

**DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS**  
**PARISH OF ST ANDREW, BIGGLESWADE**

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024 IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE**

PRESENT: Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong, Rosemary Bentley, Rob Butcher, Paul Daniels, Vivienne Gayfer, Hilary Johnson, Rob Lackey, Ruth Marshall-Jones, Chris Parker, (David Pilgrim), Andrew Rutt, Mark Simmons, Nettie van de Weerd, Nicola Woodward

( ) means not present

**1. Welcome, prayers and apologies for absence**

Rev'd Liz welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the opening prayers. There were apologies from David Pilgrim.

**2. To receive the Memorandum of Discussions of the Standing Committee held on 9th January**

Approved.

**3. To approve the Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 21st November 2023 and matters arising from that meeting**

The minutes were proposed by Paul Daniels; seconded by Vivien Gayfer. Approved by all.

Hilary noted that the carol singing was very good at both the Church and Sullivan Court, and particularly well attended at the latter with support from some families who had responded to social media. Rosemary noted the strong link we have with Penrose Court.

**Matters Arising:**

5. Review of Country Fayre Terms of Reference: Rev'd Liz said that she was pleased that at the Growth & Mission committee meeting, the action was raised that the Country Fayre committee would be going out to the congregation to ask for charities to support. This has gone into the pew sheet this week.

Rev'd Liz informed the meeting that Tibbs Dementia will be running a free course over three weeks to support those with a recent diagnosis of dementia and for those who want to make more of the link between the foundation and the community of Biggleswade. These will be held on 20th and 27th February and 5th March from 12 noon to 4pm in the Chapter House. Rev'd Liz commended the sessions to the PCC and hoped that those who were interested would come along; feedback would be appreciated. There will be a notice in the pew sheet for Sunday.

**4. Preparation for APCM**

The APCM takes place on Sunday 28th April in church following the 10.00 am Parish Communion. Ruth confirmed that there will be seven vacancies on PCC – four people for three years, one person for two years and two people for one year. There are also 2 vacancies on Deanery Synod; Rosemary is ex-officio, being a member of Diocesan Synod. There is also the annual appointment of Churchwardens and with Rob Butcher confirming he will not be standing again, we do need to do some praying and recruiting. Rev'd Liz acknowledged that there is work to do for the PCC and without the need to put pressure on people, it is important that we have conversations with people over coffee and with smaller groups/individuals. Ruth also confirmed she is working with others to compile the Annual Report of the PCC which accompanies the Financial Statement; this will be ready for PCC approval at the next meeting on 19th March. The parish booklet of reports is the responsibility of the Churchwardens and Rev'd Liz requested that Chris work with Rosemary on this.

**5. Group Reports**

- a) **Finance:** Andrew referred to the 3 papers circulated to PCC.

Chris spoke about the Sum-Up machine which we use for events. Our diocese has offered a contactless machine which a number of parishes can have at a reduced price. However iKnow, which is the company we get our website from, will shortly have the ability to provide us with a contactless machine option. We do however need an Android phone and the iKnow App. The company will give us advice on how to keep the phone safe. Rosemary noted that we have had issues with iKnow and asked how we would cope with a small iPhone to receive donations. Rev'd Liz wondered if we could have a tablet if the size was an issue for the elderly/visually impaired. Chris to continue with the research.

Rev'd Liz thanked Andrew for his reporting.

b) **Growth & Mission:**

- Mission Payments. Chris noted that mission payments are made up of 10% of all giving and this is distributed 2% via EMF, support of 15 children in Mafambisa and a further charity agreed by PCC. The group talked about how to select a charity and thought it would be a good idea to ask the congregation for nominations. A notice has gone in the pew sheet to that effect.
- Lent Course. The group spoke about a Lent course and considered a selection of books. It was felt that the BRF book Journeying through Lent would be a good course to follow and there is a signing up notice in the foyer for people to add their names.
- Lent Giving. The group also considered Lent giving where a charity is chosen. However as there is such a short timescale between Epiphany and Lent this year, it was felt that people could be encouraged to give to the mission payment charity, perhaps as part of their sacrificial giving during Lent. It was recognised that we need to decide the charity before Ash Wednesday.
- Other Services/Events. Mothering Sunday on 10th March, Palm Sunday on 24th March commencing in the market square at 9:45am. We now have a team of 10 people going to Mafambisa. Holiday Club is taking place from 13th August on the theme Deep Sea Divers. Mark referred to the Mafambisa trip and the fact that his son, Matthew is going. He felt privileged and quite special to be embraced and welcomed into that team and wanted to thank Chris and the team for bringing him on board.

c) **Building & Grounds:**

There has been no meeting but there is a meeting planned shortly.

- Heating Project. Chris said that it was done although there was still a bit of building work and a few snagging issues and work to do on one of the walls in the choir vestry. We are still awaiting further completion in the vestry toilet. The heating system works well although it had been noted that a few of the fans were blowing too fast and these have now been turned down. Rob mentioned the timing for when the fans go off and the temperature goes down which may need to be adjusted. He also mentioned a draft coming through the vestry but this could be managed by closing the door. Rob felt we needed to get feedback from the congregation and Rev'd Liz suggested the Churchwardens could write a couple of lines in the pew sheet along the lines of we welcome your constructive feedback. We are listening and we are working with you.  
**ACTION: Chris to write something in the pew sheet.**
- Heaters in Chapter House. These are traditionally serviced in the autumn and the heating company was asked to carry this out. The heater in the Ivel Room is not working, is old and we can no longer get any parts for it. The two heaters in the Chapter House can be repaired. The heating company thinks that these two heaters have been set up wrong; we need to be able to turn them on and off properly (not at the wall socket) or change to a new system. The cost to repair what we have and buy a new heater for the Ivel Room would be £3,500 compared to swapping to a better system - water heated - at a cost of £50K. Rob noted that we have a budget of £8K left over from the heating project and suggested we use the £3,500 to repair and replace the heaters. **It was proposed that we use £3,500 from the remaining heating budget of £8,000 to repair the two heaters in the Chapter House and buy a new heater for the Ivel Room. PROPOSED: Rob Butcher; SECONDED: Hilary Johnson. All in favour.**  
**ACTION: Chris to update Mandy, the Parish Administrator.**



- Inventory of donated items of furniture. Rob noted that there are pieces of furniture that we have acquired over the years, e.g. flower stands, which are taking up room in the church and therefore we need to bring a list of items that are redundant to someone to work out how to dispose of them. Hilary wondered if we could offer some of the items we don't want to local churches. Rosemary thought that if we knew the source we could then approach that person to ask them if they wished to take the item back.

**ACTION: Chris with ANO to do an inventory post Easter.**

- Eco Church. Mark said he was hoping that St Andrew's would secure the Bronze Eco award this month. He is awaiting a response from the diocese seeking guidance/advice on how best to move forward with the Autumn Meadow which is currently a cordoned-off area of the churchyard on the south side of the church. The group are due to meet on 10th February to potentially erect the compost facility against the southern boundary. It is hoped to place a water butt on the south side of the church, directly behind a table tomb in the churchyard and it is understood that a faculty is required. Mark felt it would be useful to establish whether this needs to be taken further by our church architect.

**ACTION: Chris to investigate with the Diocese.**

Mark said he will be preparing a drawing for discussion purposes of the details of the potential water butt. Rev'd Liz suggested a few words in the pew sheet about the Autumn Meadow to raise awareness with the congregation. Rev'd Liz thanked Mark for his report.

d) **Communications:**

Rosemary reported that the group had cancelled its last meeting. She noted to the meeting that the next quarterly parish magazine for Holy Week 2024 will be published on Passion Sunday, 17th March, the deadline for copy being 4th March. The new noticeboard adjacent to the church car park is still pending. Ruth has spoken with the company and they are awaiting delivery of LED lighting strips; it is hoped the noticeboard will be delivered soon.

- Social Media. Oliver Dilley reported in that there is continuing progression of use, for the Christmas period in particular. Consideration of future events in liaison with Rev'd Liz still needs attention. All suggestions for new features welcomed
- Church Website. Peter Giles reported that he is still working through the issue created by Church Edit transferring to a new design builder. The functionality has now been fully restored but the web page does not look as good as it did. He has requested to restore to previous design. He is also in the process of updating the content of the website and has emailed each person responsible for content of one or more pages on the site requesting they review and provide information to update.

Awaited developments remain the signage to the Garden of Remembrance which Rob was leading on, and the adaptation of signage to convey a more positive message which Chris is intending to do.

6. **Sub-Committees**

Rev'd Liz noted that Standing Committee had discussed that it would be good to get Sub Committee meeting dates in the diary for the year, preferably not all together but spread out. No further work has been done on this at present but it is hoped that we can do something about it to launch with a new PCC following the APCM. It is an expectation that every PCC member should also sit on at least one Sub-Committee. The Standing Committee are proposing to do some work on this.

7. **Deanery & Diocesan Reports**

Rosemary noted to the meeting that the third of the Lent Evening worship services will be held at St Andrew's. With regard to Diocesan Synod, this year most importantly there will be elections for the next Triennium of Diocesan Synod and if anyone is interested they should speak to her.

8. **Churches Together**

Rev'd Liz reported that both Vaughan Johnson and John Dilley had attended the last meeting. We had hosted the week of prayer for Christian Unity service and Rev'd Liz thanked John for

co-ordinating this – the feedback was very positive. The next event is the Good Friday Walk of Witness – no more details as yet. The World Day of Prayer is on Friday 1st March at the Baptist Church; the MU adopted this last year and it is hoped that Maggie McLoughlin will attend the meeting. 2025 World Day of Prayer will be hosted by us.

#### 9. **Safeguarding**

PSO Nicola said she is due to meet with the vicar on Wednesday 7th February as she has completed all her Church safeguarding training. She also confirmed that she has now completed and passed all the assessments from this training.

#### 10. **Prayers of Love and Faith**

Rev'd Liz had circulated a paper from Bishop Alan detailing where the Church of England is on this matter. As far as St Andrew's is concerned, there has not been a lot of engagement and Rev'd Liz said there are options available and information out there if anyone wishes to engage. She has not as yet had any enquiries about same sex blessings or prayer in Church. She asked the PCC to be aware of the developments and to hold all in prayer. Rosemary shared a recent article from the Church Times which calls for understanding and reconciliation on all sides of the debate as ways forward are found.

#### 11. **Correspondence**

Rev'd Liz had received a letter from a gentleman who had come to a service on Christmas Eve where his leg had gone through one of the gratings which resulted in injuries including a broken ankle. Rev'd Liz had responded. Any future correspondence would be via the PCC Secretary. Appropriate action has been taken following advice from EIG, our Insurance Company and our church architect.

Rev'd Liz had received a letter from Rob following a meeting she had with him to discuss his forthcoming surgery and time off afterwards. The letter was to lay out his proposals for dealing with matters in his absence as Musical Director and taking a break from playing the organ. We are looking at a timescale from 4th February up until Easter Day. There will be a couple of notices in the pew sheet which will outline some of the arrangement to do with the choir and Churchwarden role.

Rob advised the meeting that he has resigned as Foundation Governor at St Andrew's Lower School. Ruth confirmed that she had written to inform the Diocese.

Rev'd Liz said that we are all thinking of Rob and praying for him and to know that we are here for him and his family if they need support.

#### 12. **Any other Business**

None.

#### 13. **Closing Prayer**

Rev'd Liz closed the meeting with prayer.

Next PCC meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7:30pm in the Chapter House

(Chair)



(Date)

19.03.2024.