

## St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

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

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 in the Community Room

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**Present:** Revd. Claire Towns (Chair), Ian Ames-White, Iona Baker, Sally Beazley, Joanna Birkett, Barbara Calverley, Debbie Cochrane, Megan Hewson, Chris Jenkins, Judy Penhaligon, Hamish Redman, Fiona Rorbye, Gill Tucker

**Apologies:** Christina Baron, Linda Lapington, Charlie Sutton, Mike Tolley

#### 1. Opening Prayer

Hamish opened the meeting with prayer. Following some moments of reflection, Chris led prayer in memory of Nick Fridd who had recently died.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

As above.

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

It was proposed by Barbara and **unanimously agreed** that the minutes be signed as a correct record.

##### **Additional item – update on the water leak.**

Chris reported the water pipe had been replaced but additional work had been needed **to cut off the pipe which ran in the direction of the Old Vicarage**. There was also a problem with the meters, one in the hall and one in the bungalow. He was liaising with the water company to resolve the issue so that the tenant would be correctly billed in the future.

No further update on the leak into the office.

#### 4. All matters financial

The Committee noted that as Trustees, members details are in the public domain on the Charity Commission website. Fiona agreed to check Megan's details. The PCC had received the monthly accounts sheet from Fiona prior to the meeting. Fiona reported that we were still running at a loss of approximately £18,000. There was some VAT money to be recovered on the porch work and some gift aid monies to come in. Claire reported that the Diocese were about to go 'live' with the launch of the Parish Giving Scheme which was a professional donation management system. The advantage to joining the scheme as a parish was that it would encourage people to set up direct debits, and PGS would reclaim all gift aid and pay it back to the church on a regular basis, monthly. PCC were all in favour and **agreed** to join the scheme. Claire had in mind to promote the scheme and stewardship in general during the Autumn at the Harvest Festival service.

#### 5. Hannam Legacy

Claire reported that £100,000 from the legacy had been received in the form of a cheque. (To be banked). Ian reported that he was hoping to meet up with the financial adviser along with other finance team members in order to discuss how the legacy monies can best be held and invested for the short and longer term until required.

#### 6. Parish Share Survey

All churches had been asked to complete the form and we had grown by 20 new worshippers (net) at St. Thomas since the last time the survey was undertaken in 2020.

7. **Bench for Nick**

The Committee supported the family's wish to provide a wooden bench in the churchyard in memory of Rev. Nick Fridd. The family would be covering the cost of the bench and installation. The final wording for the memorial plaque or engraving to be confirmed. PCC unanimously **commended** this proposal and **agreed** on a location at the front of the churchyard near to a neighbouring bench. **The work would require an Archdeacon's Letter of Authority.**

8. **Safeguarding Update**

Joanna had previously circulated the latest update with a further three sections of the Parish Safeguarding handbook to read and note. These sections from the Diocesan handbook would be compiled to complete our Parish Handbook. It was noted that volunteers would be needed to make cakes and serve drinks at the "Keep Safe from Scammers" morning on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

9. **Foodbank matters**

Mike had asked if the church could invite members of the congregation to donate food to the Foodbank once a month during the service. The first Sunday of the month could be a suitable option, starting in the Autumn. PCC **agreed.**

10. **National Loneliness Week**

Linda had asked for information on this initiative to be circulated for members' attention. It was supported by the Marmalade Trust to highlight loneliness in the community. Inviting people to Coffee Stop was considered a good opportunity to engage.

11. **Joanna B – Reader Training**

PCC congratulated Joanna on being accepted for Reader training.

12. **Patronal Festival/Welcome to Edward**

This would be taking place on 2<sup>nd</sup> July with a bring and share lunch and bring a bottle. PCC members agreed to each bring a bottle of Prosecco to toast Edward's arrival. An outline of tasks was made as follows:

Lella and Clifford Fountaine and Debbie – teas and coffees in the hall  
Joanna and Fiona – coordinating canopies and food  
Judy, Charlie (?) and Hamish – set up hall  
Barbara and Michael – serving drinks

Notice for the church to go out in 11<sup>th</sup> June newsletter

13. **Working in teams**

The members split up into their sub teams to consider preliminary terms of reference for their respective group.

**Finance** (Barbara, Ian and Fiona)

The role of the team was to 'Support the Financial Health and Stability of St. Thomas'. This included:

- i) The management of the legacy and planned giving scheme.
- ii) Supporting the finance and financing approach for large projects – with the goal of increasing our value to the community whilst sustaining St. Thomas' Church.

[Finance Team – discussion.

- Felt our role was to – 'Support the Financial Health and Stability of St. Thomas'. The management of the legacy and planned giving scheme. Supporting the finance and financing approach for large projects – with the goal of increasing our value to the community whilst sustaining the St. Thomas Church.

- Current Financial position was discussed at some length. We are losing approx £20k per quarter. A longer term view is needed to understand if this is an actual trend or anomalous due to specific recent issues – Spire, etc.
- Planned Giving Scheme – agreed with launching this in October – NOT at the Harvest service – as this would mean that people who come to church on limited occasions – Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Marriage & Funerals – only ever hear the Church bleating about being hard up. Is it possible to get Matthew Pinnock to present a short section at PCC and bring some handouts/information we can use?
- Accounts. Our accounts will need to move from Cash Reporting to Accrual Accounting due to the forthcoming positive financial position.
- Scheme fundraising. For future projects it may be possible to use a match funding approach, that a number of grant sources encourage – e.g. Mendip Council (now the new Somerset Council), Heritage Fund, Lottery, etc. This approach, albeit a bit arduous, may enable our money to go twice as far. PCC member will remember, as an example, that St. Cuthberts successfully applied for a grant to re-open after Covid. There is money out there. Let's try and use some of it. ]

#### **Fundraising/Events** (Joanna, Gill, Debbie) - Values 1,2,3,4

To generate ideas and communicate them to the church so as to encourage involvement and to build a wider team. The sub team had responsibility for coordinating events which generally came under three areas:

- i) Fundraising (eg. Organ recitals, beer and hymns, quiz night, beetle drive)
- ii) Building up the church family (eg. Garden tea party, parish weekend/parish away day, film night)
- iii) Events to bring in the community

#### **Eco/Sustainability** (Judy, Megan, Iona) – Value 5

To be the 'conscience of the PCC' undertaking an audit to identify ways the church can be more eco-friendly and operate in a more sustainable way. The group would also look at ways to involve the wider community. (Some measures to be considered were solar panels, charging points, energy usage, swift boxes)

#### **Community/Outreach** (Chris, Sally, Claire, Hamish) – Values 1, 2 and 4

To identify some processes and work with other PCC sub groups to put into place and present initiatives to the PCC in order to help build community in and out of the church.

#### 14. **For information**

Claire reported that the celebration for the Launchpad course would be on 4<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm. She would also be leading confirmation classes in the Autumn.

Judy mentioned that she was looking into putting the swift boxes in the churchyard and would be contacting Somerset Wildlife Trust and Revd. Mary Bide at the Cathedral was mentioned as another person to contact for advice.

#### 15. **Prayers for next meeting**

A volunteer needed.

#### 16. **Dates of future meetings**

**PCC:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 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 9.20pm with the Grace.