

**Minutes of a meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 9 November 2004 in Harwell Church Extension**

Present

Jean Barton	Tony Hughes	Jim Sinclair (secretary)
Sid Gale	Allan Macarthur (chair)	Wendy Sinclair
Georgina Greer	Tim Roberts	Chris Stott
Clive House	Ruth Slatter	

1. Opening

Chris opened the meeting with a reading from Matthew 24.

2. Apologies for absence

Kate Evans, Nancy Preston, Clive Silver, Rob Thomas and Jean Twigger all sent their apologies.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 14 September 2004 were signed as a correct record, after making the following amendments:

- 4 b) "The PCC wished to record thanks to Jim, Tony, Sid and David Pyke for their hard work..."
- 4 c) Replace final sentence with "Following Jane's report, the PCC should decide responsibilities for areas of action."
- 4 d) "Elizabeth and Clive H will encourage renewal of standing orders..."
- 4 h) "... possible recipients identified by the Missions Group, ..."
- 7 b) "About half the children attended every day."
- 8 b) Replace with "Ray Hinchliffe has now made repairs to the churchyard wall on behalf of the Parish Council."
- 12 a) Final sentence: "Chris and Tony will look to see if there is an existing job description."

4. Matters arising

- a) GB Tree in churchyard: Action (on Jim) still pending.
Action: Jim to pursue.
- b) Church Weekend: not many responses yet to questionnaire; no collation of responses has been done yet.
- c) Church Hall Caretaker: Wendy Sinclair has offered to take on this role – gratefully accepted by the PCC.

Action: Jim to write to the McNivens expressing warm thanks for their work over the past several years, and to write to Liz Roberts thanking her for standing in for the interim period.

d) Church Hall use by Scouts: Chris has met with Brian Zimmerman to clarify the requests.

i) to fix two eyes to the wall for attaching a net for ball games – **approved** (this has already been done with David Pyke's help).

ii) to take over the cupboard formerly used by the Girls' Brigade – **not approved**. The PCC felt that a more pressing need was to use this cupboard for storing the TV and video player, instead of in the electrics cupboard. It was suggested that the Scouts may be able to share a different cupboard, partly used by Welcome Group.

Action: Wendy to sort out cupboard key holdings correspondingly.

5. Financial report

Clive H distributed a written report as usual. Income and expenditure are broadly on target against the budget.

Elizabeth Gill has asked for clarification of missionary giving.

Action: Clive H to check with her to resolve any remaining uncertainty.

6. Giving to Local Caring Organisations

Clive H reported the four nominations had been received for possible recipients of the £500 budgeted for this purpose:

- a) South and Vale Carers Centre
- b) The Oxfordshire Befriending Network
- c) Little Pippins "Support a village child" Scheme
- d) Fun Club Twins

Details of these organisations are given on a sheet that had been distributed by Clive.

Clive proposed that for this year we make a donation of £125 to each of the four nominated organisations. **Agreed**.

In discussion, it became clear that this year's proposal had not been accompanied by a clear framework with regard to what type of organisation was eligible (e.g. how local is 'local?'), or how the nomination and decision process would operate.

Resolution	That for 2005 the PCC will set criteria for eligibility when a budget is agreed; that any congregation member would be able to propose recipients; and that the final decision would be made by the Standing Committee
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Moved Allan Macarthur	Seconded Tony Hughes	Passed unanimously
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7. Vision Group report

Tim reported that the Vision Group had developed a desire to evaluate progress against the agreed goals, and to reassess priorities (this was foreshadowed at the last PCC meeting).

These matters would be considered in detail at the Group's forthcoming meeting, with the intention of bringing forward specific proposals at the January meeting of the PCC.

Reports on specific activities:

- a) At the Children's Activity Day held in mid-October, 34 children attended, of which some 8 had no church connections. The event was therefore considered as an effective outreach, apart from the other benefits to all who attended. Thanks were expressed to Marilyn and all the helpers.
- b) The current Alpha Course is going well. The AwayDay was on Saturday 6 November, and was led by Chris and Helena Knight. Some commitments were made, as well as significant requests for prayer.
- c) The Youth Service on Sunday evening 7 November went very well, with the church full. Many of the Youth Fellowship members contributed to leading the service, and they were pleased to see many relatives and friends specially invited. Some of the invited friends expressed interest in joining the group.

8. Health and Safety Audit

The PCC welcomed as guest Jane Vickers, who had conducted the audit along with Allan. Renewed thanks were expressed to Jane.

A written report of the audit, including findings and specific recommendations, had been distributed to PCC members. Jane emphasised the following points:

- a) **Documentation:** we should have a documented H&S policy; we should conduct and record risk assessments for appropriate activities (e.g. the Carols by Candlelight service, or maintenance involving working at heights); we should record actions for improvement following each review. Such documentation was necessary to demonstrate adequate provision for H&S of our users. Our insurers (The Ecclesiastical) have a good book about policy.
- b) The absence of any regime of regular testing portable and installed electrical equipment was notable.
- c) 'Winning hearts and minds' – to persuade people to take these matters seriously in an ongoing manner – is the hardest thing.

In discussion, the following way forward was agreed:

- a) This audit should be followed up by annual walkabout inspections;
- b) The Buildings Committee should go through the report in detail, and bring forward recommendations for specific actions, including a suggestion as to which person or group should take responsibility for each.
- c) Jane was willing to help with policy writing.

9. Buildings Committee report

Tony reported:

- a) It has been noted that the Church has no lightning conductor. Tony to look into possible systems and costs.

- b) Despite further actions, the way forward for the kitchen/toilet refurbishment project is still not clear. A written summary of the status was distributed. No way has been found around the ~~now~~ mandatory regulations with regard to ~~fire escape and~~ size of ~~the~~ disabled toilets, ~~which the latter~~ cannot quite be satisfied by the original plans. A meeting with ~~the a~~ fire officer who advises VWHDC Building Control was held; this was constructive, but the written response communicated via West Waddy still seems to require elaborate provisions for fire escape that again are incompatible with the original design.

Tony indicated that our choice seems to be between a new plan that satisfies all the planning issues but costs more, a simplified plan providing a disabled toilet but much simplified kitchen facilities, or doing nothing.

The position was noted, but no decision was made. It was noted that there was still a slim hope of helpful information being received from the DAC.

10. Missions Support and Awareness

Clive Silver had prepared a presentation regarding the level of awareness in the church of our missions interests and financial support. In Clive's absence, Sid spoke briefly to the distributed written material, which included summary information about the various overseas missions that we support. The main questions discussed as a result of this were –

- a) whether these missions activities were kept sufficiently in the attention of the congregation;
- b) whether we have the right balance in the choice of missions that we support, both overseas and home;
- c) whether the present system of deciding financial allocations is appropriate, given that the recommendations drawn up by the Missions Committee are usually accepted with little discussion; that these recommendations tend to vary little from year to year; and that any principles underlying the allocations have not been much discussed or publicised.

The specific proposal in Clive's note – that we cultivate links with the church in Tanzania – was not discussed.

With regard to bringing missions activities before the congregation, it was generally felt that the number of Sundays already taken up with visits of supported missions workers was about as large as could be achieved. There was insufficient time to seriously consider whether the process of support allocation decision-making should be renewed. This would have to be taken up at some later date.

11. Sound System – Extension of Hearing Aid Loop

Jim reported that extension of the hearing-aid induction loop to cover most of the seating area in the church was the only remaining item in the sound-system renewal. An original assessment had indicated that such an extension could be achieved by supplementing the present loop with another, and continuing to use the existing driver amplifier.

Recent more thorough calculations by Jim had shown, however, that uniform field strength over the desired seating areas would best be achieved by installing a completely new loop. The required path could be covered only by passing a thin 'foil' cable under the carpets. The resulting single-turn loop would require a new amplifier specifically designed for this purpose. Jim presented estimates of the cost at £623, although it might be possible to save around £100 by using a smaller amplifier.

This expenditure was **approved**, with choice of the amplifier and other technical details left to Jim.

12. Assistance at Holy Communion

Chris Stott felt that, in view of Kate Evans' current training programme for assisting with leading of worship, it would be appropriate for her also to assist in administration of Holy Communion. Chris explained that authorisation for such lay assistance is given by the Bishop, and that all people so authorised must have been recommended by the PCC.

Resolution	That the PCC recommends that Kate Evans be put forward for approval as a lay assistant in the serving of Holy Communion in St Matthews Church, Harwell.		
Moved	Chris Stott	Seconded	Wendy Sinclair
		Passed	unanimously

13. Replacement of Hymnbooks

Jean Barton presented and spoke to a report from a small subcommittee formed to consider replacement of our main hymn book, Mission Praise. The recommendation was that we do not acquire a new printed hymn book, but rather print hymn words each week as part of the service sheets handed out. This approach would leave open the option to project words also, if suitable equipment were acquired. The proposal was **accepted**.

It was also recommended that a better folding machine be bought, to minimise the work for Naomi in producing these hymn sheets. Estimated cost £200. This was **provisionally agreed**, subject to confirming that this cost would not outweigh that of the alternative of having the printing done commercially.

14. Future Dates

4 December	Children's craft morning
11 December	Concert by Christian Music Fellowship
19 December	Carols by Candlelight services in Harwell
22 December	Carol singing from 6.30pm in Crown and Cherry Tree
24 December	Crib service (aimed at 4 to 7-year olds)
26 February 2005	Diocesan conference on Climate Change (High Wycombe)
Easter week 2005	'Y God' in Chilton, followed up by after-school club.
10 July 2005 (eve)	Confirmation service, Harwell

15. Other Business

- a) **Retiring collection Christmas Day:** approved, in aid of Bible Lands.
- b) **Collections at Carols by Candlelight services:** agreed to hold retiring collections only.
- c) **Mulled wine and mince pies after evening CbyC:** agreed; *PCC members to donate mince pies, please.*
- d) **Flowers in Church:** Betty Pyke has decided to retire, and Debbie Davies has agreed to take on the responsibility, from 1 January 2005. Thanks should be expressed to Betty in some way.

Action: Chris to enquire with Bill what gift she might appreciate (order of £50).

- e) **Church Cleaning Co-ordinator:** we need a new one, since Debbie has been doing this, but would give up when taking over the Flowers role.