

Parish of Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden

Minutes of the PCC meeting held in the Church of St Peter and St Paul
Tuesday 24th October 2017

Present (PCC Member):

Rosie Harper	RH	Elizabeth Lowson	EL
Martyn Green	MGr	Wendy Harris	WH
Sally Clark	SC	Katherine Shuster	KS
Margaret Gordon	MG	Guy Priestley	GP <i>Secretary</i>

Present (Deanery Synod):

Chris Nickless CN

Present (Churchwardens):

Ken Harratt KH Val Withams VW

Apologies: Clive Bowen; Philippa Howells; Vicky Preece; David Harris; Brenda Harris; Sophia Okonkwo; Christopher Figg; Helen Clark

[RH called the meeting to order at 8.00pm . She read Luke 12 v35-38 and reminded the PCC members to look for God in all we do and be ready for him. She then led the meeting in a short prayer]

1. Recognition of Chair and Apologies

The meeting noted that RH was Chair; and accepted the above apologies. RH informed the meeting that VP was in hospital with a broken leg, and asked for prayer. She should also be congratulated on being chosen as Law Society Advocate of the Year for her work in family law, which includes some very difficult cases.

2. Quorum

GP confirmed the meeting was quorate, with 11 present.

3. The Minutes of the meeting on 19th September were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Damaged Screen: Nothing to report. We still await a visit by Daedalian Glass to confirm the best way to repair the damaged glass. RH noted that the damage was minor, and the insurers aware of the situation. It was not time-sensitive. Carried forward. **Action: SC**

4.2 VAT reclaim on Little Hampden bells: CF will advise when refund is received *PMN: funds received.* **CLOSED**

4.3 Safeguarding Policy: in DH's absence, EL spoke to the issue. GP noted that to his mind this was the single most important issue on the agenda.

The PCC needed to be able to state unequivocally that it was fully compliant with the applicable law and regulation; and to this end that all necessary procedures and documentation were in place and current. This had to be demonstrable, for the Trustees' protection should any breach occur. EL agreed to liaise with DH with a view to formally confirming this to the PCC. **Action: EL**

4.4 CCTV and other works: VW confirmed that the following were complete:

Roof sensors: replaced and functional

CCTV: installed. It was agreed that the Churchwardens would put up prominent warning notices, including on the South side of the building. SC noted that the security company considered the signage to be the single most effective deterrent.

Clerestory windows: replaced, and scaffolding removed.

SC noted that there would be external scaffolding for the lead piping work on the tower. This was scheduled for 13th November.

Carried forward: SC

4.5 Trigger Alarms: KH reminded the Committee of the nature of the proposal. SC suggested motion-sensitive floodlights. It was agreed that both ideas suffered the apparently insurmountable problem of false alarms due to eg bats, leaves, small mammals etc.. This would need to be resolved before approaching the Diocese for a faculty.

It was agreed to shelve the proposal until and unless someone had a solution. **Closed**

4.6 St Mary's Ballinger Pew project: RH reported that the Ballinger community was eager to make better use of the space. The existing pews were inflexible, and unstable in certain circumstances. A recent attempt to hold an art class there had failed as insufficient space could be freed.

The sponsors of the change would prefer folding chairs, which were more space efficient when not in use.

CN reported that the Baptist Church had bought high-quality folding chairs. These had proved inappropriate; but had been sold for enough to replace them with stacking chairs.

The sponsors and RH had arranged for a retailer to bring four different types to the next evensong, for practical assessment in practice. **It was agreed that the Choir would test the chairs at the next St Mary's Evensong and report their views to RH.**

RH had concluded that there were two ways forward:

- a. Prepare and submit a full faculty to the Diocese, including H&S implications, lighting issues, costing etc.
- b. Seek a one-year Temporary Licence from the Archdeacon. During this period remove and store the pews, and use the selected chairs. The effectiveness could then be reviewed at the end of the Licence and – if appropriate – a formal faculty submitted and the pews sold.

RH favoured (b).

MGr agreed the Ballinger pews were uncomfortable and unstable. He supported the proposal.

VW suggested the sponsors replaced only half the pews. The balance could be replaced if the experiment were successful. The Church Wardens had considered chairs for Sts. Peter and Paul. Should the Ballinger experiment not work out, we could consider moving them there.

WH felt we should bear in mind that the ultimate decision should lie with the St Mary's congregation. VW clarified: their proposal had to be sanctioned by the PCC.

The Committee endorsed approach (b), but asked that those implementing it take due notice of the following points:

- The pews should be stored safely and in dry conditions. If ultimately sold, the value should be maximised.
- Members of the congregation with mobility problems might find chairs provided insufficient support when sitting down and standing up again.
- Any solution should allow somewhere for congregants to put hymnals and pray books during services
- It should be clearly established whether the chairs should be capable of being linked, to prevent chaos in emergency such as fire.

On this issue, RH noted that she understood linked chairs could actually be more dangerous in small spaces such as St Mary's. Consequently, health and safety regulation were not homogenous.

CN asked where the pews could be stored. RH suggested Tim and Posy as a first stop. VW would liaise on this aspect. **Action: VW**

GP was instructed to draft a letter to the Diocese explaining the proposal and seeking the Temporary Licence. *PMN: after the meeting, RH agreed with VW that the latter would do further liaison/groundwork with the sponsors before sending this application.* **Action: VW**

4.7 Fabric committee: see Agenda Item 7

4.8 Ecclesiastical promotion: the promotion had been publicised with a suitable disclaimer. SC had spoken to Ecclesiastical and reminded them of the need to ensure compliance with FCA rules. **Closed**

5. Updates from Diocesan Secretary

5.1 Advent Resources

RH advised she planned to hold three Advent lunches in December, which would be linked to the Beatitudes theme.

WH wondered if it could be linked to the carol service. RH considered it an interesting idea; but would need to ponder the theological implications.

5.2 Parish Giving Scheme

RH advised that the initial results from centralised donor administration had been very encouraging. The sponsor was eager to visit to present details to the PCC.

MGr noted that the new mechanism used Direct Debits, whereas the majority of the parish's existing donations were by Standing Order, which arguably gives greater control to the donor. He was also concerned that the change should not impose an additional burden on the Treasurer. He had just completed a successful but very time-consuming migration to the new Xero accounting package: new procedures had a tendency to increase administration. GP supported these concerns. In theory, the new system should significantly reduce administration; but we should ensure this was actually the case before committing.

RH acknowledged these concerns, but felt the case warranted further investigation.

It was agreed that RH should get the promotional video and schedule a visit by the sponsor. **Action: RH**

5.3 PCC Secretary Training

GP confirmed he had reserved a place for the November training.

5.4 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): in light of recent guidance from the Diocese, the PCC need to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO) responsible for ensuring compliance. The Committee unanimously

appointed GP, who would formally brief the Committee on compliance status as part of the Standing Agenda. **Closed**

5.5 Statistics for Mission

RH confirmed that these were maintained and submitted by Mike O'Farrell. EL had been doing some excellent work improving the parish's Social Media profile, especially on Facebook.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

MG spoke to the paper circulated. The figures to date were slightly above budget, but the projections into 2018 were adverse. Headwinds included a regular donor's death; and some had cut back their standing orders. We would probably have to reduce the Parish's share.

RH noted his comments. This made it all the more important to identify good fund-raising opportunities.

MGr mentioned that when planning resource-intensive fund-raisers we should bear in mind that the big Parish fund-raiser was the cream teas. These were always successful, but as they spanned several months they did leave volunteers in need of a rest.

VW advised she was discussing with WH the possibility of a similar event with a theme more suited to winter. Ideas would be welcome.

On a general note, CN suggested we recommend Xero to other churches, since MGr was so pleased with its performance.

7. **Fabric**

7.1 Oldham Hall Sound System (KH)

KH and SC ran through the shortcomings of the existing arrangements, which effectively required KH to attend the Hall before every use and spend considerable time wiring up a sound system – even for an effective microphone.

The Hall did have equipment, but in KH's professional opinion it was no longer really fit for purpose; and was cumbersome to set up. He had recently taken to lending his own equipment.

RH and CN concurred, and observed that the problem – especially in respect of the microphone – had become more pressing with the recent great success of the Friends' talks. The Hall's acoustics were not ideal, and many of the audiences could not hear properly without clear amplification.

KH therefore proposed the Parish spend something like £2,000 to buy a set of good second-hand equipment (some of which he had already purchased).

SC noted that before committing we should have a clear idea of how to protect the new equipment. The Hall was hired by various users, not all of whom could be trusted to care for it properly. KH noted this concern, but believed it was effectively addressed by the fact that the speakers would be wall-mounted and chained; and most other equipment would be in a locked room. Only the central mixer/control panel would be exposed.

VW replied that SC, who already did a lot of work to administer the Hall, would still end up responsible for putting out the control panel, and ensuring it was returned safely to storage each time. It would therefore be better to restrict use of the equipment to PCC-sponsored events such as the Friends' talks. Private hires could provide their own sound-systems.

VW asked whether the Parish or Oldham Hall (a separate charity) would bear the cost. MGr said that the initial cost would be borne by the Parish, and partly recovered from Oldham Hall. It would be up to the PCC to decide how much to recover.

It was agreed that KH should draw up a formal, detailed proposal with hard costings, and submit it to the Finance Committee. **Action: KH**

7.2 Replace the pews in Sts Peter & Paul with chairs (MG)

This proposal met with general support in principle, although it would require a considerable amount of thought and documentation before being submitted formally to the Diocese.

VW raised the question of the floor beneath the pews: it might prove very expensive if removal of the pews revealed a need for work.

RH considered the proposal merited serious consideration, and asked WH to circulate a Doodle poll to organise an away-day at which it could be thoroughly explored as part of the overall Agenda. It might also provide as good opportunity to install new under-floor heating (the existing heating was nearing obsolescence). **Action: WH**

8. Youth and Safeguarding

EL advised that training had been scheduled for the PCC on 7th November; but this needed to be rescheduled. **Action: EL**

RH asked for clarification: if a member of the PCC (or anyone else) had a concern in this area, who would they turn to? EL confirmed it would be DH in the first instance; or in his absence the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (john.nixson@oxford.anglican.org).

9. AOB

9.1 Individuals permitted to administer Holy Communion

RH advised GP that the Diocese had delegated control of these permissions to the PCC. On the strength of this, the Committee approved the attached list of 22 individuals.

9.2 Electoral Roll

It was agreed that the Secretary (GP) should be responsible for ensuring the electoral roll is kept current and the Diocese updated.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 28th November

RH called the meeting to a close at 9.45 pm with the Grace.

Signed.....

Date 28th November 2017