

St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

Wednesday 26th April 2023 in the Community Room

Present: Rev. Claire Towns (Chair), Sally Beazley, Joanna Birkett, Barbara Calverley, Debbie Cochrane, Megan Hewson, Linda Lapington, Judy Penhaligon, Hamish Redman, Fiona Rorbye, Charlie Sutton, Mike Tolley, Gill Tucker

Apologies: Ian Ames-White, Iona Baker, Christina Baron, Nick Fridd, Chris Jenkins

1. Opening Prayer

Claire opened the meeting with prayers and a reflection from 2023 Dwelling in the Word. Claire welcomed Mike and Megan as new members.

2. Apologies for absence

As above.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2023

Approved and signed.

3.2 Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on 29th March 2023

Approved and signed.

4. Matters arising (not covered by the Agenda)

4.1 **Picture Sale** – Claire reported that the sale of Alan and Christina's pictures had raised £450 which they had kindly donated to the Church funds.

4.2 **Church cleaner** – Claire reported that Xolo had been appointed as the new church cleaner. He has been invited to also clean the hall kitchen and toilets as a one-off.

5. Deanery Synod Report from 30th March

The inaugural meeting for new reps would be in September. The Synod voted to adopt the proposal to appoint a half-time Interim Priest to the Chewton Mendip etc. benefice. It was noted that the proposal would need to be taken to the Bishop's Council for final approval before advertising, hopefully by September. It was also noted that the 'road map' for future benefice resourcing across the Deanery was approved, though not unanimously. Fiona queried whether we would lose the £8,429 allowance we received towards parish share reduction if the new arrangement with Chewton Mendip went ahead. Claire **agreed** to check.

Post Meeting Note: *Claire spoke to Matthew Pinnock, Head of Finance for the Diocese: this rebate has nothing to do with that Benefice. We get it purely for St Thomas's. It is given to churches with a large number of regular worshippers and where there is only 1 paid member of the clergy looking after that large number. Therefore, as things stand, our parish share stays exactly the same when we break away....*

6. **Feedback from Standing Committee**

Judy reported that the work to replace the fascia boards on the bungalow was going ahead at a cost of approx. £2500. A quote of £4164 had been received from Hydro Vein to replace the leaking water pipe from the stop cock in the hall to the Bath Road. Work was due to commence week of 1st May.

7. **All matters financial**

Ian had provided an update on the Hannam legacy. Following the sale of the flat in Weston, it was hoped that the beneficiaries would receive between £82-£87,000 each in the next few months. Probate was taking longer than expected but it was hoped applications to the Court would be made within the next fortnight with assets being realised in three or so months after that. Claire also reported that Shirley Jones had left a legacy of £2000 to the church.

Fiona reported that we are still running a deficit of approximately £3000 a month. Planned Giving and gift aid contributions were also down compared to last year. It was agreed that in the Autumn we should look at running a Stewardship campaign once legacy monies had been received. A leaflet could be prepared for the congregation, highlighting ways of giving and encouraging gift aid. We also have the new card payment machine, so it is hoped that might encourage more giving. Fiona also reported that parish share would be increasing and we had two options, either a) to accept a 2% rise which would mean paying £101,255 or option b) to accept a 6% rise, paying £105,226.

Claire **proposed** that we pay the lower amount initially and once the monies from the legacy were received, we could review this option. Joanna Birkett **seconded** the proposal and it was unanimously **agreed**.

8. **Working in teams**

Following standing committee discussions, Claire proposed setting up teams within the PCC with co-opted members of the congregation where appropriate. The teams proposed were:

Finance (Fiona, Barbara, Charlie and Ian)
Fundraising/Events (Sally, (Barbara), Joanna, Gill, Debbie and (Fiona))
Fabric (Judy and Chris...and others as and when needed)
Eco/Sustainability (Linda, (Charlie), Megan, Judy)
Community (Sally, Mike, Gill, Hamish)

It was noted that some people would 'float' across teams and Claire would follow up with those who had not been at the meeting. It was hoped that the teams would be able to bring a more focussed approach to various aspects of church mission/life and support the Vicar, churchwardens and treasurer. It was also noted that there would be varying levels of commitment depending on each person's situation. Judy reported that she was working through the skills audit sheets and there had been a good response from the congregation.

9. **Safeguarding update**

Joanna had provided the Committee with an update report for members to read. She reported that she was preparing a full handbook for PCC approval.

10. **Porch update/Thanks to Alan Thomas**

Following a previous e-mail from Claire regarding the porch refurbishment, James Preston, the contractor, is rectifying and re-doing the work. Alan Thomas has indicated that he would be stepping down as church architect because he plans to fully retire. Claire proposed inviting Alan to a service to thank him for his work and present a leaving gift.

11. **Website update**

Nothing further to report.

12. **Collection for Neil and Catie**

A note had gone out to the congregation regarding a collection and it was agreed the PCC would make a contribution from church funds. Also, as well as giving them money, it was agreed a gift from the PCC would be good. Suggestions included some form of artwork or montage with James Preston's photos from the spire and possibly a small piece of the old spire stonework.

13. **July 2nd Patronal Festival**

Claire reported that Bishop Ruth would be preaching and we would also be welcoming our new curate, Edward. It was suggested it would be nice to have a bring and share lunch afterwards. Sally agreed to buy a welcome card.

14. **For information**

Claire reported that for the time being the church needed to be kept locked due to ongoing police enquiries. She had also been invited by Bishop Michael to take part in a new initiative called Launchpad which was a pilot project looking at ways of working with young people.

Heads Up charity open afternoon is on July 1st (1-4pm).

Judy mentioned that it would be good to have more donations of flowers or contribution to the costs. It was agreed an item could be put in the noticesheet.

Mike asked if he could raise an item regarding the Foodbank for the next meeting.

Gill asked about the commissioning of the new PCC. This would be during a suitable future service, at which the PCC values would also be presented to the wider congregation

Joanna reported that she had been asked to be a lay member of the Cathedral Chapter.

15. **Prayers for next meeting**

Hamish volunteered.

16. **Dates of future meetings**

PCC: 31st May, Tuesday 27th June, 26th July, 27th September, 25th October, 29th November, 31st January, 28th February

APCM: Wednesday 30th March 2024

The meeting closed with Grace at 9.20pm.