

## St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

### Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in the Community Room

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**Present:** Revd. Claire Towns (Chair), Ian Ames-White, Iona Baker, Christina Baron, Sally Beazley, Joanna Birkett, Barbara Calverley, Debbie Cochrane, Revd. Edward Day, Megan Hewson, Chris Jenkins, Linda Lapington, Judy Penhaligon, Hamish Redman, Mike Tolley, Gill Tucker

**Apologies:** Charlie Sutton, Fiona Rorbye

#### 1. Opening Prayer

Claire welcomed Edward who opened the meeting with prayer.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

As above.

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

It was **unanimously agreed** that the minutes be signed as a correct record with one additional sentence added to item 13. Community/Outreach: "...in order to build community in and out of the church **and serve our community**".

#### 4. Matters Arising

**a) Bench for Nick:** Chris reported that the work to install the bench was progressing and the the base would be laid shortly. The Archdeacon's letter of authority had been obtained with the wording for the memorial plaque which read:

"In memory of Nick Fridd.  
I'm having a lovely time".

#### 5. Local Authority Planning Matters

##### a. Residents' parking in St Thomas Street

Claire reported that a consultation process was underway and standing committee, on behalf of the PCC, had agreed to support this proposal for residents' parking. It was noted that this would probably have a knock on effect for the church car park usage. It was agreed that better signage displaying 'Private Car Park' would be needed to advise that the car park was for hall and church users only.

##### b. Coach House office conversion

Claire had received information regarding a planning proposal to convert the Coach House, behind the church hall to an office with potentially 14 desk spaces. Notices had not been sent to the PCC (on behalf of the church) nor to the Vicarage as a neighbouring property. Discussion followed and the PCC **opposed** the proposal (with one abstention) as it was agreed this change of use would be detrimental for various reasons. These included traffic congestion, safety of the demographic who used the building and hall, lack of parking for the office could lead to a threat to our car park users losing spaces and the fact that it was a single track roadway. There were also rights of way issues as the road up to the Vicarage was owned by the Diocese. Claire **agreed** to chase up the Diocese as she'd already forwarded the details to them and would also write to Somerset Council to lodge the church's and Vicarage opposition.

## 6. **All matters financial**

Hannam legacy – Ian reported that we had received £150,000 so far and were due to receive a further £750,000 in the next two months and a further £100-150,000 following tax adjustment. He had met with Insignis who were financial planners who had advised that it would be good to draw up a list of capital projects divided into short, medium and long term and invest appropriate amounts for each fund. This would form the basis of our consultations with stakeholders and enable the legacy to be divided appropriately. The importance of ethical investing was noted. Other points:

- Some confusion with spire works invoice and the contractor which Fiona is dealing with.
- Business PayPal account has been set up. (Did not require two authorisations, therefore it was noted that some form of double check on payments would be needed).
- New accounting package was working well and gave a better idea of income/expenditure breakdown.
- We were still running on £3500 deficit a month which works out at £151,000 a year to run the church including parish share.
- It was acknowledged that teaching and encouragement towards planned giving was a priority. (see also item 9a). Possibility of re-introducing collection during offertory to increase casual giving. Claire mentioned that it would be good to have a Stewardship Officer and she had someone in mind to approach to take on this role.

The PCC acknowledged with thanks the amount of time and dedication that Fiona gives to the church as Treasurer.

## 7. **Report from DMPG**

Claire reported that the previous proposal had been for the Chewton Mendip, Ston Easton, Litton to have an interim priest for three years and then to move to Phase 2 of the ministry model with this group of rural parishes joining Beacon Trinity. The Archdeacon had now decided to move straight to Phase 2 with consultations beginning in September with a view to Claire resigning from the Chewton Mendip group by December. It is proposed that St Thomas w. Horrington would be joined with Dinder.

## 8. **Report from General Synod**

Christina provided a report on General Synod highlights:

General Synod is primarily a legislative body, so always has to deal with items like the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure, many small items which are important in some contexts.

Synod passed a motion asking churches to work more closely with Probation; incidentally, research shows that involvement with faith groups reduces recidivism.

The fees for a marriage in church are more than three times the cost of the most simple weekday ceremony in a register office. There will be a trial in two English Dioceses of not charging wedding fees (details to be worked out, this might apply to weekdays, for example)

Living in Love and Faith: the draft prayers for same sex blessings were circulated but will not be voted on until a special Synod meeting in November. Efforts are being made to avoid any departures from the CofE over this issue but the bishops are not willing to establish a system of alternative oversight as the system put in place for those who cannot accept the ministry of women has not worked as well as claimed.

Safeguarding: the national system, particularly for addressing historical cases of abuse, is not working well. The relationship between the Archbishops' Council and the Independent Safeguarding Board broke down and the two remaining members were sacked. After considerable process arguments about suspending Standing Orders at Synod, both former ISB members addressed

Synod, for five minutes each. A number of reports on historical abuse are seriously, in one case several years, late.

This has little or no effect on safeguarding at local and diocesan levels, which is well established with dedicated advisors.

## 9. **Teams Feedback**

### **a. Community Team (Chris, Mike, Claire, Sally)**

The team had worked on their terms of reference and felt that building relationships in the community and identifying stakeholders was part of that remit. It was important to also target any gaps in the parish and embed our values to the wider church. To that end, they suggested more regular prayer opportunities/prayer days. Claire proposed that the usual pattern of services in October be changed with Harvest celebration on 1<sup>st</sup> October and October 29<sup>th</sup> for Stewardship with the three Sundays in between looking at what it means to give. Other suggestions included a bar-b-q on the Green in Churchhill Road, homework club run by Claire and Edward, production of a three monthly leaflet advertising church activities to be distributed throughout the parish, carol singing at Horrington and Light Party for children on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

### **b. Events/Fundraising (Gill, Debbie, Joanna)**

The terms of reference focussed on events for building up the church family and bringing in community. Encouraging others to be part of the team would be good. For the church family some initial suggestions included harvest lunch or supper with entertainment, beetle drive with food/BYOB, beer and hymns. Other suggestions for church and community were organ and/or musical events and also Light Party for children.

### **c. Eco/Sustainability (Megan, Judy, Linda, Iona,)**

The group were keen to look to obtaining the status of Eco Church which had different levels. (Edward had some experience of this in previous parish). Educating the church was also a priority, promoting Repair Café, Community Fridge, Second Hand clothes sales). They would also like to survey the church to see what people are aware of and look to hosting an event on sustainability which could tie in with Harvest celebration.

### **d. Fabric (Churchwardens' report on jobs outstanding and 'to do' list)**

Chris reported that works to the bungalow would be starting in August/September. Other works to be done were: repair to front door of the hall, locks on the doors behind the organ, repairs/renewal of both noticeboards in the churchyard, gates at the Horrington cemetery, roof on shed and tenant's shed.

## 10. **Frequency of PCC meetings**

Claire proposed that as the sub groups were in place and beginning to meet, the number of PCC meetings could be reduced. It was decided that the PCC would next meet in September and then November.

## 11. **Safeguarding update**

This item was deferred.

## 12. **For information and suggestion for next PCC meeting**

Hamish reminded the group that he would be providing cake and drinks to celebrate his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday next Sunday.

## 13. **Prayers for next meeting**

Gill volunteered.

## 14. **Dates of future meetings**

**PCC:** 27<sup>th</sup> September, [25<sup>th</sup> October], 29<sup>th</sup> November, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 28<sup>th</sup> February

**APCM:** Wednesday 30th March 2024

The meeting closed at 9.30pm with the Grace.