

## Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held at All Saints', Chilton on Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 7.30 pm

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### Present

Eliza Wheaton

Phill Johnston (Treasurer)  
(present for items 9,12,21,22)

Allan Macarthur

Tony Hughes  
(Chair)

Pam Rolls (present for items 1-3)

Liz Roberts  
(Minutes)

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-3. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

Items were taken in the order on the agenda [but Items 9 and 12 were repeated once Phill Johnston was present]

### 1. Opening & Prayer

Pam Rolls read from 1 Peter 2: 1-10. She reminded us that we are built on Christ the Cornerstone and we are living stones of the Church called to be aligned to what Christ wants us to do, and to be alert listening to Him.

Pam Rolls led the meeting in prayer.

### 2. Sunday morning services at Harwell

Paper A was circulated before the meeting. Allan Macarthur reported that the SLT had reviewed the new service pattern as was agreed when it was introduced earlier in the year. No major changes would be made until the new Rector is in post but it was recognised that the split start time of the Harwell service was difficult to manage. Following input from the leaders and preachers, it was suggested that the Harwell main Sunday service would be a single service starting at 10.30am. It was recognised that there was a need for clear communication of what is happening on each Sunday through the month. The staffing of this change would not impact greatly on the current commitments. It was agreed to leave the timing of the implementation of this change to the SLT.

The following proposal required a decision in principle at the Combined PCC with any local issues covered by the Harwell PCC in their individual meeting:-

**That we move to a single morning service at Harwell starting at 10:30. The pattern will continue to be to offer a formal Holy Communion service on the 2nd Sundays with other services mainly still starting with informal worship and moving to a more formal 2nd part of the service though this will still be accessible in terms of songs/hymns, liturgy etc. However, the leaders and preachers would have more flexibility over how much time was taken up by either informal or formal worship depending on the week, event and requirements of the congregation. So, the 10.30/11am split would be softer and more flexible instead of a fixed time.**

Straw Poll result - It was agreed unanimously by the thirteen PCC members present. (There were 6 members of the Joint PCC present)

### 3. Proposed new Parish Share formula for 2023

Paper B refers. To introduce this item Liz Roberts read out a statement from Gordon Gill, Wallingford Deanery Synod Lay Chair, following a recent meeting of the Deanery Synod Standing Committee to discuss the new Parish Share formula in advance of the next Deanery Synod meeting.

He is in favour of the new formula (Appendix 2). The Standing Committee agreed that the review was measured and well considered, whilst acknowledging that some parishes will see an increase in parish share and others will see a reduction. They will however listen to views at the next Deanery Synod.

He reported that the Deanery will not be able to pay its parish share in 2022 or 2023. Gordon has already spoken to Bishop Gavin about this, as has the Area Dean. The significant under payers are the churches in Didcot who individually have challenges.

Andy Lord as Area Dean, and Gordon as Lay Chair, with support of the Standing Committee, have submitted a follow-up report to the Diocese looking at various models of ministry across a growing Greater Didcot with a request for central funding from Glebe and Common Development. This could change significantly how the Deanery meets its future cost of ministry through parish share. If their report and recommendations are accepted, one outcome might be additional help for our new Rector for ministry in Valley Park with costs borne by the Diocese of Oxford.

Following this statement Stuart Gibson commented that he was in favour of Appendix 4 which was a 2% increase over the 2022 calculated share. This reduced the increase for the struggling Didcot churches who would have a significant increased amount to pay with the new formula allocation. This option would also reduce the overall Deanery deficit by half.

There was a general sense that the other churches and Benefices in the Deanery should help those who are struggling to a greater extent to meet the parish share.

Discussion followed and the following feedback will be sent to the Deanery Synod Secretary in advance of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September for the Synod members and treasurers. It is hoped that Stuart Gibson and Phill Johnson can represent us at this meeting.

1. The Benefice would like to allocate the division of the Parish Share internally as it has done for numerous years. We would prefer a lump sum allocation for the Benefice as we historically split 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s 1/3<sup>rd</sup> which has a different outcome to the formula applied to the individual parishes.
2. The PCCs are in favour of Appendix 4 as it would reduce the deficit.
3. Slide 16 of the presentation suggested a 10% reduction for each month of those in a vacancy. What decision was made about this?
4. How can we collaboratively help struggling parishes to pay their share?

### 4. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Hazel Connelly, Sid Gale, Gordon Gill, Rebecca Lewis, Jan Radford and Jane Woolley.

### 5. The minutes of the PCC meeting on 7 June 2022 were approved and signed.

### 6. Decisions made between meetings

**In July** (whole PCC): to endorse Alison Gale and Sid Gale as the Pilgrim Walk leaders, subject to the conditions listed in Paper C from the July 2022 Combined PCC meeting.

**In August** (Standing Committee): for the PCC's share of the Bagg's Tree Field income to be paid net of expenses in future

### 7. Sunday morning services at Harwell

See Item 2. There were no local concerns from Harwell PCC members so no resolution was necessary.

## 8. Matters/actions arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere

### 1. Event manager role description: Paper D refers.

This was agreed with the actions below.

**Action: Liz Roberts to:**

- Send a copy to other Event managers i.e. Wendy and Jim Sinclair
- Ask Deborah Evans to put a copy on the website/store in web office for future reference

### 2. Use of World Missions fund: Jane Woolley to contact the World Missions Group (WMG) to ask them if they wish to put forward a proposal for how the sum in the World Missions fund that has come from legacies might be used – for example for a church building in Albania.

STATUS: Jane emailed Helen Brook on 11 June cc'd to Yvonne Sanderson and Georgina Greer and received a reply from Yvonne Sanderson intimating that the WMG would discuss further imminently. Jane has heard nothing further since and presumes that this issue will be addressed at the next Combined PCC meeting in October.

### 3. Pastoral care lead: Eliza Wheaton to consult Pam Rolls about who else to approach about being Pastoral Care Lead

STATUS: Pam has spoken to two church members. Neither had yet agreed.

### 4. Rectory

Eliza Wheaton had written to Rev Canon David Tyler, Associate Archdeacon of Oxford, to advise that the PCC would discuss its future with the new incumbent on appointment.

## 9. Finance reports

Paper E refers (Fund balances and Income & Expenditure vs budget).

Income is slightly ahead of expenditure but there is a large outgoing, the annual insurance premium, yet to come. Allan MacArthur had responded to a risk survey conducted by Ecclesiastical which assessed the premium at £5,200 which would be some hundreds above what was forecast for the end of this financial year.

**Action: Treasurer to:**

- Contact Ecclesiastical to find out if this is the premium expected *this* year or in 2023.

## 10. Heating costs

Jane Woolley raised via the inclusion of this agenda item the issue of what the likely impact of rising heating costs will be on expenditure vs budget, and whether we need to take any radical mitigation action.

Tony Hughes has investigated possible electricity savings and will discuss the conclusions with the Buildings Committee before reporting further to the PCC. The provisional conclusions are that better

use of zoning of the heaters, more care with lighting, and cavity wall insulation of the extension are the best prospects for reducing usage.

## 11. Harwell Helpers Fund

Paper F refers. This raises the issue of what we should do with the Harwell Helpers Fund which was raised via private donations during the Covid pandemic and is held by St Matthew's on behalf of Harwell Helpers.

Contrary to the assertion in bullet point 4 of Paper F, the PCC knows that some small sums had been spent.

**Action: Allan MacArthur to:**

- Contact Cath Convery about the PCC's suggestion that the sum currently held by the church be donated to local organisations with similar charitable purposes. Both the Didcot and Wallingford CAP Debt Centre and Didcot Emergency Foodbank would be considered.
- Bring a proposal for next steps to the next Harwell PCC.

## 12. Breakdown of money raised during the 2021 appeal

An update on the action at the last meeting, in which the Treasurer had been actioned to:

- obtain the breakdown of the money raised during the December 2021 appeal i.e. restricted giving vs general giving, and what any restricted giving was specifically for
- check whether the bookkeeper has followed up on any giving pledges

was not yet available.

The PCC discussed the usefulness for planning purposes of the picture that might emerge from having this. For example, we might achieve a sense of which aspects of our work have appealed to those not part of the Church membership.

Allan MacArthur, having been tasked with exploring funding of the Administrator post, suggested that the Treasurer and he link up once the above data was available.

## 13. Buildings Committee Report

Paper G was noted. Four invitations to tender were currently out for the restoration of existing or construction of new finial crosses. No meaningful quotations had yet been received.

The PCC thanked Tony Hughes for his diligent work with the Buildings Committee and Tony in turn asked for the minutes to record the enormous input into tasks which David Pyke contributes in addition to being on the weekly cleaning rota.

## 14. Cleaning the chandelier in the chancel

This has not been done for possibly four, certainly three years and needs doing. Liz Roberts offered to project manage it happening in time for the Carols by Candlelight service in December. She would consult George Laing on his experience of doing it for us before, and the people required.

**Action: Liz Roberts to:**

- Contact Harwell Scouts

## 15. Possible sale of Church Hall – use by Beavers

**Action from last meeting:** Sid Gale had found out why the Beavers had reverted to using the Church Hall instead of the main church building. Sid reported (and Liz Roberts conveyed to the meeting) that the answer is that there is a child in Beavers who is prone to leaving the meeting unaccompanied and trying to go home. The Beaver leaders feel that the church hall is easier to secure than the church/church grounds so prefer to meet in the hall.

## 16. Possible sale of Church Hall – update

Tony Hughes has agreed to take on the task of dealing with matters relating to the possible sale of the Church Hall.

Paper H refers. In summary the firms consulted advised that it is important that S119 valuation does not happen too soon before it is clear that we would want to proceed with a sale. Otherwise a valuation would have to be repeated at extra cost.

Hazel Connelly has offered to lead a small group to address the questions raised in Paper L to the June PCC. She has obtained agreement to participate from four members and hopes that the group can meet later in September. The PCC briefly discussed the option of selling to a Community Land Trust and asked Liz Roberts to put this into the 'mix' of possibilities the group might explore.

**Action: Liz Roberts to:**

- Convey the suggestion of a Community Land Trust option to Hazel Connelly

## 17. Health & Safety

There was nothing to report.

## 18. Services & Seasonal

See item 7.

## 19. Harwell Helps Ukrainians (HHU) – update

Paper I refers. This was an update on the group's use of the church for a weekly café (now ceased), weekly English lessons (continuing but with looming heating costs) and for an Orthodox service (now deemed not required). It was understood that Jane Woolley had received an offer of a grant towards costs.

Visitors to the church while the lessons were taking place had noticed the bright lighting the group preferred, so Liz Roberts, as a member of the group, would talk to the language lead for HHU, Tim Hart, to ask if lighting could not be restricted to the nave. She further reported that Tim had started publicising to hosts and guests that funding would be available to allow HHU language lessons to remain in the church during the winter. He was also inviting the adult guests to feed back to HHU if they would like their children to take part in language lessons held at the same time in a different part of the church. If this goes forward the group would need to assure the PCC that they have Safeguarding procedures in place.

## 20. Relationship with 1<sup>st</sup> Harwell (St Matthew's) Scouts

Paper J refers. This is about the support which the church receives from the loan of Scouts equipment and the support that Scouts receives by way of free use of the Church Hall.

Allan Macarthur reported on the disproportionate benefit in kind offered to the Scout Group by their use of the Church Hall four nights a week for little financial contribution. He reported that he and Jane

Woolley were due to have a meeting with Brian Zimmerman, Group Scout Leader, to find out what the Scouts wish to achieve from taking a more 'commercial' approach to their loaning us tentage for Holiday Club. Liz Roberts asked that the outcome before next summer be a published advance tariff for the hire of equipment and the people to transport, erect and dismantle it so that both sides knew what to expect.

**21. Future dates to note**

Sunday 25 September – Harvest Festival

Tuesday 4 October – Combined PCC meeting

**22. AOB**

**Co-option of Hazel Connelly:** Hazel's co-option to the PCC in March only lasted until the Annual Meeting in May. Therefore, we need to co-opt her again. Hazel is aware of this and has agreed to be co-opted again. At the next Annual Meeting Hazel will have been on the electoral roll long enough to be elected for a three-year term in the usual way.

<b>Resolution</b>	To co-opt Hazel Connelly as a PCC member				
<b>Proposed</b>	Eliza Wheaton	<b>Seconded</b>	Allan MacArthur	<b>Passed</b>	Unanimous

There were no other items of Other Business and Tony Hughes closed the meeting at 9.38pm

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**CHAIR**

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**SECRETARY**

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