

Action: *Tim* to report back when there is progress.

5. Election of officers

Resolution	That the people listed below are appointed to the posts specified				
Moved	Tim	Seconded	Clive	Passed	Unanimously

Secretary: Martin Speed (appointed to this role only - not a member of the council)

Vice-Chair: Tim Roberts

Churchwardens' assistants: It was agreed that these would not be required again this year.
 Treasurer: Clive House
 Book keeper Elizabeth Gill
 Electoral Roll Officer: Mike Pepper
 Gift Aid Secretary: Geoff Jenkinson
 Stewardship secretary: Ruth Slatter
 Joint PCC members: Sid Gale and Georgina Greer (in addition to 'standing members': Treasurer, Rector, and 2 Churchwardens)

6. Appointment of committees

Resolution	That the people listed below are appointed to the committee posts specified				
Moved	Allan	Seconded	Clive	Passed	Unanimously

Missions: Sid Gale (chair), Kate Ullmer, Betty Pyke, Grace Mein

Social: Not finalised. *The question of whether the scope of the social committee should be expanded this year was discussed. It was noted that the 'because approach' team had identified a need for more opportunities for 'engagement' with those who didn't regularly attend church, and the feedback from the Lent sessions had suggested that more social functions encompassing both Harwell and Chilton congregations would be a good idea. It was agreed that co-ordinating such events, (even if they concentrated on only 'external' functions or only on 'internal' ones) represented a substantial workload. Chris reported that he has spoken to last year's chair of the social committee, Wendy Sinclair, and though has agreed to co-ordinate the two key annual events of Harvest Supper and Mulled Wine after the carol service she would not like to take on a wider remit. It was agreed that someone willing to take on the challenge should be sought, both through a notice sheet advertisement and by approaching people directly.*

Action: Martin to draft a paragraph for the notice sheet.

Standing committee Rector, Churchwardens, and treasurer.
 Finance and Budget: Clive House (chair), Elizabeth Gill, Chris Stott, Allan Macarthur, and Sid Gale.
 Buildings: Tony Hughes (chair), Mel Gibson, Roz Shipp, Frances Taylor, Tim Roberts, David Pyke, Doug Jordan,.
 Worship: Kate Evans (convenor), Steve Ward, Vicky Macarthur, Naomi Gibson, Pam Rolls, Chris Stott, Martin Speed
 Team Time: Tim Roberts, Allan Macarthur, Chris Stott, Steve Ward, Kate Evans, Naomi Gibson, Pam Rolls, Alex Reich, John Berry and Liz Morris

7. Appointment of representatives to organisations

Resolution	That the people listed below are appointed to the organisations specified
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Moved	Kate	Seconded	Clive H	Passed	Unanimously
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Christian Aid: Vacancy. No volunteers were forthcoming despite notice sheet adverts.

Winterbrook Youth Club: Tony Hughes

Churches Together in Didcot: Liz Roberts

The Village Hall Committee: Vicky Macarthur

8. Financial report

Clive gave a brief commentary on the latest financial report from Elizabeth. In summary he reported that the picture was very positive, with giving in line with the budget and donations meeting the costs of the YF trip.

9. Buildings committee report

The written report of the buildings committee was noted. Tony drew the attention of the meeting to three issues in particular:

1. The re-painting of the cancel would require contractors and, with the need to take part of the church 'out of service' in order to do the work, he felt the work would be neither cheap nor easy.
2. Costs for items of work electrical done so far this year had exceeded the budgets set for these items and unless other works were cheaper than anticipated in the budget (or postponed) it was likely that the buildings budget would be exceeded.
3. The Chancel roof represented a 'ticking time bomb' of potential cost. It was not known when it would require replacement, but Tony thought it would need doing within ten years. Assuming it would have to be replaced 'as is' with stone tiles, it would be very expensive.

10. Review of current priorities, perspectives and key issues

The meeting reviewed the current position by means of a 'SWOT' analysis. The points noted were as follows:

Strengths

The quality of the church hall

The YF

The welcome given to visitors (as reported in the survey of all-age worship)

Orchestra

Visiting team

Finances

Size of the membership

Active involvement of so many members

Web site

Breadth of style of worship

Ministry team

Weaknesses

Not being good at 'out and out evangelism'

Lack of social diversity (people from some areas of the village just do not visit the church)

Age gaps in the congregation

The location of the church hall (and perhaps Church – some thought of it as relatively central, while others thought that it was too far from the less wealthy areas of the village) A problem with finding volunteers for new tasks, related to:

- Over-compartmentalisation – people only wanting to contribute in a narrow area they were comfortable with
- Lack of shared ownership
- Perhaps doing too much

The ministry team being 'spread too thin' in trying to maintain so many services
Communication – people are not aware enough of church activities and issues

Opportunities

The work done by the visiting team

The new development

Welcoming newcomers

A general renewed interest in a 'spiritual' dimension

Sharing more with Christians in the village who worship elsewhere

YF

School links

Fledglings

Using the ministry team to offer more variety of worship

Threats

The need for a new chancel roof

The new development

The fact that there are plenty of venues in the village (such as village hall, Freeman hall, British legion, etc.) means that the village do not naturally use the church or church hall as a venue

Aggressive Atheism

Not enough people joining the church

Chris leaving

Lifestyle changes – less time and Sunday no longer convenient for worship

Reflecting on these issues, the PCC agreed that improving communication should be an important focus for the year ahead. Some detailed issues were raised (particularly in regard to encouraging people into the church when they were passing: there being no notice that the Church was open for prayer every day, and the fact that the door sometimes stuck in a way that made it seem locked.) In terms of developing a more co-ordinated strategy for communications throughout the parish as a whole, it was agreed that Naomi should take a lead role in this.

Action: Chris to ask Naomi to draft a communications strategy for the parish.

It was agreed that it was not possible to develop further proposals in the light of this analysis until there had been a time for reflection and prayer. It was suggested that the Team time group might like to use this analysis to put forward some proposals, though Chris pointed out that this would require Chilton to find time for a similar exercise.

11. St Matthew's Harwell Renewal Project

Chris gave an introduction to his paper suggesting changes that could be made to the church to make it more inviting and the reasons for them. The following were among the points made in the discussion that followed:

- It was noted that there was much of value in the suggestions for opening up the church to use by more people – and it was thought that the church could benefit from hosting art exhibitions, musical events, or a venue for cream teas.
- However, it was also noted that the location of the church did not lend itself to being considered a central venue by many people in the village. Leading on from this the view was expressed that it may be better to invest in going out to people in these areas rather than in trying to attract them into the church.

- It was noted that the paper focussed on the *building* rather than the *people* of the church - a focus on investing in 'plant' rather than people. (Though it was noted that 'plant' investment could help the 'people stuff' happen.)
- The importance of consultation was noted. And it was suggested that the proposals did not yet have a sufficient base of evidence to support them.
- The point was made that the primary importance of the building as the House of God – somewhere people visited to pray every day – should not be overlooked.
- It was suggested that changes to the church were unlikely to be sufficient to attract non-members into the church, and that the changes were likely to benefit existing members rather than representing a way of reaching out to non-members.
- The point was made that if previous changes to the building had not been made – changes such as providing a 'platform' alongside the organ, and building the extension and providing toilets – the church would not be able to attract the people (such as those with children) that it does now. Changes such as wiring for projectors and providing flexible seating could be seen as essential to maintaining that attractiveness in the future.
- Another point made was that if a project of this nature were not done now – before Chris left – it would be very unlikely that it could be done for a considerable time.

It was agreed that the PCC would not be able to agree a clear way forward at this time. It was agreed that the issue should be tabled again at the next meeting, and that ideally the issues should by then be written up in the form of a draft consultative document.

Action: **Martin** to add the item to the next agenda.

12. Review of AGM

Chris invited comments on the AGM while it was still fresh in people's minds.

Generally the PCC regarded the meeting positively (and thanked Georgina and her helpers for the particularly fine refreshments). The attendance was thought to have been reasonable. It was suggested that the only thing likely to raise attendance substantially was some sort of controversy and that would not necessarily be a good thing.

The limited number of nominations to the PCC was discussed. It was agreed that this was not necessarily a bad thing, as a small PCC could be effective. Among the 'thoughts' that were expressed were: that it would be good to have some teenagers on the PCC and that it was beneficial to target new members of the church as members of the PCC. It was agreed that gaining nominations should be an agenda item on the PCC meeting prior to the annual meetings next year.

The issue of ensuring everyone was thanked at the meeting was raised. Chris was concerned that he had missed out at least one key person that he should have thanked. However, there seemed no way to avoid thanking people or to ensure that no-one was left out.

13. Christians together on climate change

The meeting expressed its thanks to Martin Gibson (an expert on environmental matters) for attending the conference on behalf of the Church and providing the report.

It was agreed that the ideas presented were very positive, and it was recognised that there could be an opportunity for outreach and community service through focussing on this area. However, the PCC agreed that there did not seem to be the resources for such an initiative at this time.

It was thought that the Harvest Thanksgiving may be an opportunity to develop this issue, and Chris will talk to Martin Gibson about this.

Action: Chris to discuss with Martin Gibson opportunities to use the Harvest Thanksgiving as a vehicle for addressing the issue of climate change.

14. Standing committee

Martin reported that there were no decisions taken by the standing committee since the last meeting of the PCC.

15. Future dates

May 18 th	Visit and sermon by the Area Dean, Edward Carter
May 26 th	Church to help with the barbeque at the Feast
June 7 th	Living Faith Day, Oxford
June 22 nd	Visit and sermon by Richard Zair of CPAS
June 22 nd PM	Missions Tea, with representative of CPAS on topic of CPAS patronage and appointing new ministers. All PCC members from both churches will be invited
June 29 th	10:30am Bruce Keeble will be priested at Reading
July 27 th	2:30 pm Special celebration of the British Legion's 80 th anniversary
August 11 th	'Champions Challenge' summer holiday club. It is aimed that this will be for full days for a full week.
August 30 th and 31 st	David and Heather Sharland will be visiting and speaking in Church
October 5 th	Harvest Thanksgiving with a speaker from Tear Fund
November 1 st	All Saint's day service to be led by Bruce Keeble that will focus on bereavement

16. Other Business

No other business was introduced.

17. Close

The meeting closed with prayer at 10:15pm.

18. Next Meeting

The next Harwell PCC meeting will take place on **Tuesday 1st July 2008** at 9:00 pm in the Church. This will be a short meeting aiming to finish at the normal time, and it will follow a combined PCC meeting which will start at 7:45pm (in the same venue).

..... Chris Stott, chairman

..... Martin Speed, secretary

PAPERS

PCC07M6	Minutes of previous meeting
PCCP8-1-01	Finance report
PCCP8-1-02	Buildings Committee report
PCCP8-1-03	St Matthew's Harwell Renewal Project
PCCP8-1-04	Christians together on climate change
PCCP8-1-05	Response about low energy light bulbs

Outstanding actions from previous meetings

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1.	Report on pew sale	When complete	Tim
2.	Report on altar frontal	When complete	Chris
3.	Provide a progress report from the Child Protection Sub-group	When progress	Martin
4.	Report on issues from H&S audit	When complete	Martin
5.	Amend asset record to show pianos if necessary	When complete	Tim or Allan
6.	Report on the Worship group survey	When complete	Vicky
7.	Report on glowsticks contents and recycling	When complete	Vicky
8.	Work towards a Church directory	When complete	Kate
9.	Gift for Brian Zimmerman	ASAP	Vicky

Completed actions from previous meetings

1. E-mail Tony Hughes regarding low energy light bulbs for Church
2. Amend asset record to show pianos
3. Approach Anne, David and Gordon regarding reports to the Annual Meeting