

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30 pm

Present

Jonathan Mobey
(Chair and present for items
1-5b; also present for item 16
onwards)

Phill Johnston (Treasurer;
present for item 14 and item
16 onwards)

Rebecca Lewis

Gordon Gill

Tony Hughes
(Chair for item 6 onwards)

Eliza Wheaton

Allan Macarthur

Pam Rolls (items 1-5b)

Jane Woolley (Secretary)

Jan Radford (items 1-5b)

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-5b. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

Items are shown in agenda order but in fact item 14 was taken after item 15.

1. Opening & Prayer

Jonathan Mobey read John 3: 22-36. In this passage we hear John the Baptist explain his role and relationship with Jesus. We also hear of Jesus baptising people. There is a description of John the Baptist's disciples arguing with a Jew about ritual washing. Such practices and preoccupations are something that can puzzle non-Jews. But there are equivalent peripherals that we can get transfixed by.

Jonathan Mobey led the meeting in prayer.

2. Annual Report sections 1-4

Paper A refers. These sections were approved in principle, for formal confirmation later in the meeting by the individual PCCs.

3. Churchwarden and PCC elections

Jonathan Mobey said that he believed that all four existing churchwardens were willing to stand for re-election.

The PCC secretaries reported that there will be five vacancies for elected PCC members at each of St Matthew's and All Saints' (at All Saints' three of these vacancies are where people's three-year terms are coming to an end but the individuals are willing to stand for re-election). All Saints' also has two unfilled vacancies for elected Deanery Synod representatives.

Gordon Gill commented that it would be helpful to have as many Deanery Synod representatives from the Benefice as possible.

It was agreed that there is plenty of scope to have fresh blood on the PCCs. PCC members were asked to approach church members to stand for election who they thought could make a useful contribution.

4. Interregnum update

Churchwarden Allan Macarthur relayed the following information:

- **Keeping the wheels turning during the vacancy**
 - The churchwardens are making arrangements to ensure that the main management bodies continue to function properly.
 - The churchwardens have in hand arrangements for Jonathan Mobey to hand over all his responsibilities and to ensure that there are no gaps
 - The following decisions have already been made:
 - Leaders & Preachers group – Eliza Wheaton will chair
 - Senior Leadership Team – Allan Macarthur will chair
 - Individual PCCs – the vice-chairs will chair
 - It has not yet been decided who will chair the Combined PCC. It was agreed that the churchwardens should discuss this with the PCC vice-chairs
- **Finding a new Rector**
 - The Diocese has been in touch to arrange an initial meeting between the PCCs and the Patrons. A date, venue and the agenda are under discussion.

Jane Woolley asked if there was any further news about whether we would get an incumbent or a priest-in-charge, and the related matter of whether the Benefice or St Matthew's might 'face' more towards Didcot/Valley Park in future.

Allan Macarthur reported that the churchwardens are arranging to meet with our Diocesan Synod representatives (Gordon Gill and Sid Gale) to discuss how to progress obtaining PCC members' views on the matter.

Jonathan Mobey relayed that he had had a discussion that morning with David Tyler from the Diocese. David had been as reassuring as he could be – saying that he could not see a good reason **not** to replace Jonathan like for like on the grounds that the current Benefice arrangement works well and we pay our Parish Share in full.

5. Financing the Church Administrator post

Paper J refers. After some discussion, a straw poll of PCC members indicated that all were in favour of this proposal. However, underwriting the cost has to be formally taken by the individual PCCs. So formal voting on a resolution was delayed until later in the meeting (see item 14).

5b. The Ukraine crisis

Tony Hughes was given permission by the Chair to raise an item of other business relevant to both PCCs. The upshot was that it was agreed that Tony would provide some wording for a church news bulletin email explaining that his friend's son in Poland is taking in Ukrainian refugees and asking people who would like to support this financially to contact Tony to make the arrangements.

6. Apologies for absence

Sid Gale sent his apologies. Michelle Walker was absent.

7. Decisions required of the Standing Committee between meetings

In November 2021, as researched and recommended by the Treasurer, the Standing Committee approved the purchase of a CollecTin tap and pay device (plus a spare battery, plus software installed to prevent anyone exiting the donations app without the PIN) at a total cost of £262 + VAT = £314.40.

8. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 2 November 2021 were approved with the following error rectified:

- Section 21 Health & Safety. Last paragraph should read "*Eliza Wheaton said that the Churchwardens, Rector and Church Administrator are having a meeting with Hazel Connelly in w/c 8 November.*" (change is underlined here)

9. Matters arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere

There were none.

10. 2021 Accounts

Paper C refers. It was noted that reference to "note 5a" etc. on page 2 of the accounts should say "note 4a", etc. The PCC Secretary will relay this to the Treasurer for correction before the accounts are signed by the Independent Examiner.

Resolution	To approve the 2021 accounts with the above-mentioned error on page 2 corrected				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Gordon Gill	Passed	Unanimously

11. 2021 Fabric Report

Paper D refers. Allan Macarthur thanked Tony Hughes for preparing it.

Resolution	To approve the 2021 Fabric Report				
Proposed	Allan Macarthur	Seconded	Eliza Wheaton	Passed	Unanimously

12. 2021 Annual Report

Paper A refers.

Resolution	To approve the 2021 Annual Report				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Allan Macarthur	Passed	Unanimously

13. 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda

Paper E refers. It was agreed that item 6 on the Agenda about the implementation of the church vision: "Growing God's Church, wider, deeper and closer" should be amended to focus on giving an update on the Youthwork Trust and the families and children's work specifically.

Resolution	To approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda with the above-mentioned amendment				
Proposed	Allan Macarthur	Seconded	Gordon Gill	Passed	Unanimously

Action: Gordon Gill to liaise with the Children & Families workers to design and deliver a short presentation about the Youthwork Trust and families and children's work at the Annual Meeting

It was agreed not to have presentations on Finance or Buildings during services in the run up to the Annual Meeting.

14. Finance Reports

Impact of appeal letter in December

The Treasurer was pleased to report that the appeal letter resulted in:

- £9,300 in one-off donations from nine individuals in December (plus a further £600 in early 2022) and
- An increase of c.£250 per month in regular giving.

The Treasurer did not know if the one-off donations came from people who also made regular monthly donations.

The greater response in terms of one-off donations compared with regular giving was noted.

PCC members reflected that we might conclude that an appeal of this sort tends to produce more one-off donations as opposed to increases in regular giving. It was noted that one-off donations are harder to plan around.

Income & expenditure to end of December 2021

Paper F refers.

It was noted that:

- Eventual income was only £201 short of what was budgeted, thanks to the one-off donations resulting from the appeal letter in December.
- We had been fearing a deficit of £7k-£8k. The eventual deficit was only £361.
- The pattern of income in recent years has been:
 - 2018 c.£124k
 - 2019 c.£124k
 - 2020 c.£116k (pandemic)
 - 2021 c.£109k (pandemic)
- That we will incur unanticipated expenditure in 2022 on advertising and interview expenses for the vacancy

Fund balances

Paper G refers. The fund balances were reviewed in the context of whether the PCC could safely afford to underwrite a further £8k of the cost of the Church Administrator post due to the cessation of donations for this purpose once Jonathan Mobey leaves.

The following other issues were noted:

- The Porch Doors project is going to cost more than the remainder of the Stringer Legacy
- The C&FW fund has more money in it than anticipated because we did not have to pay Melanie Shield's salary for November and December 2021

Funding for the Church Administrator post

Resolution	To underwrite the cost of the Church Administrator post for 12 months from 1 April 2022 to a total of £8,000 but with the expectation that as much as possible of the sum required would be raised via an appeal				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Jane Woolley	Passed	Unanimously

CollecTin tap & pay device

The Treasurer reported that this device arrived in time to use at the carol services. It has registered c.£90 in donations so far compared with its cost of c.£315.

It was agreed that it is most appropriate to use this device at festival-type services and at one-off events such as weddings and funerals rather than at regular Sunday services where the attendees are more likely to have set up regular giving arrangements.

Allan Macarthur remarked that there are quite a few people who wander into the church building outside of services. He suggested that it would be good to have the device visible then too, but that it would need securing.

Action: Allan Macarthur to discuss with Phill Johnston how the CollecTin device might be secured when there is no one around

It was agreed that we need to ensure that sides people and vergers are aware of the need to put out the device on such occasions and how to set it up.

Action: Allan Macarthur/Eliza Wheaton to discuss with Phill Johnston about raising awareness of the device and among sides people and vergers and giving them the necessary training on how to set it up and use it

15. Buildings Committee Report

Paper H was noted. Tony Hughes drew attention to the following items in it:

The Chancel Roof – this will need consideration by the PCC in due course.

Porch Doors project – Tony has been chasing quotes from contractors. He thinks he now has two meaningful quotes which can be compared. These will be checked by Tony and by David Pyke to see if there are any omissions. Tony relayed that it is clear now that even manual doors would cost more than £20k.

Tony Hughes relayed a recent matter that had arisen which is not in the Report: Allan Macarthur had noticed that two ridge tiles had blown off the porch roof in the recent storm. It is going to be more of a complex job to repair it than it initially appeared. However, there is no danger of rain getting in because the membrane is still intact. David Pyke is obtaining quotes for a repair.

16. Possible sale of Church Hall – progress update

Jonathan Mobey related that there is no change since the last meeting. We are still waiting to hear back from the Charity Commission about whether they would allow a sale. We had decided to wait for that before commissioning a valuation. We have a few potential valuers lined up. The Plymouth Brethren know that we are waiting for a decision from the Charity Commission.

Johnathan Mobey said that, following the November PCC meeting, he had received a list of questions from Tony Hughes to help inform the decision about whether to sell the Hall. However he had not done anything with these.

Action: Tony Hughes to turn his list of questions into a paper for a future PCC meeting with the aim of prompting a decision about the process to be employed for deciding whether to sell the Hall.

Action: Allan Macarthur and Eliza Wheaton to add to the handover list sorting out a briefing on the Church Hall sale from Jonathan Mobey and allocate someone to be the main point of contact for it.

17. Manpower

Jonathan Mobey reported that the Standing Committee met on 3 February to draw up a list of potential candidates for Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer, Pastoral Care Lead and additional Event Managers.

Jonathan Mobey said that he has approaches in hand for Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer and Pastoral Care Lead. However no one has said yes yet.

Action: Allan Macarthur and Eliza Wheaton to add to the handover list obtaining a briefing from Jonathan Mobey on the status of recruitment of Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer and Pastoral Care Lead, and allocating others to take the search forward where necessary

Allan Macarthur explained that Event Managers would ideally be ex-churchwardens or churchwarden deputies. Currently the only Event Managers are Liz and Tim Roberts and they feel that the team needs to be bigger. Allan reported that he had approached Jim and Wendy Sinclair about being additional Event Managers and they had agreed. Liz and Tim Roberts are aware of this.

18. Job description for Event Manager role

Action held over from November 2021:

Action: Jonathan Mobey to find the job description for the Event Manager role to pass on to Jim and Wendy Sinclair

19. Health & Safety

Ref action from September 2021: **Eliza Wheaton** to confer with the PCC's Health & Safety Adviser, Hazel Connelly, about the Policy and its implementation and then to bring the Policy to the next PCC meeting for approval.

Paper I explains that the PCC's Health and Safety Advisor, Hazel Connelly, had advised that the existing policy can just be rolled over every year unless there is a major change.

20. Future dates to note

Wednesday 2 March – Lent begins (Ash Wednesday)

Saturday 26 March – leaving event for Jonathan

Sunday 27 March – Mothering Sunday

Tuesday 5 April – Combined PCC meeting

Sunday 10 April – Palm Sunday

Sunday 17 April – Easter Sunday

Sunday 8 May/Thurs 12 May – Annual meeting

Friday 3 June – Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Saturday 4 June – Harwell Feast

Saturday 4 June – Stone Service (to commemorate D Day)

Tuesday 7 June – Individual PCC meeting

Jane Woolley reported that the Senior Leadership Team had taken the decision not to run a Songs of Praise on the Sunday after Harwell Feast.

21. AOB

Tony Hughes proposed a formal vote of thanks to Jonathan Mobey as this would be his last PCC meeting.

Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting with The Grace at 10.01pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

_____ **DATE**

_____ **DATE**