

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 3 July 2018 at 7.30pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey (Chair and present for items 1-6 & 8)	Jane Woolley (Secretary)	Sid Gale
Pam Rolls (present for items 1-6 & 8)	Michelle Walker	Lizi Bowerman (Treasurer)
Jean Barton (Chair for items 7, 9 & 10-20)	Tim Paget (present for items 1-6, 8, & 10-14)	Gordon Gill
Tony Hughes	Christina Wood	Martin Gibson (present for items 3-6 & 8)
	Eliza Wheaton	

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Item 2. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

Agenda items are recorded here in agenda order but were in fact taken in the following order: 1, 3-6, 8, 2, 10-20, 9, 7.

1. Opening & Prayer

Revd Dr Jonathan Mobey opened the meeting by reading Psalm 30. In it, David is reflecting on a time when he begged to the Lord for help, God saved him, and "changed my sadness into a joyful dance". The relevance for us is that this is the equivalent to what happens when we become a Christian.

Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Items of joint business with All Saints' PCC

a) Revised PCC meetings schedule

A revised PCC meetings schedule was proposed by Jonathan Mobey at the June Combined PCC meeting, to be adopted starting in September 2018. Since the June meeting, Jonathan Mobey has emailed All Saints' PCC members about this, and has also spoken to the All Saints' Treasurer, Stuart Gibson. Stuart was happy and Jonathan received no objections from PCC members.

The conclusion is therefore that the revised schedule will be implemented as per Paper A, as of September.

<p>Action: Jane Woolley to liaise with Jonathan Mobey to prepare and circulate confirmation of the revised list of PCC meeting dates and locations to all PCC members.</p>

b) Proposal for a new member to join the clergy team

Paper B refers.

Jonathan Mobey gave an overview of the comments and questions he had received from PCC members on this matter. These together with Jonathan's answers, and the ensuing discussion, are summarised in an accompanying confidential minute, for PCC members' eyes only.

Bishop Colin had indicated to Jonathan Mobey earlier on the day of the meeting that progress on this matter is slow at the moment, and so there is now no imminent prospect of a new member joining the clergy team.

In view of the sensitive nature of the matter, it was agreed to delegate any further discussion and decision-making required in due course to Jonathan Mobey and the four churchwardens.

c) Participation in research project

Papers C & D refer.

After some discussion, the matter was put to a vote. All but one of those present were in favour of our churches participating.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Becca Lewis, Andrew Keene and Jan Radford.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 8 May 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

Jane Woolley had an action to make a note for the agenda of the first PCC meeting in 2019 of the need to form a small group to agree and implement Annual Meeting improvement ideas.

Due to the adoption of a revised PCC meetings schedule (see item 2a) it was agreed that it would be necessary to put this on the agenda for the November 2018 meeting.

6. Decisions taken by Standing Committee between meetings

At the last meeting it was agreed that the Instructions for Counting of Collections needed some amendments and that a revised version would be put before the Standing Committee for approval.

A revised version was put before the Standing Committee but members requested some further revisions. The latest version of the document is currently with Jonathan Mobey.

<p>Action: Jonathan Mobey to communicate to Nick Clarke the remaining amendments needed, and to ask Nick to submit the final document to the Standing Committee once again.</p>
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7. Church Tower – west elevation – render repairs

Tony Hughes explained that the need for this work is unwelcome, but the rendering in question has become a little more detached since first noticed in the Winter. Initial indications are that the costs to inspect and rectify are going to be high and so we are obtaining competitive quotes. As this is a repair we will need an Archdeacon's Certificate rather than a Faculty. English Heritage will be consulted as part of that process.

Tony Hughes stated that the Buildings Committee view is that it would be irresponsible on safety grounds just to leave it and let the render fall off. An area below the tower has been fenced off as a precaution, but this cannot totally guarantee safety. Various other PCC members agreed with this stance.

Jean Barton asked whether we have the funds to pay for the work. Lizi Bowerman said that there are funds in our reserves. We might also be able to raise extra funds and apply for grants e.g. from Oxford Historic Churches – but we would need an Archdeacon's Certificate to apply for grants.

The PCC then voted on the following resolution:

Resolution	To proceed with the work necessary to inspect and repair the rendering on the west wall of the tower, in accordance with the specification of works prepared by the Church Architect				
Proposed	Sid Gale	Seconded	Gordon Gill	Passed	Unanimously

8. Heating project

Paper G refers.

Jonathan Mobey thanked the working group for Paper G and commented that it must have taken a lot of work to produce it.

Tony Hughes summarised the key points in Paper G. He relayed that the members of the working group unanimously agreed that the economic case for the previous recommendation in 2016 to install an electric central heating system such as *Ecomiser* has now worsened. This is as a result of increased capital costs and related operating costs, due mainly to realising that a more powerful system than previously supposed would be necessary in our building. The upshot is that the economic case for investing in a central heating system is now significantly weaker than that for continuing with the church radiant heating system, at current usage levels, and there is no compelling economic case even if church usage increases.

Tony Hughes emphasised that the working group has peer reviewed the detailed calculations behind Paper G and confirmed that the figures used are as good as they can be. Tony explained that the conclusions and recommendations in Paper G came out of the working group's discussion when it met 10 days ago.

Tony Hughes asked Martin Gibson, a member of the working group, to comment further.

Martin explained that the working group is of a reasonable size – 5 people including himself and Tony Hughes. The group had considered sustainability issues and the practicalities of a water based heating system as well as the economic factors. Martin confirmed that the group concluded that its recommendations are the best way forward, given all the assumptions and the unknowns involved.

There then ensued a lengthy discussion covering:

- The prospects of trying to heat the church to more modern comfort levels, and the extent to which a comfortable temperature might help to drive church growth and greater usage of the church building
- The traditional use of church/village halls rather than church buildings to host baby & toddler groups and the extent to which this is driven by temperature and flexible floor space
- How comfortable a temperature an upgraded radiant heater system might achieve compared with the current radiant system and compared with a central heating system
- The extent to which it would improve comfort levels if we were to switch on a radiant system for longer than currently, and how much this would increase running costs

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- The age and reliability of the current radiant system, and the cost and risk of having to replace failed heaters if we were to continue with the current system
- The pros and cons of continuing with the current radiant system compared with investing £8k on an upgraded radiant system that would replace the 12 heaters which are 40 years old out of the total of 24.
- Whether spending £8k on an upgraded radiant system might effectively kick reconsideration of the case for a central heating system into the long grass
- How sophisticated a control system an upgraded radiant system could have
- Whether we could fit a more sophisticated control system to the current radiant system
- How soon we would envisage being able to install an upgraded radiant system
- The likelihood of being able to construct a better economic case for a central heating system in two to three years' time
- The extent to which it is relevant to consider the challenges of raising the required capital costs when assessing the case for installing a central heating system

The general conclusions of the meeting were that:

- Continuing with the current radiant system is not really a good idea because 12 of the 24 heaters are 40 years old, one heater fails per year on average, the cost of repairing individual heaters is not insubstantial, and there is a reasonably high risk that one or more heaters will fail at an inconvenient moment. Therefore doing nothing for very much longer is not an attractive option.
- We cannot construct a sound economic case for investing in a central heating system at the moment. The non-economic issues have pros and cons, but opinions differ as to the weight they should be given in making a large financial investment. Pursuing our original proposal for an electric central heating system is on balance not a justifiable option at the moment.
- The most practical option for now is to upgrade the radiant heating system as recommended by the working group.

To test these conclusions, the meeting first voted on the following resolution.

Resolution	To stick with the current radiant heating system rather than upgrade it but to run it for more hours to increase comfort levels				
Proposed	Sid Gale	Seconded	Jonathan Mobey	Voting result	Not passed: 3 in favour 8 against

The meeting then proceeded to vote on the following resolution.

Resolution	To adopt the key recommendation of the working group i.e. to upgrade the radiant heating system				
Proposed	Jean Barton	Seconded	Gordon Gill	Voting result	Passed: 8 in favour

					3 abstentions
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Tony Hughes said that he would now investigate the installation of an upgraded radiant heating system in more detail, especially the issues raised about control. He has already obtained three quotations from potential suppliers as part of the working group's analysis. Tony said that there was a good chance that a replacement system could be installed in time for this winter, although there are other church buildings projects which are competing for time at the moment.

Tony Hughes confirmed that the plan is to re-evaluate the case for an electric central heating system over the next two to three years. As part of a re-evaluation the group will investigate the heat loss from the building (in particular via air circulation in the higher reaches near the roof) to see what might be feasible to reduce heat losses and influence the case.

9. Porch glass doors project

Update Paper H was noted. Tony Hughes said that the working group meets next on Friday 6 July.

10. Chancel – proposal for additional furniture

Paper I refers.

Gordon Gill asked if the donation had been received yet and if it would be restricted. Christina Wood clarified that the donation is currently a pledge and has not yet been received, and that the donation would be restricted i.e. only to be used for purchasing the described items of furniture.

Sid Gale queried whether the statement that “*The other companies were all more expensive than Treske*” was accurate for the priest's desk as well as for the armchair. It was agreed that it was not, and that this part of the Statement of Needs would need to be modified. Tony Hughes suggested making some reference to comparative prices in catalogues for 'off the shelf' desks, but bearing in mind that the DAC had requested 'bespoke' furniture for the chancel. Jane Woolley suggested pointing out that one reason for selecting a desk made by Treske is that they are able to match the colour of the wood to the St Wilfrid's chairs.

Resolution	To approve the purchase of a priest's desk and St Wilfrid's armchair for the Chancel				
Proposed	Christina Wood	Seconded	Tony Hughes	Passed	Unanimously

Resolution	To approve the Statement of Needs for the purchase of a priest's desk and St Wilfred's armchair, with the minor modification outlined above.				
Proposed	Lizi Bowerman	Seconded	Tony Hughes	Passed	Unanimously

11. Buildings Committee report

Paper J was noted.

Jean Barton thanked Tony Hughes and the Buildings Committee for all their work.

12. Church Hall management - update

Paper K was noted.

13. Finance reports

Papers L, M & N were noted.

Jean Barton asked about the type of new furniture approved for the Church Office, referred to in Paper L. Lizi Bowerman said that this consists of a new desk with an adjustable height so that the Church Administrator can work standing up or sitting down, plus some new cupboards so that the office furniture is of a more uniform appearance.

14. Bank account signatories

Jane Woolley confirmed that she has taken the action from the last meeting to ask Nick Clarke to prepare the necessary bank paperwork to update the authorised signatories. Lizi Bowerman confirmed that this paperwork is about to be taken to the bank.

15. Legacy giving leaflet

In Jonathan Mobey and Martin Gibson's absence, Jane Woolley relayed that the situation is that:

- Jonathan Mobey had found a useful template for a Parish Legacy Leaflet online and had sent it to Martin Gibson.
- Martin Gibson had then used this template to revise his proposed text for a leaflet, and had sent this to Jonathan for review.
- Jonathan Mobey and Martin Gibson have agreed that it would be best for the Benefice Stewardship Committee, of which Jonathan Mobey is a member, to take on progressing this matter now.

PCC members were content for the matter to now be passed to the Benefice Stewardship Committee.

16. Finalising Health & Safety Policy

Jane Woolley confirmed that she has double checked with Vicky Johnston that the action to obtain Jonathan Mobey's signature on the finalised Policy, etc. has all been completed. Jane confirmed that Vicky has indeed done all that was required..

17. Risk assessment in the main church building

Jane Woolley relayed that she had spoken to Hazel Connelly and that Hazel inspected the building on 19 May 2018 but has yet to write up the findings. The following action therefore remains outstanding:

<p>Action: Hazel Connelly to undertake another risk assessment in the Church once the new seating arrangements have settled down.</p>
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18. Reinstating the evening service on the second Sunday of the month

Sid Gale commented that this matter has been pending for quite a while and queried when and how a decision would be made about it. Sid wondered if the question that needs answering is: is there is a demand for it or not?

Tony Hughes suggested asking evening service attendees if they would like this service reinstated or not. Jane Woolley said that this might not give a good steer because if you ask people if they want

something and it is seemingly at no cost to them, they will typically say yes. The answer you get also depends on how you ask them and who asks them.

Jane Woolley wondered if the resources that might have gone into running this service have effectively been redeployed into the Pebbles Fresh Expressions services. Other PCC members agreed that reinstating this service would certainly take resource e.g. a service leader, preacher and sidespeople.

Tony Hughes commented that he has not felt able to update the information about evening services on the blue sign outside St Matthew's due to the decision about this service being on hold, and that this is one practical reason why we should not let the matter drag on for an extended period of time.

Action: Jean Barton to discuss with Jonathan Mobey how we might make better progress with making a decision on whether or not to reinstate the evening service on the second Sunday of the month.

19. Future dates

Tuesday 4 September – next PCC meeting

Sunday 7 October – Harvest Thanksgiving

Sunday 11 November – Remembrance Sunday

20. Any other business

There was none.

Jean Barton closed the meeting with a period of quiet and then led the meeting in prayer and a recitation of The Grace at 9.45pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE