

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 7 May 2019 at 7.30 pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey (Chair for items 1, 2, and 9 onwards)

Becca Lewis

Pam Rolls (items 1-2 only)

Tony Hughes (Chair for items 3-8)

Phill Johnston

Eliza Wheaton

Andrew Keene

Jane Woolley

Sid Gale

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1 & 2. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

1. Opening & Prayer

The Rector (Jonathan Mobey) read Luke 14 v15-23. In this passage various individuals make excuses for not going to a banquet.

Jonathan remarked that this passage is about our priorities. Being invited to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven (the banquet) is amazing, but we're often short-sighted and settle for less and we don't appreciate what is on offer. Jesus is saying that we should fix our sights on something that is much greater than worldly things. We should always be asking God to recalibrate our disordered hearts and minds.

Jonathan commented that much of what we discuss at PCC meetings is about agreeing our priorities – for finances and time. We pray for God's guidance in this.

Jonathan then led the PCC in prayer.

2. Items of joint business

There were none.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jan Radford, Tim Paget, Allan Macarthur and Gordon Gill. Michelle Walker was absent.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the PCC meetings on 5 February and on 2 April 2019 were signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

There were none.

6. Decisions between meetings by Standing Committee

There were none.

7. Annual appointment of role holders

Jane Woolley had circulated a list of the relevant positions. This list indicated whether or not the incumbents were willing to continue.

Tony Hughes clarified that the Concert Managers are ultimately answerable for practical matters about use of the church and its facilities to the Churchwardens. Therefore if a Concert/Event Manager had a problem or a query, they might need to consult a Churchwarden.

Ruth Slatter has stood down after serving many years as Stewardship Secretary. The post needs to be filled by December in order to be ready to distribute giving scheme envelopes for 2020. Jane Woolley has had a briefing from Ruth about what the task involves. It seems fairly straightforward and mainly consists of distributing envelopes to scheme members annually. There are currently only 7 scheme members. PCC members were in agreement that it is important to continue this scheme for those who prefer to give in this way.

Jane Woolley recommended that the role of Stewardship Secretary should ideally be taken on by someone who is not already a PCC officer or churchwarden, to spread the load. It could easily be carried out by someone not on the PCC. Phill Johnston (Treasurer) said he would undertake the task if no one else could be found to do it.

Action: Jane Woolley to talk to Jonathan Mobey to identify possible suitable candidates to be Stewardship Secretary.

The meeting then voted on the following resolution:

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following roles:				
	Churchwarden deputies		Tim Roberts Ruth Slatter Mel Gibson David Pyke		
	Bookkeeper		Nick Clarke		
	Electoral Roll Officer		Mike Pepper		
	Deputy Electoral Roll Officer		Jane Woolley		
	Concert/Event managers		Liz Roberts Tim Roberts Mel Gibson		
	Health & Safety Officer		Hazel Connelly		
Moved	Sid Gale	Seconded	Eliza Wheaton	Passed	Unanimously

8. Annual appointment of PCC sub-committees

Jane Woolley had circulated a list of existing committee members. This list indicated whether or not the incumbents were willing to continue.

Phill Johnston confirmed that he will chair the Finance & Budget sub-committee. However, he is yet to confirm with other committee members whether they wish to continue. He also plans to ask Allan Macarthur as churchwarden to be on the committee.

Tony Hughes said that he had e mailed Allan Macarthur yesterday assuming that he would need to be on the Finance Committee and had asked whether he would also be willing to join the Buildings Committee, in addition to Becca Lewis. Allan has been on the Buildings Committee before. Tony has not heard back from Allan yet.

Action: Phill Johnston to propose the members of the Finance & Budget committee at the September PCC meeting

The meeting then voted on the following resolution:

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following committees:				
	Buildings	Tony Hughes (Chair) David Pyke Philip Roberts Juan Bowerman Becca Lewis (Churchwarden)			
	Standing Committee	PCC Vice Chair, Tony Hughes PCC Secretary, Jane Woolley PCC Treasurer, Phill Johnston Other clergy licensed to the benefice: Pam Rolls and Jan Radford			
	(Churchwardens and Rector are automatically members of the Standing Committee, and the Rector is automatically a member of all subcommittees)				
Moved	Sid Gale	Seconded	Becca Lewis	Passed	Unanimously

9. Matters arising from the Annual Meeting

1) Church Electoral Roll

Paper F refers. There was a much larger than expected drop in the Electoral Roll (down from 111 to 44).

Mike Pepper (Electoral Roll Officer) has done some analysis of who was on the old Roll compared with the new Roll. Mike has identified a group of 28 who still regularly attend St Matthew's but who have dropped off the Roll. Mike is proposing to approach informally as many of this group as possible when he is sidesman to ask them if they would like to be on the new Roll.

Tony Hughes commented that Mike's analysis is very useful. Tony noted that the number of people who have moved away, died or no longer attend St Matthew's (78) is more than six times higher than the number of new people who have joined the Electoral Roll (12). On the face of it, this is a large difference. If we are a thriving, or even growing church, then we might hope that new attendees would replace those who have moved, died or who no longer attend. Tony suggested that Mike Pepper be asked to also approach new regular attendees about whether they would like to be on the new Roll.

Sid Gale and Becca Lewis commented that the number on the new Electoral Roll seems to be small in comparison with the number of regular church attendees. For instance, average attendance figures have not dropped.

Sid Gale wondered if it is possible to get a feel for how many people regularly attend services. Jonathan Mobey said that it is more difficult than you would think to accurately identify individuals and keep a list every week for period. Jonathan said that he last did this about a year ago. This revealed that the mean average attendance at St Matthew's was one week in three. However underlying this statistic was a lot of variation in individuals' habits with some attending every week without fail and some attending only very irregularly.

Jonathan Mobey commented that the Electoral Roll is used as a crude gauge of church size, and that he would agree that the new Roll is on the small side compared to the number of regular or active church members. Jonathan said that this is one of the criticisms of the Electoral Roll system.

Tony Hughes remarked that the Electoral Roll system is perhaps a bit arcane, but nevertheless it is pivotal to parish church governance. You need to be on the Electoral Roll to be elected on to the PCC or to be a churchwarden. If our Electoral Roll is too small then we are limiting the number of people who can participate in the formal decision making that is required for the day to day running of a parish church.

Becca Lewis commented that one simple explanation of the drop in numbers on the Electoral Roll is that people never got round to completing and returning their Electoral Roll form.

Tony Hughes suggested that Mike Pepper's task of retrospectively approaching regular attendees to be on the Electoral Roll might be aided by an announcement from the service leader.

Action: Jane Woolley to ask Mike Pepper:

- To go ahead with his suggestion that, when he is a sides-person, he informally approach regular attendees who were on the previous Electoral Roll to invite them to join the new Roll
- To also approach regular attendees who were not on the previous Electoral Roll e.g. if they are new
- To give the service leader a supporting oral notice to read out to further encourage active church members to sign up to the Electoral Roll

After the meeting, the following related action was also agreed:

Action:

Jane Woolley to ask Mike Pepper to send Jonathan Mobey a list of the 17 people in category D (no longer attend St Matthew's)

Jonathan Mobey to follow up with these 17 people

2) Allocation of 10% of Staples legacy to world mission giving

Jonathan Mobey stated that this issue is not just about the Staples legacy.

Jonathan clarified that the PCC has agreed to set aside 10% of unrestricted **regular** income to fund the **regular** income that we donate to our world mission partners the following year. The PCC has also agreed to set aside 10% of any unrestricted one-off gifts (such as legacies) for world missions – but to fund one-off capital projects rather provide ongoing income for a mission partner. Jonathan Mobey

said that ideally he had in mind that the PCC would also set aside 10% of any fundraising, for example for building projects, for world missions projects.

To reinforce and clarify its agreement to setting aside 10% of legacies for world missions projects, the PCC passed the following resolution.

Resolution	Reserve 10% of unrestricted legacies for mission giving projects:				
Moved	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Sid Gale	Passed	Unanimously

Phill Johnston agreed to split out the Staples legacy into two lines in the Fund Balances report – one for the 10% reserved for world missions projects and the other line for the remaining 90%. He will also do this for the Ullmer legacy just received and for any other future legacies. Jane Woolley asked that the existing “Missionary Giving” line of £6,755 be relabelled to make it clear that it represents 10% of the Talbot legacy set aside for world missions projects (the other 90% having already been absorbed into funds for building improvements).

Action: Phill Johnston to amend the Fund Balances report to clearly label the 10% of each unrestricted legacy which is set aside for world missions projects

10. Reflections on the Annual Meeting

It was noted that roughly the same number of people attended the Annual Meeting as last year.

PCC members expressed their thanks to Eliza Wheaton and to Martin Gibson for their efforts to engage church members prior to the meeting. Eliza reported that a key finding from the pre-meeting questionnaire was that people do not feel that they understand the relevance of the Annual Meeting to them.

Eliza Wheaton stated that there had been a very short window between the February PCC meeting and the timetable for finalising and circulating the agenda for the Annual Meeting. If we want to canvas potential attendees for issues they would like to hear more about or to discuss at the Meeting then we need to start earlier next time.

Jonathan Mobey suggested that people might be more engaged with the Annual Meeting if they understand more during the year about what the PCC has been looking at. So how might we make the work of the PCC a little more public? Various possibilities were then discussed, culminating in the action below.¹

Action: Jane Woolley to draft a couple of sentences to summarise key issues discussed/decisions made after each St Matthew's PCC meeting for the Rector to approve. The Rector will then pass it to the Church Office to be published in the noticesheets and (if space) the Broadsheet.

¹ It was agreed after the meeting that the Rector would prepare an equivalent summary of the All Saints' PCC meeting, and that Jane Woolley would prepare a summary after each Combined PCC meeting as well.

Tony Hughes noted that the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting say that Jonathan Mobey received a question before the meeting asking how we could make St Matthew's more welcoming. Jonathan's answer to that was mainly buildings-related. Tony wondered if we know what lay behind that question. Was it something to do with the building or was it the people side that they were thinking of? If so, the implication is that they feel we could do better on that (albeit that Joan Sutton had remarked in the meeting that she felt she had been made very welcome as a newcomer).

Action: Eliza Wheaton to go back to the person who submitted this question to ask for more detail about their perspective.

Becca Lewis stated that she thought that not having chairs in the north aisle makes it easier for people to get coffee and to linger to talk to others after the 11am Sunday service.

11. Porch glass doors

Tony Hughes said that the Working Group had organised a consultation on the proposed porch glass doors among church members and the wider community (the latter via Facebook). So far we have received four comments from church members and five from the wider community, so a total of nine (all from different people). Tony handed out a copy of the comments.

Of the nine comments, three were against the project. Six were supportive, although some of those expressed a desire for automated rather than manual doors. Tony Hughes said that the number and content of the comments received suggested to him that we should stick to the PCC's preferred design when submitting the proposal to the DAC, but that we should put more substance into the argument for opting for manual over automated doors into that proposal.

Tony Hughes raised the issue of when to "close" the community consultation on Facebook. It was agreed that Tony will arrange a Facebook message seeking any further comments with a deadline of 20 May.

Tony Hughes said that, from his past experience, he would recommend that he invites DAC members to a site visit before we submit our proposal to the DAC. This would then allow us to identify any significant issues the DAC is likely to have and to amend or strengthen our submission accordingly. PCC members agreed with this approach. It was noted that the DAC might not agree to a site visit, in which case we will have to make our submission without the benefit of that.

It was noted that the next PCC meeting is September. The Working Group can plan to have a proposal for the DAC for PCC members to approve at that meeting.

12. Electronic donations service provider

Phill Johnston reminded PCC members that the current provider, BT Donate, ceases service soon. Paper G set out three options. Phill is recommended the first option, called Wonderful. This has zero charges unlike the other two. It has relatively few users at the moment because it is new. Phill has looked into who is behind it and the answer is that it is backed by Co-op bank and Amazon, amongst others. It is also recommended by the Money Saving Expert website.

PCC members discussed whether the small size of Wonderful made it higher risk of going out of business while owing us money collected. Indeed, Co-op Bank was noted to have had financial problems in the recent past. However, it was agreed that Wonderful was unlikely to fold owing us money if it is backed by the large organisations named.

One PCC member had an objection to using a service backed by Amazon because of unease at their business practices.

Resolution	To use Wonderful as our electronic donations service provider				
Moved	Jane Woolley	Seconded	Eliza Wheaton	Passed	7 in favour 1 against

Action:

Phill Johnston to set up an account with Wonderful as our electronic donations service provider

Jonathan Mobey to then create a link from the church website to the relevant place

13. Buildings Committee report

Paper H refers.

Tony Hughes drew attention to recent developments on a couple of the items in Paper H as follows:

Tower re-rendering

The re-rendering work has now started. However the rendering will probably take more than one week due to the need to put on three coats and allowing each one to dry. The work should be completed by the end of May, though.

Improvements to church toilets

A plumber has now been commissioned to undertake stage 1 work in the smaller toilet. Work is due to start on 4 June and should take about a week.

There were no questions from PCC members.

Jonathan Mobey thanked Tony for his report and all his work.

14. Church Hall management - update

Paper I refers.

Jonathan Mobey explained that the key issue at the moment is engaging a new cleaner. This is being looked at in conjunction with paying someone to also clean the toilets and nearby areas in the main church building. A possible schedule is being discussed with a potential candidate and a detailed specification of work is being drawn up.

15. Paid cleaner for the church toilets - update

See item 14 above.

16. Chancel furniture - update

Becca Lewis reported that the priest's desk and chair have now been delivered. They were commissioned on Easter Sunday.

Becca Lewis said that the supplier was supposed to send wood and fabric samples beforehand to check the match with existing chairs. However they did not do this. The red fabric on the priest's chair

is a slightly different colour to the other chairs. Becca is going to talk to the supplier to see if that can be rectified. A recent change in the range held by the fabric supplier might make this impossible. The wood is currently slightly lighter than the existing chairs but should darken over time.

17. Finance reports

The Income and Expenditure report, the Fund Balances report and the Finance Commentary report (Papers J, K and L) were noted.

PCC members asked the following questions:

Q1: Is the Generation Gold donation mentioned in paper L a donation to St Matthew's or to the Benefice?

A1: Phill Johnston said that he will find out.

Q2: Can the remaining money in the Improved Heating fund be redistributed to something else now?

A2: Tony Hughes said that there are some ongoing actions which could result in further expenditure. For instance, there will be an investigation into possibly improving the vertical distribution of heat via down-draught fans. So it would be helpful to leave the funds designated as they are for the timebeing.

Q3: Is there some surplus in the Chancel Furniture fund?

Q3: Becca Lewis said no, the final invoice will absorb the rest.

Q4: Is the Ullmer legacy restricted?

A4: Phill Johnston said no, it is not.

Action: Phill Johnston – Generation Gold donation:

- Find out if donation is to St Matthew's or needs to be split with All Saints'
- Let Pam Rolls and Jan Radford know about this donation

18. Publicising Amazon Smile

Jonathan Mobey reported that this is something that he would like the Benefice to consider, not just St Matthew's. Jonathan will raise the issue with the Benefice Stewardship Committee. The matter can then be considered at the next Combined PCC meeting.

Action: Jonathan Mobey – put Amazon Smile on the July Combined PCC meeting agenda

19. Friends of St Matthew's Harwell

Jane Woolley reported that she had completed the action from the February PCC meeting. However, Jane's understanding is that Liz Roberts has been unable to arrange to meet with American Harwells in USA.

20. Health & Safety – update

Jane Woolley reported that Hazel Connelly had carried out a risk assessment for the No Go Joe performance.

21. Services and seasonal

No issues were raised. Jonathan Mobey invited anyone with any feedback on the Lent and Easter programme to contact him. Jonathan confirmed that feedback on Lent Central would be considered at the next Combined PCC meeting.

22. Future dates

Harwell Feast: Monday 27 May

Chilton Fun Day: Saturday 8 June

Prayer/Reflective Spaces at Harwell School: Monday 10–Friday 14 June

Next Combined PCC meeting: Tuesday 2 July

Holiday Club: Monday 29 July–Friday 2 August

Next St Matthew's PCC meeting: Tuesday 3 September

23. Any other business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm with the Lord's Prayer.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

_____ **DATE**

_____ **DATE**