

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present

Jonathan Mobey
(Chair and present for items
1-9; present for items 20-28)

Tony Hughes (Vice-Chair)
(Chair for items 10-28)

Phill Johnston (Treasurer)
(withdrew for items 2 & 3)

Sid Gale

Pam Rolls (items 1-9 only)

Eliza Wheaton

Jane Woolley (Secretary)

Allan Macarthur (Churchwarden)

Rebecca Lewis (Churchwarden)

Gordon Gill

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-9. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

The items are minuted here in agenda order but they were in fact taken in the following order: 1-9; 22-25; 10-17; 18-21; 26-28

1. Opening & Prayer

The Rector (Jonathan Mobey) read Romans 12. Jonathan picked out a few themes which are particularly relevant at this time. For example:

- Focus on worship (v1)
- Renewing of our minds (v2). Perhaps we need to be cultivating a different pattern of living at the moment?
- Diversity of gifts (v6)
- The importance of looking after one another (v10; v13)
- Being careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone (v17). We must adhere to social distancing, etc. Our public reputation can have a large impact on our effectiveness as a church

Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

Jonathan thanked Carol Pigott for standing in as All Saints' PCC Secretary for the time being.

2. Church Administrator arrangements from January 2021

Phill Johnston excused himself for this item due to a conflict of interest.

Paper A refers. The Church Administrator is a 20 hour per week role. Vicky Johnston is the Church Administrator. Vicky is currently on maternity leave, due to return in January 2021. Deborah Evans is covering the post on a temporary basis. Vicky has asked if she could return to work after maternity leave for 8 hours per week – probably to be on a Thursday. If so, the proposal is that Deborah would be offered the other 12 hours per week. Deborah is willing to proceed on that basis, although her preference would be to be appointed for the full 20 hours per week.

PCC members asked various questions of Jonathan Mobey and Hazel Benton (Chair of the Employment Committee) in order to clarify matters, and to discuss the proposal.

Key points generally agreed were:

- Vicky's request is effectively a flexible working request. As employers, we are legally obliged to consider whether this request can be reasonably accommodated
- It is preferable to keep the post as one role which is job-shared rather than split it into two separate roles. A job-share arrangement allows greater flexibility over agreeing a suitable split

of responsibilities and tasks between the job-share partners, and for the allocation of responsibilities/tasks be amended as circumstances change, or if the initial allocation proves unsuitable

- Job-share partners are legally two separate employees. If one leaves, it does not affect the employment of the other
- There are pros and cons to a job-share vs. where the role is undertaken by a single individual
- The proposed job-share arrangement should be for a trial period initially e.g. 3 or 6 months and formally reviewed after that. Agreement to Vicky's flexible working request would be revoked if the arrangement proves unsatisfactory during the trial period

Jonathan Mobey, as the line manager, confirmed that he would be content to manage a job-share arrangement.

Resolution	To agree a job-share arrangement for the Church Administrator role with the hours split as follows: Vicky Johnston @ 8 hours per week; Deborah Evans @12 hours per week				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	14 out of the 15 Combined PCC members present voted in favour

3. Staff pay review

Phill Johnston excused himself for this item due to a conflict of interest.

Hazel Benton reminded PCC members that we need to consider annually if we can increase staff salaries in line with the 12 month rolling average CPI rate published in December. From the monthly CPI rates published so far in 2020, this is likely to be in the range 0.5%-1.5%.

There was a detailed discussion about affordability, the absolute sums of money involved, and the impact on staff morale.

Resolution	To agree to increase staff salaries from January 2021 either by the 12 month average CPI rate published in December 2020, or by 0.5%, whichever is the higher				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

4. PCC and Annual Meeting dates for 2021

Phill Johnston re-joined the meeting.

Paper B refers.

The following aspects of the proposed schedule were discussed:

- Why does it say “no meeting in April” if the Annual Meetings are in April? Jane Woolley clarified that this meant no PCC meeting in April
- Could the annual meetings be put back to May so that elections don't occur again so soon? Jonathan Mobey pointed out that the Annual Meetings are really to reflect on the previous calendar year, so it is best to hold them earlier rather than later in the year
- Could meetings of the individual PCCs be held in the relevant parish, if they take place face to face, to avoid unnecessary travel? The general opinion was that it was preferable for both PCCs to meet in the same location. This facilitates discussion of joint items, and allows Jonathan Mobey to attend part of each meeting. Connecting two groups in separate locations electronically is not straightforward. A home group attempted this recently via Zoom, with some of the group meeting together in the church and the rest joining in from home. It didn't work very well from a technical point of view
- The proposed schedule is provisional because the Bishop has to decree what mechanisms are acceptable for holding PCC meetings and the Annual Meetings in 2021.

Resolution	To agree the proposed schedule of meetings for 2021 as set out in Paper B				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

5. Christian youth work in greater Didcot area - update

Jonathan Mobey relayed that he had submitted at the end of September the application for a grant from the Diocesan Development Fund to support an independent trust for Christian youth work in the greater Didcot area, in partnership with the following churches in Didcot: Ridgeway Church, Didcot Baptist Church, Great Western Park Church. The application was for £200,000 over 5 years.

Jonathan Mobey reported that the assessment panel is considering the application this week. Jonathan said that he had been asked to provide some supplementary information in advance of this, and he had submitted that yesterday.

6. Fundraising activity - update

Jonathan Mobey reported the following communication activity recently or imminently on the subject of giving generously:

- Rector's emails to those on the church email list
- Distribution of eight daily Generosity Podcasts
- Reference in sermons and services during October
- A Gift Day

A PCC member asked whether it would be possible to add World Mission to the list of areas people are prompted to think about giving to. Jonathan Mobey explained that this would be difficult at this stage, but would be possible in future years. Jonathan said that donors can specify other areas that they wish to give to, not just the ones on the list provided.

7. Arrangements for forthcoming 'special' services – Remembrance & Christmas

Remembrance Sunday

Jonathan Mobey explained that the plan for Remembrance Sunday was:

- A ceremony in All Saints' churchyard in Chilton
- A ceremony in Harwell Cemetery at the war graves, which will be livestreamed

Jonathan Mobey explained that the imposition of a second lockdown from 5 November had led to some confusion over what will now be allowed, and we are waiting more guidance from the Diocese. However, Jonathan said that he was hopeful that the current plan would still be permissible.

Christmas

Jonathan Mobey reported that there is a planning meeting about Christmas arrangements tomorrow evening, and anyone interested is welcome to join this meeting. That meeting will discuss various options.

8. Actions from previous meeting

Action: Jonathan Mobey to liaise with the Church Administrator to organise:

- A Ridgeway Broadsheet in October/November
Status: **DONE**
- A Christmas card in December – to clarify Christmas services arrangements
Status: **Held over** - until options discussed and there is more clarity about what will be happening

Action: Jane Woolley to contact Oxford Women's Refuge to ask if they can accept donated toys this year

Status: **DONE** (the answer is yes please)

Action: Jonathan Mobey to include mention in the next Ridgeway Broadsheet that a written copy of sermons can be downloaded from the church website, and that anyone who cannot access the website should contact the Church Office for either a paper copy or a copy on a DVD

Status: **DONE**

A PCC member asked whether the Harvest donations for Didcot Foodbank had been taken to the Foodbank. The answer was that they had, but only just today. This was because the Foodbank had asked us to hold on to the items until they had dealt with a plethora of other Harvest donations.

9. Activities during lockdown

Jonathan Mobey gave a brief overview of an electronic document listing which church activities are permitted in which circumstances. This is in the form of a table where the rows are various church activities and the columns are different Covid-19 societal restrictions. Currently the column options are Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 and the second national lockdown. We are currently a Tier 1 area but the second national lockdown starts on 5 November. The document is [here](#).

Jonathan Mobey invited questions from PCC members about what is allowed under what circumstances. The following questions were raised and the answers concluded via discussion:

Q. Church buildings are permitted to be open for private prayer under the second national lockdown. Will we be opening our church buildings?

A. Yes, provided we can arrange safe operating and cleaning. This is a matter for local discussion with churchwardens. However, the default assumption is that we open church buildings daily and generally from 10am to dusk.

Q. The document says that Fledgelings for new parents will not operate during the second national lockdown. However, support groups for up to 15 people are permitted under government regulations, with new parents a specifically cited group in need of support. What is stopping us from running this group during lockdown? New parents are a group that is reportedly suffering greatly from mental health issues as a result of social isolation and lack of support during lockdown.

A. We need to be mindful of whether running a support group for new parents during lockdown would appear incongruous to our communities. We have to weigh up the increased risk of transmitting Covid-19 if we do run Fledgelings against the increased risk to the mental health of new parents if we do not, plus the potential reputational risk to our churches in either scenario. The risks are difficult to quantify. Ethically, it is not a cut and dried decision. Furthermore, the Diocese will probably advise against it. Having said that, ultimately it is in our power to decide, and there are Biblical arguments for acting courageously. The Diocese advised against running an in-person Holiday Club but we did go ahead with that. The insurance requirements are to adhere to government guidance and to work to a thorough risk assessment.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to re-visit with the Children & Families workers the idea of continuing to run Fledgelings as a support group for new parents during lockdown. Jonathan to relay to the C&FWs that the PCCs would support their doing so, if they opted for that. Jonathan to emphasise that the C&FWs must not feel under any pressure to run Fledgelings during lockdown i.e. the final decision is theirs.

10. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jan Radford. Michelle Walker was absent.

11. Minutes of the meeting on 1 September 2020

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 1 September 2020 were signed as a correct record.

12. Decisions requested of Standing Committee between meetings

There were none.

13. Matters/actions arising from the previous meeting, not covered elsewhere

There were none.

14. Appointment of PCC officers

Resolution	To appoint the following people to the following roles:				
	Vice Chair		Tony Hughes		
	Treasurer		Phill Johnston		
	Secretary		Jane Woolley		
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

15. Appointment of PCC sub-committees

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following committees:				
	Finance	Phill Johnston (Chair) Nick Clarke Allan Macarthur			
	Buildings	Tony Hughes (Chair) David Pyke Philip Roberts Becca Lewis (Churchwarden) Allan Macarthur (Churchwarden)			
	Church Hall Management	Vacant			
	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	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

16. Appointment of role holders

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people to the following roles:				
	Churchwarden deputies	Tim Roberts David Pyke Tim Paget			
	Bookkeeper	Nick Clarke			
	Electoral Roll Officer	Mike Pepper			
	Deputy Electoral Roll Officer	Jane Woolley			
	Concert/Event managers	Liz Roberts Tim Roberts			
	Health & Safety Officer	Hazel Connelly			

	Stewardship Secretary Eliza Wheaton (envelope scheme)				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

17. Appointment of sides people

Resolution	Approve the appointment of the following people as sides people: Peter Barclay-Watt Gill Gay Anne Cox Graham Cox David Pyke Jim Sinclair Madeleine Speed Wendy Sinclair Andy Lewis Liz Hill Mike Pepper Elaine Shrimpton Tony Twigger Jean Twigger Georgina Greer Debbie Davies Ruth Slatter Kevin Davies Matthew Davies Ryan Davies Jan Childs Peter Barton Christine Iacopetti Mike Chedzey Sheila Chedzey				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

18. Finance – action from last meeting

Action: Phill Johnston to relay the PCC's thanks to Nick Clarke for all his work as Book-keeper
Status: DONE

19. Distribution of the 2020 World Mission Giving budget

Resolution	To distribute the 2020 World Mission Giving budget as follows: Sharlands £2,250 Tubakus £1,900 Arocha £650 Christian Solidarity Worldwide £650 The Leprosy Mission £650 Mission Aviation Fellowship £650 Scripture Union £650 Christin Perkins £300 CPAS £100 TOTAL £7,800				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

20. Income & Expenditure and Fund Balances report

Papers F&G refer.

PCC members discussed what the figures indicate. In summary, the key points concluded were:

- Giving so far in 2020 is significantly below budget
- Unless giving or fundraising increases, the deficit for 2020 looks as though it is going to be more like £20k than the £6k budgeted. This scale of budget deficit is unprecedented
- Paying for the roof repairs has already effectively depleted unrestricted reserves to c£55k. Around £15k of this is pretty much already committed to the church porch doors project, which then leaves around £40k. A budget deficit of c£20k at the end of 2020 will then reduce unrestricted reserves to c£20k. If we had the same size of budget deficit in 2021, our unrestricted reserves would be down to zero within a year
- The results of the gift day on 8 November will not be apparent for a little while yet

21. Draft budget 2021

Papers F and H refer.

Paper F shows an indicative budget for 2021, kindly drawn up by the book-keeper, based on what has occurred in 2020 and what might be expected in 2021, all other things being equal. The Finance Committee and the PCC as a whole have not had any input to this yet.

Paper H shows the detail of an indicative buildings/maintenance budget, as provided by Tony Hughes, Chair of the Buildings Committee.

It was agreed that the Finance Committee should now arrange to meet, possibly over several sessions, to set a realistic interim budget for 2021, bearing in mind the dwindling reserves situation, and that the actual position at the start of 2021 will only be known after the 2020 year end.

This interim budget would ideally be approved by PCC members or the Standing Committee before the start of 2021. It can be updated once the actual 2020 year-end figures are available. This final budget could then be approved at the February PCC meeting.

Phill Johnston said that a meeting of the Finance Committee was already scheduled for 18 November.

As Chair of the Buildings Committee, Tony Hughes said that he would be very happy to take the Finance Committee through the indicative buildings/maintenance budget for 2021 to help identify the priorities.

22. Buildings Committee report

Paper I was noted.

Jane Woolley relayed the following message of thanks from Pam Rolls:

I am particularly impressed by, and grateful for, the work and care that has gone into looking after the church building. Tony Hughes has done a marvellous job in leading this in the face of considerable challenges, especially over the north aisle roof.

Gordon Gill added that he had not come across any other church which is as meticulous at recording work to the buildings in the log book.

Action: Jane Woolley to relay thanks from Tony Hughes to Pam Rolls for her kind words

23. North aisle and extension roofs - update

Paper K was noted. In summary: the roofing work is now almost complete. There are a few 'snagging' tasks still to be done, but the scaffolding was taken down on Friday 23rd October and the appearance of the roofs is now more or less how they will look for the foreseeable future, except that the coated steel will tarnish to a colour more like that of lead.. The PCC noted the acknowledgment in Paper K to the vital contribution that David Pyke has made to the on-site management of the work and the liaison with the contractors and the Church Architect.

24. Porch glass doors - update

Paper I refers and was noted. In summary: the project is still in abeyance, and the firms that made or promised quotations in January have been contacted yet again to obtain the answers to technical queries. A further chase will be necessary since no replies have been received.

25. Church Hall management - update

Paper J was noted. In summary: There are currently two weekly bookings – a band practice on Friday evenings and Irish dance classes on Saturday mornings. Previous regular bookings are still in abeyance due to Covid-19. The community larder idea is still under discussion. The paid cleaning continues.

The following action from the previous meeting is outstanding:

Action: Jonathan Mobey to arrange for the Hall ventilation system to be serviced and for users to be briefed on using it

26. Health & Safety

Jonathan Mobey remarked that the major item at the moment is Covid-19 safety. We have had to undertake detailed risk assessments for all church activities.

Jonathan also relayed that the fire extinguishers have all been examined and serviced. There are a few actions arising from that to follow up on.

27. Future dates to note

Tuesday 5 January – Combined PCC meeting

28. Any other business

Gordon Gill said that he has a meeting with the archdeacon tomorrow, part of which will feed back on wellbeing in parishes. Gordon asked how we would summarise that here. Jonathan Mobey commented as follows:

- There is a lot that is hidden/unknown to us about people's wellbeing
- As a church, we have realised that we need to be more proactive in connecting with members of the church community e.g. we are now reinforcing encouragement to join home and Zoom 'Connect' groups

Gordon Gill commented that whilst St Matthew's might be concerned about its finances, there are some churches in the Deanery which are in a far worse financial position.

Tony Hughes closed the meeting at 10.20pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

_____ **DATE**

_____ **DATE**