

St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

Wednesday 27th September 2023 in the Community Room

Present: Revd. Claire Towns (Chair), Iona Baker, Sally Beazley, Barbara Calverley, Debbie Cochrane, Revd. Edward Day, Megan Hewson, Linda Lapington, Fiona Rorbye, Charlie Sutton, Mike Tolley, Gill Tucker

Apologies: Ian Ames-White, Christina Baron, Joanna Birkett, Chris Jenkins, Judy Penhaligon

1. **Opening Prayer**

Gill opened the meeting with prayer.

2. **Apologies for absence**

As above.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2023**

It was **unanimously agreed** that the minutes be signed as a correct record with one post meeting note proposed by Christina: Item 8 - Report from General Synod – end of the penultimate paragraph: (St Thomas's is fortunate to have Joanna as Safeguarding Officer and Mike as her deputy and their hard work is much appreciated).

4. **Matters Arising**

a) Local Authority Planning Matters

The residents' parking in St Thomas Street matter was on hold as the Council was looking more widely at the parking situation in the City as a whole.

The developer had failed to get planning permission for the Coach House office conversion but an amended application was expected to be lodged.

5. **Feedback from Teams**

a. **Finance Team**

Fiona presented the new style of accounting report which isolated extraordinary income and expenditure. Extraordinary income showed legacy monies and an insurance claim payment totalling £107947 and extraordinary expenditure totalling £20006. We were due £10,000 back for the spire work but this had not been confirmed in writing. The deficit still remained at about £4000 a month. Fiona also reported that Rob Riley (energy broker) had negotiated a much better energy deal with gas bill half the amount that it was last year. It was noted that the Brownies and Guides were struggling to pay their hall rental charges. After some discussion, Claire proposed and it was **agreed** that the outstanding debt should be written off for both groups and we would look into fixing a new rate for youth groups.

b. **Community Team**

Claire thanked Edward for his hard work in delivering the questionnaires regarding the legacy money and flyers to all the houses in the parish. Claire reported that, so far, she had received 75 responses which was very encouraging and it was suggested a message could be put on our Facebook page to that effect, encouraging people to respond as the deadline was not until the end of October.

c. Eco/Sustainability Team

The group reported that Edward was applying for Eco Church Award status. The group were also involved in the forthcoming Harvest Festival activity.

d. Events Team

Nothing to report.

6. Building Works

a. North Porch Update

Work to finish glazing was due to start in the first week in October.

b. Spire

As mentioned earlier, the final monies were due to be settled. Claire reported that St Thomas had won an award from the William Stansell Historic Building Awards for the spire work.

c. Choir Vestry

Claire proposed that the choir vestry needed a thorough clear out to tidy up the area and potentially create a more useable child friendly space. A skip would be needed as there might be other items in the hall attic which could be disposed of. It was hoped that, where possible, items could be re-cycled and/or re-purposed.

7. Safeguarding Report

Joanna's report with attachments had been circulated. Mike updated the Committee and reported that the church was using a new DBS provider and that he would be updating the Diocesan Parish Dashboard software with policy documents and information on those who had attended training, certification and renewal dates.

Claire reminded the Committee of the importance of GDPR and how we store information.

8. Organist Fees

At St Thomas's, the organist's fees are currently £90 for a funeral and £120 for a wedding. Following RSCM guidelines, the wedding fee was doubled if the service was videoed. Clare reported that this had caused some annoyance with some couples, and wondered if this should now be reviewed. After some discussion, and input from Gill, it was agreed that this double fee should be waived. If couples do not want to have an organist, and do not want hymns, there would be no organist's fee.

Fiona pointed out that the funeral and wedding fees had not changed for some years. It was agreed that comparisons would be made with other churches (ie. St Cuthbert's and St John's, Glastonbury), and that the fees should remain the same for now, but be reviewed after these comparisons had been considered.

9. Deanery Synod Feedback

Claire reported that the new deanery arrangement plans were taking shape. Section 11 Notice had been activated at Chewton Mendip.

10. Additional Item – Harvest Festival

A decision was needed as to which charity should receive the monetary donations at the forthcoming Harvest service. After some discussion, Gill proposed the Wells Foodbank should receive both the monetary and food donations. This was seconded by Barbara and unanimously agreed.

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

It was agreed that the PCC would not meet in October (finance team would meet separately) and the next full PCC meeting would be on 29th November.

Iona gave her apologies for this meeting.

Mike would give a talk about the Foodbank in the New Year.

13. **Prayers for next meeting**

Megan volunteered.

14. **Dates of future meetings**

PCC: 29th November, 31st January 2024, 28th February 2024

APCM: Wednesday 30th March 2024

The meeting closed at 8.50pm with the Grace.

DRAFT