

Parish of Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden

Minutes of the PCC meeting held in the Church of St Peter and St Paul
Wednesday 13th June 2017

Present (PCC Member):

Rosie Harper	RH	Martyn Green	MGr
David Harris	DH	Sally Clark	SC
Katherine Shuster	KS	Clive Bowen	CB
Margaret Gordon	MGo	Vicky Preece	VP
Philippa Howells	PH	Sophia Okonkwo	SO
Julia Sands	JS	Guy Priestley	GP Secretary

Present (Deanery Synod):

Brenda Harris	BH	Chris Nickless	CN
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Present (Churchwardens):

Ken Harratt	KH	Val Withams	VW
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Apologies: Helen Clark (HC), Christopher Figg (CF), Wendy Harris (WH).

RH called the meeting to order at 8.00pm and noted it was not a Communion. Communion would be given when Elizabeth had joined the Parish, as a welcome.

The meeting started with a reading from Luke 10 (Mary and Martha). RH enjoined those present to put themselves in the place of Martha, whose hard work was behind the scenes. Not to resent this, but feel instead blessed by the chance for active stewardship to oil the wheels of mission through the nitty gritty of duties like Child Protection.

RH led the meeting in opening prayer; then updated all on the state of John Martin, recovering from serious injury when a plough fell on him. She was pleased to advise that although a long recovery lay ahead, he was fundamentally in good shape. Sally would need our continued support.

1. The Minutes of the meeting on 7th March 2017 were agreed and signed.

2. Change in Committees and Office Holders

2.1 RH proposed, and KH seconded, the following:

i. to co-opt GP to the PCC.

The motion was carried.

ii. to appoint GP as Secretary, in place of SOF.

The motion was carried.

iii. to appoint VW (longest-serving Warden) as Vice-Chair.

The motion was carried.

- iv. To appoint the following as the Standing Committee:
Rosie Harper (RH)
Val Withams (VW)
Ken Harratt (KH)
MOF
Guy Priestley (GP)

Post-meeting Note: as MOF is no longer either a Church Warden nor a PCC member, he will support the Standing Committee informally. Subject to ratification at the next PCC meeting, the revised Standing Committee membership will therefore be:

*Rosie Harper (RH)
Val Withams (VW)
Ken Harratt (KH)
Elizabeth Lowson (EL)
Guy Priestley (GP)*

- 2.2 The Finance Committee was recognised and unchanged:

Mike O'Farrell (MOF)
Val Withams (VW)
Martyn Green (MGr)
Helen Clark (HC)

- 2.3 The Child Protection committee had lost Carolyn Bailey

- 2.4 The Mission Committee chair was still TN.

The meeting discussed whether it would be appropriate to cease funding the Lindengate project (near Wendover), as it is now mature. A similar project has started up on 5 acres of land at the Abbey in Great Missenden. It might be a suitable recipient of the church's support.

No decision was reached.

3. Fabric

The meeting noted no committee was formally charged with fabric matters.

SC is discussing with the insurance company and underwriters the repair to the damaged glass screen. She is currently awaiting monies from the insurers for the first payment to Daedalian Glass. Action: **SC**

After discussion on whether funds could be borrowed from the Watson Cottages Fund, and a question on whether the Oldham Hall had repaid the loan it had received from that fund, SC reminded the Committee of the background to the loan. Refurbishment had been needed following a fire caused by solvents used in other work. A loan had been taken out from the Watson Cottages fund. MG

stated this had nearly been repaid, as had several previous loans from the same fund.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Little Hampden Faculty: was to be actioned by Sue O'Farrell (SOF). Carried forward in her absence; GP will liaise with SOF to resolve Action: **GP**

4.2 Dog waste bin: there was no update as WH had sent her apologies. Carried forward. Action: **WH**

4.3 Data Protection: RH/AC to contact Mary Sayward for clarification of what we need to do to comply with new General Data Protection Regulations effective May 2018. Carried forward Action: **RH/HC**

4.4 CCTV: DH advised the Planning Department was being very slow to grant planning permission for the cameras; but he did not believe that it was technically needed. He would wait a little longer before pre-empting them, and update the next meeting. Action: **DH**

4.5 Lighting: resolved. See 6.1 below

5. Correspondence:

Mural Competition

SC told the committee that Ecclesiastical Insurance had launched a competition for its clients to submit a poster or mural design representative of their community. The first prize was £10,000.

Ideas were discussed, including the suggested choice of A1 poster (rather than mural); possibly around the theme of handprints. CB offered to help with the practicalities.

It was decided to enter the competition with the leading involvement of Ignite and the broader young church. PH would liaise. Action: **PH**

Maintenance

VW advised she had received a letter from John Jones: he would step down in October from mowing the grass in front of the church.

6. Safeguarding

6.1 Safeguarding Guidelines

DH briefed the meeting on the new Safeguarding Guidelines received from the Diocese; and distributed a summary. He recommended that every PCC member should read the Diocesan guidance.

- VP noted that the church had a very good training DVD. It was available from the office if anyone wished to view it.

The most material change was the extension of the protection to vulnerable adults. The guidelines were much shorter than before, and were now principles-based. This allowed flexibility, but also required more judgement and discretion on the part of the church.

DH noted that common sense would be essential. No system is fool-proof, so it was crucially important to maintain a transparent documentary audit trail so that if someone within its care came to harm, the church and its members could evidence that they did all they reasonably could in each case, and the incident did not reflect inattention or slackness.

Diocesan guidance was that these records should be retained for at least 25 years. Mark Ladd was the sole custodian of these often-sensitive records: for Data Protection purposes he would release them to no one except legally authorised individuals or bodies.

- PH welcomed the concision of the new document. The bulk of the previous version had been off-putting to new families.

There followed discussion around the difficulty of defining and identifying vulnerability (particularly as opposed simply to being elderly); and reconciling the new duties with the church's outreach activities, including communion.

DH advised that a written record should be maintained of all visits; and the church should ensure that those involved had been briefed on what to do if anything untoward occurred.

DH then addressed the boundaries between the church and independent associations. The Healing Group was part of the church, and particularly exposed to vulnerable people; whereas Keeping in Touch (KIT) was now independent. He recommended close liaison with KIT to ensure they alerted the Healing Group to high-risk cases.

- RH wondered how we decide when an active, elderly member of the congregation becomes vulnerable by reason of physical frailty and disbarred from activities that might result in injury – potentially against their will.

DH agreed: such decisions would not be easy. We should err on the side of caution. Similar issues arose in respect of pastoral visits: when is engagement on behalf of the church, and when is it simply the act of an old friend? There was also an indirect responsibility: anyone visiting should be alert to signs of problems such as abuse by a third party. It was important to blow the whistle, and evidence this.

RH agreed. It was easy for abuse or neglect to go unchecked when several people notice things but no one joins the dots to see the whole picture. However, we must equally balance this against the parishioner's right to privacy under Data Protection laws. Whistleblowing should be through Mark Ladd, who can consult the Vicar if he thinks it appropriate.

DHH moved that the Committee adopt the new guidelines. RH seconded. The motion was carried. DH would notify the Diocese. Action: **DH**

6.2 Training

DH advised he would arrange safeguarding training for the whole team. He would defer this until the Autumn when everyone was back from holidays and Elizabeth had joined us.

6.3 Disclosure and Barring Statements (DBS)

DH asked everyone, in particular Junior Church Leaders, to ensure they had obtained and lodged with him a current DBS. He would follow up on any missing or obsolete ones.

CN noted that transferable DBS were available, but the applicant had to register them as transferable within 14 days of approval.

KH asked if the church would subsidise the cost of DBS. DH replied that they were free to volunteers – there was a charge only for people seeking them as employees.

6.4 Youth Work

PH confirmed that she was always careful to ensure at least two adults were present for all youth activities. She was aware that the records needed to be overhauled

- DH advised her to review her records and ensure the church held written parental permission for each child's attendance, emergency contact details, details of any specific allergies/needs; and maintain an Attendance Register.

Given the imminent summer holidays, it was agreed that September would be the best time to do this. PH agreed to ensure correct procedures are in place for IGNITE from September onwards, and KS will do the same for REACH. DH will send the necessary information to Chloe Lewis for MAP. Action: **PH/DH/KS**

6.5 Third Parties

RH asked if the church bore any liability for third parties using the Church Hall.

DH recommended they sign a formal acknowledgement of the rules, including an appropriate disclaimer.

7 Administration

VW felt the number of church initiatives made it hard to manage each project effectively. SC had helped with this by doing the hard work on lighting. VW requested further assistance from the PCC.

7.1 Church Lighting

SC presented a paper on this long-standing issue. An all-in quotation had been obtained of £5,829.83, which would see all lighting replaced with brighter, energy-efficient units. The new lighting would use less power, and should last upwards of 30 years. Softer white bulbs would be used.

All involved in the project recommended approval, as did the Finance team. If approved, she would try to raise some of the money from Churches Together and/or Sweet Charity. She hoped to secure a much as £1,000.

- CN asked if this included the choir. SC confirmed it did.
- KH asked what would be done with the old units. SC indicated they would probably be offered to the congregation against a donation.
- MG suggested the cost be taken from the fabric fund.

VW proposed a motion to incur the cost and charge the fabric fund. MG seconded. The motion was carried.

7.2 Grounds

VW advised the grounds were showing signs of falling into disrepair. Path edges were crumbling, and it was hard to keep up with the necessary mowing and brush-cutting. The church either needed some committed volunteers; or to engage a new grounds-keeping company: grass-mowing alone would cost £1,500 – £2,000 a year.

7.3 The Yurt: the project had made no progress, and had no Project Manager. The school had shown little practical support, perhaps because of limited resource. RH to convene everyone who had expressed interest within the church.

8. Finance

MGr spoke to the item.

Overall, finances were healthy and the Parish solvent. However, trends this year were adverse: receipts were down and although expenses were carefully controlled and unavoidable, an increase in outgoings (such as refurbishing the vicarage) threatened to cause a deficit on the year and eat into reserves. Monthly donations were lower than in 2016 and fundraising was below the budget target of £4k. The church had incurred a deficit of £3k to the end of May.

By contrast, the Junior Church Youth Fund exceeded £10k and continued to rise, as little was being spent. The programme should be reviewed for effective spending of these monies. PH said that there were plans for these funds

- RH suggested this would be an excellent job for Elizabeth when she arrived

VW asked the PCC should consider appointing someone to sort out the banking aspects of our Charitable Giving. This would make her task easier.

8.1 Fund Raising

The meeting discussed existing and potential events and opportunities. VW felt that the common element, and non-negotiable success factor, was the need for more passionate, committed volunteers, to adopt the projects and make them real. Her particular concern was the imminent Patronal Festival, which was 2 weeks away and nothing had been organised. Traditionally it had been marked by a “whole church” social event of some kind. PH observed that any church event involving younger parishioners had to take account of exams, school holidays and the like. 1st July is not a good time for families: the reality is that at this stage in the term, there are a number of conflicting events.

Christmas Tree Festival: this was a tradition and usually successful. However, existing volunteers wanted to step down.

No other events were currently planned. Ideas included:

Clay pigeon shoot. This had been tried before, but made only a small gain. However, very poor weather on the day did not help.

Scavenger Hunt: attractive, but again needs sufficient warning and quite a lot of organisation. It was agreed that some sort of scavenger hunt type event would be undertaken for the Patronal Festival. CB noted he could supply a vehicular scavenger hunt he had organised some time ago. VP pointed out that questions were available online. VW noted that such events needed to be carefully calibrated to take account of ages, genders interests and mobility.

Quiz Night: KS and PH pointed out that REACH have been keen to organise a quiz night for some time. It was agreed that they could do so as a Harvest event/fundraiser, fixed for 30 September. **Action: KS/PH**

Murder Mystery: although this would take some organising, it was popular with the committee, as a previous similar event had proved popular. Brenda Harris undertook to organise one in 2018.

9. AOB:

VW advised the printer service was poor, and the cost excessive. GP thought the provider might be the same as the one used by QIB (UK), in which case he might be able to influence the pricing.

- *PMN: GP has established it is a different firm.*

The Science Festival had been successful. RH planned to follow it with a Lent theme of Faith and the Law.

CN noted the cleaning rota was not being completed consistently. Additional volunteers were always welcome. It was agreed that CN would remind all existing volunteers to maintain the rota record.

RH called the meeting to a close at 9.35 pm with a dismissal prayer.

The meeting finished with the Grace.

Signed.....

Date...19th September 2017