

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 2 March 2021 at 7.30 pm

Present

Jonathan Mobey
(Chair for items 1-4.
and 15-18)

Eliza Wheaton

Allan Macarthur (Churchwarden)

Pam Rolls (items 1-4)

Gordon Gill

Tony Hughes (Vice-Chair;
Chair for items 5-14)

Jane Woolley (Secretary)

Rebecca Lewis (Churchwarden)

Phill Johnston (Treasurer)

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-4. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

1. Opening & Prayer

The Rector (Jonathan Mobey) read Hebrews 2: 1-9. Jonathan highlighted that there are a few things in this passage to reflect on and to take encouragement from, such as:

- We need to pay attention to what we've heard and not drift away from it. It is easy to drift in life generally. That is a risk for us as a church too. We need to fix our eyes on the right thing.
- As humans we have a great responsibility. We have been put in charge over the Earth. We have responsibility for stewarding spiritually as well as physically. As PCCs we steward the resources of the church.

Jonathan Mobey then led the meeting in prayer.

2. 2020 Annual Report

Paper A refers.

Jonathan Mobey thanked the PCC Secretaries for their work on the annual report. He asked if PCC members had any queries on the content of sections 1-4 which are virtually identical for both churches.

Hazel Benton queried the accuracy of the paragraph near the start of section 2.5 about the length of extension of the Children & Families Workers' contract and the funding of it. There was some discussion about what the true situation was. This culminated in agreement that the wording needed to be amended. The meeting agreed to delegate this re-wording to Jonathan Mobey, Jane Woolley, Carol Pigott and Hazel Benton.

In terms of the funding situation, Phill Johnston, St Matthew's Treasurer, clarified that St Matthew's has already received enough in donations to cover its share of C&FW costs for 2021 and for most of 2022 even more donations were forthcoming. In addition, those who donate to the C&FW fund via a monthly sum are likely to maintain this giving for the duration. Therefore the funding of the C&FW post for a further five years looks to be on a fairly firm footing at St Matthew's. However, Phill said that he gathered from talking to the All Saints' Treasurer that this is not the case for All Saints'. For instance, its December 2020 contribution to C&FW costs had to be part-funded from money that had been set aside for another purpose, and that All Saints' PCC has agreed to continue this approach until more funds are raised.

It was also agreed that the phrase "For the remaining nine months of the year" later in section 2.5 of the annual report would be put in bold so that it was clearer that descriptions prior to that applied before the pandemic and descriptions after that applied during the pandemic.

<i>Proposal</i>	With the proviso of the two amendments to section 2.5 (described above) to approve the in-common sections 1-4 of the 2020 Annual Report				
<i>Moved</i>	Chair	<i>Seconded</i>	-	<i>Passed</i>	Unanimously

3. Encouraging nominees for churchwarden and PCC member elections

Jonathan Mobey stated that some PCC members are standing down or their terms are coming to an end. In particular, it was noted that Chris Pollard (All Saints' PCC) is moving away and so will be unable to resume his role as All Saints' PCC Secretary as planned.

Jonathan encouraged PCC members to think of others who might be willing to serve on the PCC. We should think of increasing diversity and of where we have skill gaps. Jane Woolley said that nomination forms were available on the church website or by contacting the church office or PCC Secretaries.

4. Dates of electoral roll revision and annual meetings, and communicating these

Paper B refers.

There was some discussion about the dates when indoor meetings would be allowed again, and whether it was worth making the annual meetings hybrid events as in 2020 (broadcast via Zoom from the church building with the ability to attend in person).

It was agreed that the decision should be made here and now that the annual meetings would be remote meetings only via Zoom and not hybrid events. Therefore the dates would be Thursday 29 April (All Saints') and Thursday 6 May (St Matthew's).

<i>Proposal</i>	To hold the annual meetings remotely via Zoom. Recommendations about publicising the electoral roll revision and the annual meetings as set out in Paper B were accepted.				
<i>Moved</i>	Chair	<i>Seconded</i>	-	<i>Passed</i>	Unanimously

5. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sid Gale and Jan Radford. Michelle Walker was absent.

6. Decisions requested of Standing Committee between meetings

There were none.

7. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 21 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

8. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

There were none.

9. 2020 Accounts

Paper D refers.

The following minor amendments were noted by the Treasurer:

- An increase in planned giving of £20 (£48,484 becomes £48,504)
- On the front page statement to be signed by the Independent Examiner, 31 December 2018 should be 2020; the signature date of 2020 should be 2021
- Amend Note 5 on the final page to say (affected words are underlined here): “....Church Administrator, a post for which part of the year was held by....”

Resolution	Subject to the minor changes described above, to approve the financial accounts for 2020				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

Jane Woolley reminded the meeting that the next step is for Phill Johnston and Jonathan Mobey to sign the accounts, and for that document to then go to the Independent Examiner. Once the accounts have been examined and signed by the Independent Examiner, Phill will send Jane an electronic copy so that it can be made available before the annual meeting.

10. 2020 Fabric Report

Paper E refers. The Chair asked if there were any comments or queries. There were none. Rebecca Lewis thanked Tony Hughes as Chair of the Buildings Committee for all that he does.

Resolution	To approve the 2020 Fabric Report				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

11. 2020 Annual Report

Paper A refers. Sections 1-4 were discussed under item 2. The Chair asked if there were any changes proposed to the remaining sections. There were none.

Resolution	With the proviso of the two amendments to section 2.5 (see agenda Item 2) to approve the Annual Report				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

12. 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda

Paper F refers.

It was noted that Eliza Wheaton, Jane Woolley and Tony Hughes were coming to the end of their three year terms as PCC members, making seven vacancies for elected PCC members at the Annual Meeting.

Eliza Wheaton said that she is not standing again. However, Jane Woolley and Tony Hughes said that they are willing to stand again.

Allan Macarthur reiterated Jonathan Mobey's request to try and think of people and ask them if they would be willing to serve on the PCC.

It was noted that Rebecca Lewis is standing down as churchwarden but is happy to stand for election to the PCC instead. Allan Macarthur is willing to continue as churchwarden.

Tony Hughes thanked all those who had served during 2020 and said that he hoped that enough successors would be found for 2021 and beyond.

Proposal	To agree the Annual Meeting agenda (Paper F)				
Moved	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

13. Finance Reports

Papers G (Income & Expenditure Report) and H (Fund Balances Report) were noted.

Phill Johnston, Treasurer, highlighted that income so far in 2021 is below budget for this point in the year (£6,819 vs £9,160 budget to the end of January). In particular, planned giving was £726 lower than expected for the month. However, expenditure was also c. £2.5k less than expected. So the net result is fairly close to budget.

Phill also mentioned that in the Fund Balances Report we had decided to continue to show the general fund as a large negative balance rather than move money into it from the Phase 2 Building Fund. Tony Hughes asked why the general fund had gone a further c. £500 into the red. Phill said he didn't know but it's probably to do with income being lower than expected. However, it is very early in the year and it's not a major concern at this stage.

Allan Macarthur commented that he and Tony Hughes had now reset the heating in the Church Hall because it is not being used at the moment, and it will be interesting to see the impact of that on expenditure.

Jane Woolley asked if planned giving was less than expected due to deaths or people reducing their giving, or losing church members/people stopping their giving. Phill Johnston said he didn't know but thought it was a combination.

Tony Hughes summarised that the position is that it's early days, but there are some income issues that need keeping an eye on.

Phill Johnston expressed his thanks to Nick Clarke for all his work as book-keeper.

14. Cost savings and claim for loss of income

Cost savings

Tony Hughes referred PCC members to the minutes of the January meeting which say: *The Rector suggested that a separate group be convened to look into where we might make expenditure savings and claim for loss of income.*

Tony said that in his view, the Finance Committee should be tasked with looking into how we might make further expenditure savings. It does not require a separate new group. Phill Johnston, Treasurer, concurred.

Action: Finance Committee to investigate how we might make further expenditure savings

Claim for loss of income

Jane Woolley reported that she had ascertained that the Church Hall was not eligible for the grant which Uffington Village Hall had successfully applied for. Only premises assessed for business rates are eligible for that. However, Jane had discovered that the Church Hall might be eligible for something called an Additional Restrictions Grant which is a flat amount of £3k. This is distributed via local authorities and is designed to help businesses/charities who were not eligible to any other grants to compensate for loss of income during the pandemic. Jane has completed the online application form and has e-mailed the Rector to ask him to check it before it is submitted.

Action: Jane Woolley to submit application for South & Vale Additional Restrictions Grant

Jonathan Mobey returned to the meeting and took over from Tony Hughes as Chair.

15. Buildings Committee Report

Paper I was noted.

Tony Hughes gave an update on item 6 – Porch Glass Doors project. Tony said that he had now circulated a 'status quo' report to the working group. This report highlighted that the project has reached a complicated position because:

- There are some technical issues to overcome before the project could go ahead

- The DAC is sensitive about some of these issues
- The cost will exceed the money left in the Stringer legacy even if the eventual solution were to be manual rather than automatic doors.

The report suggested that the next step is to update Ruth Stringer with the situation and to discuss with her how to proceed.

Jonathan Mobey thanked Tony Hughes for his update and all the work involved.

16. Church Hall Management update

Jonathan Mobey reported that not a lot has changed since the January PCC meeting. The Hall is being cleaned periodically. Jonathan is checking the Hall now and again.

The Church Office has had enquiries about when bookings can re-commence. There has also been a new enquiry for a regular booking. Deborah Evans is about to undertake a benchmarking exercise on hire rates.

Tony Hughes took the opportunity to inform Jonathan Mobey that he and Allan Marcarthur had altered the Hall heating controls and the ventilation settings a couple of weeks ago.

Tony Hughes said that he'd noticed on that visit to the Hall that the front door looked as though it was rotting at the bottom. Jonathan Mobey confirmed that he was aware of this, and said that the situation was not helped by the guttering problems in that area. Tony asked what the plans were for tackling such tasks.

During discussions, PCC members were reminded that the Hall lacks a management committee and the honorary Hall Manager has had personal issues to deal with recently. Due to lack of usage of the Hall currently due to the pandemic, these repairs had not been pressing. However, such repairs can get worse if not attended to promptly. Jane Woolley offered to talk to a carpenter about the door and a roofer about the guttering if Jonathan could then meet them at the Hall to show them the problem and ask them to provide a quote. This offer was accepted.

Action: Jane Woolley to arrange for a carpenter and a roofer to meet with Jonathan Mobey at the Church Hall in order to provide a quote for repairs

17. Health & Safety

Tony Hughes relayed that he might need to get in touch with Hazel Connelly, Health & Safety Officer, to discuss the recommendations arising from the 5 year electrical inspection.

18. Services & seasonal

Jonathan Mobey reported that there had been a question at All Saints' PCC meeting about the plan for restarting in-person worship services. It would be permitted to hold some in-person gatherings prior to when all the restrictions are due to end on 21 June. All Saints' PCC had concluded that this decision should be delegated to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – just as it had been throughout the pandemic. Jonathan asked whether St Matthew's PCC members were also content with that. No PCC member objected.

Eliza Wheaton asked when we could restart in-person evening services. Jonathan Mobey said that there were no plans to do this before Easter.

Jonathan Mobey said that plans for Holy Week include a socially-distanced service of Holy Communion in each church building on Easter Sunday. The churchyards might also be used for in-person gatherings.

Jonathan Mobey said that, longer term, the PCCs also needed to consider what worship service arrangements should look like after all restrictions are due to end on 21 June. Jonathan plans to email PCC members and invite their views, including about the channel i.e. in-person versus online. The SLT will then take account of these ideas and Jonathan will prepare a discussion paper for the Combined PCC meeting in early May.

19. Future Dates

Sunday 14 March – Mothering Sunday
Sunday 28 March – Palm Sunday
Sunday 4 April – Easter Sunday
Thursday 6 May – Annual Meeting
Tuesday 4 May – Combined PCC meeting

20. AOB

There was none.

Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting with The Grace at 9.30pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE