

**Minutes of a meeting of Harwell PCC  
held on Tuesday 27 January 2004 in Harwell Church Extension**

**Present**

Chris Stott (chair)	Nancy Preston	Marilyn Thomas
Jean Barton	Tim Roberts	Rob Thomas
Georgina Greer	Jim Sinclair (secretary)	Steve Tunstall
Clive House	Wendy Sinclair	Jean Twigger
Tony Hughes	Ruth Slatter	Tony Ullmer
Allan Macarthur	Frances Taylor	

**1. Opening**

Chris opened the meeting with a reading from Psalm 78. This was followed by prayer.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Clive Silver sent his apologies.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 11 November 2003 were signed as a correct record, subject to the following minor correction:

Item 4(a): Church Hall locks ... impossible to obtain **so far. The cylinders may have to be changed if this situation persists.**

**4. Matters arising**

- a) Church Hall locks: Tony H reported that keys for the replacement locks have still proved impossible to obtain. Ongoing.
- b) Projector screen mount: awaiting action
- c) Church heater replacement: Tony H reported that the heater replacement work is scheduled for 29 January, and will cost £564.
- d) Wheelchair for occasional use: Tony H reported that there had been no response to a notice in the Sunday sheet. He then visited the Red Cross, who can lend or sell chairs. He saw a suitable one to be sold for £70, but not yet ready. Will pursue.
- e) Pew disposal: Tony H reported that expressions of interest had been called for, with closing date 16 January. Five EOIs were received. He will now organise a viewing and a process of sealed bids.

**5. Vision Group report**

Tim distributed a report summarising the state of play in several of the key areas.

**Children and Youth:** Aiming to hold one special event per term, two in Harwell, one in Chilton, with personal invitations. The 'Y Jesus' course material is to be used at the Harwell School play-scheme. Other ideas have been discussed for outreach. Resources, however, may be a limiting factor. The level of attendance at children/youth activities in Chilton remains very low. The question was raised whether they could be interested in attending Harwell events.

**Outreach:** Alpha to be repeated this year. In Lent the 'Lost for Words' programme will be followed in the house-groups, probably bringing groups together for joint meetings. A Men's group is to be tried. A Songs of Praise near to the Harwell Feast day is being considered.

**Prayer:** Email has been well used for sharing prayer requests, and may be used also to remind people of events. A drive to increase the number of people doing intercessions at HC is desirable.

**Worship:** Have been considering ways to involve children more in services, and to encourage congregational sense of responsibility for them.

**Administration & Structure:** A questionnaire is being used with those who work closely with Chris, to collect ideas for how to proceed when Chris is away on his sabbatical.

*Committee?*  
→

## 6. Buildings Committee report

Tony H had distributed a written report ahead of the meeting.

Among the works planned for 2004, a notable item is the improvement of the kitchen and toilet facilities in the church. The cost of this planned work is estimated between £10,000 and £12,000, but the capital sum so far earmarked for this is only £5,000, so additional funds would have to be raised. For the other planned maintenance works, a budget of £3,500 has been proposed. For the kitchen project, planning permission has been received, but a DAC visit is still awaited, preparatory to applying for a faculty.

## 7. Financial report

Clive H distributed the accounts for 2003 as presented for examination. It is pleasing to be able to report an operating deficit of less than £2,000 for the year, when a deficit of over £9,000 had been budgeted.

Clive then went on to present the 2004 budget agreed by the Budget Committee. This provides for a deficit of £8,452. Income is based on previous years. The predominant expenditure item, as always, is the Parish Share, over which we have no control. Special provision has been made for extra expenses associated with Chris' sabbatical.

<b>Resolution</b>	That the budget as presented be approved		
<b>Moved</b>	Tim Roberts	<b>Seconded</b>	Jean Twigger
		<b>Passed</b>	unanimous

## 8. PCC Members' Length of Service

Jim and Chris had distributed a note containing potential resolutions that could embody the opinions expressed in previous meetings on this subject. After some further debate the following decisions were reached.

### Term per election of Elected Lay Representatives

The following motion was approved unanimously for proposal to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in March:

The Synodical Government Amendment Measure 2003 has established that the default arrangement for electing Lay Representatives to a Parochial Church Council is that each representative shall be elected for a term of 3 years, with one-third retiring each year. However, the PCC proposes that this default be overridden in Harwell, with elections for all the positions of Lay Representative to be held annually, the term of election being one year.

### **Number of Lay Representatives**

No motion was passed, reflecting the PCC's wish to retain the present number of elected lay representatives, which is the standard number for a church with 100 to 200 on the electoral roll.

### **Length of continuous service**

The following resolution was passed unanimously:

Elected members should consider as a norm for maximum length of continuous service as ordinary Lay Representative the period of five years. However, the PCC should have no hesitation in encouraging key members involved in important roles to serve beyond the norm.

### **Ensuring succession**

No formal motion was passed, but it was agreed that all elected members of the PCC should make known to the Chairman, by Christmas each year, whether they foresee continuing to stand for office beyond the following APCM.

## **9. Church Sound System**

Jim had distributed a Note reporting that in December, a long-standing problem with the radio microphone system had been overcome, by repositioning the receiver at the front of the nave. For the time being, this had required that both radio-microphone channels be adjusted in volume by the same control on the mixer-amplifier at the rear, but this limitation will be removed when we have a mixer with more independent input channels. In the light of this successful experiment, Jim believed that the present radio-microphone equipment could continue to be used, even though other components of the system be replaced.

Jim had also provided a lead for connecting portable equipment, such as CD players, to the amplifier for occasional use.

It was also reported that, for several of the Christmas services, problems had experienced with the sound system. These included acoustic feedback ('howling speakers'), and components not functioning. After discussion with Tim Roberts, Jim reported that he did not believe the problems to be caused by any fundamental malfunction of the equipment. The feedback had probably occurred because the re-sited radio-microphone receiver had had its two channels adjusted to very different settings, making control from the rear difficult. The non-functioning components were probably the result of loose power connections in the small mains distribution panel in the control box (a known problem).

Regardless of the understanding of the causes, everyone was agreed that the system must be adjusted, maintained, renewed or replaced to achieve a higher degree of reliability.

Jim's Note also presented a review of the proposal for complete renewal of the system, replacing every component, that had been put forward about a year ago. His detailed analysis led him to the opinion that several of the components – notably some of the microphones, some of the installed microphone cabling, and the hearing-aid loop and its amplifier – were in good condition, and need not be replaced. A well designed modular system would allow these components to be replaced independently at any time in the future if that should become necessary, as well as allowing additional microphones, input devices (e.g. CD player), and

speakers to be added at any time. In this way, rather than spending the £5,100 proposed for a complete replacement system, only about half that figure needed to be spent to achieve the performance and features that had been identified as desirable.

In discussion (including written points distributed by Tim) of the problems and of the need for upgrading the system, the following points were made:

- a system of high reliability is required
- it should be as simple as possible to 'drive', but not so simple as to prove disappointingly limited in future years
- there should be enough microphones (radio or otherwise) to allow minimum disruption as different people contribute to leading services
- work to upgrade the system should proceed as quickly as possible

It was agreed that a group consisting of Jim, Tim, Jean B and Allan should meet to firm up the requirements and to propose a programme of renewal including approximate costs and timetable.

## 10. Health and Safety

Allan reported that he had become aware of the need for the church to take more care over safety issues in the church and the hall, including prompt reporting and rectification of faults in equipment or furniture. A review was required to ensure proper care for all users, especially children, and to ensure compliance with insurance requirements.

It was agreed that Allan and Tony H should carry this forward, consulting others where necessary.

## 11. Vocations for Christian Service

Rob had distributed a Note explaining that he had felt a growing sense of vocation to engage in ministry beyond his present Lay Reader functions, possibly through some form of ordained ministry. He asks PCC members to help in the testing of this vocation by making their views known to Chris. He is also pursuing the diocesan process of testing and selection, and provisionally aims to attend a selection conference in the summer.

Chris also reported a recent statement by the Bishop of Oxford proposing new arrangements to license lay people to undertake occasional preaching or other service. This is intended to regularise the use of people who have recognised gifts, but do not wish to go through the Lay Reader training system. The requirements for recognising this kind of service will be that any person involved should have the support of the PCC, that they have some form of team support, and that they have some form of training.

Chris indicated that he wishes to consider Kate Evans for recognised service under this provision.

## 12. Donations to Local Caring Organisations

Tony H had distributed a Note proposing that the Church consider putting aside a sum of money each year for local charities and for emergency aid. He suggested that a sum of the order of £1,000 would be appropriate and affordable.

In discussion, some thought it might be difficult to select recipient organisations that all the church would be happy to support. Some wondered whether retiring collections should be organised case by case.

Nevertheless, the principle and the sum of £1,000 annually were **approved**. Details of how to divide the budget between local charity and relief appeals, and how to select beneficiaries, would be worked out later.

**13. Deanery Synod report**

Jean Twigger reported that the recent Deanery Synod meeting had approved the proposed Parish Share figures without change. The meeting heard a talk on the Perry Report concerning senior Church appointments (such as appointment of bishops).

**14. Other Business**

- a) Thanks were received from Joan Impey and from Jean Barton for their Christmas gifts from the PCC.
- b) It was proposed that summary reports of PCC business be included either in the Broadsheet or in the Sunday Service sheet from time to time. Chris and Jim were asked to bring forward specific proposals.
- c) Kate Evans has asked for permission to sell cards produced by her Omega Images enterprise in church. Discussion included strong reservations by some concerning endorsement of individual commercial ventures, and the PCC was unable to come to a decision at this meeting.
- d) Concerning Churches Together in Didcot, it was reported that Aston Tyrold URC had joined; that a service at Pentecost was planned; and that the AGM would be held on 20 April. Joan Impey, our usual representative, cannot attend this, and alternative volunteers are called for.

**15. Close**

The meeting closed with prayer at 10.10 pm.

**Next Meeting**

Tuesday 9 March 2004 at 7.45 pm in the Church Extension

..... Chris Stott, chairman

..... Jim Sinclair, secretary