

ST MARY MAGDALEN, KNIGHTON

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 7:30pm on

22 September 2022

Present: Revd Adrian Jones (Chairman), Kate Adams, Amanda Beck, Beryl Bonfield, Sian Howard, David Palmer, Lorna Pollard, Judith Rudd.

Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Siesage and Ida Stanyer

The meeting opened with a reading from Ephesians.

22/75 PARISH FINANCIAL POSITION

The PCC noted that financial contributions to the parish had not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The Vicar pointed out that the Bible tells us we should plan our spending carefully and, where possible, be generous; if we sense what God is calling us to do, we should be bold, not timid.

There had been no renewal of giving programme in recent years in the light of circumstances, but one would now be held over several weeks to engage the congregation fully with the issues. In addition, a wi-fi connection and a card reader connected to the internet to be permanently based in the church would facilitate spontaneous donations from the congregation and visitors.

The Treasurer presented a financial summary of the half-year to date. Income is slightly above the last forecast, but this assumed an operating deficit, and it was important to note the rapid increases in inflation. With regard to energy costs, the Treasurer had established that the parish would be eligible for Government help for businesses/charities.

Current 'unrestricted' reserves stood at 260K but approximately half of this had been earmarked at previous PCC meetings. Taking into account this and some other expected outgoings, only some £42K in the reserves could be regarded as truly 'free' and undesignated at present.

Parish Centre income in the first six months was slightly lower than expected (and still not at pre-pandemic levels).

The PCC agreed that it was important to manage regular expenditure, eg. heating, lighting, as rigorously as possible. regarding our regular outgoings e bills. The Vicar agreed to investigate further a the long-running problem with reported (over-)heating of some rooms in the Parish Centre.

In view of all the financial circumstances, and the projected deficit, the Committee **agreed** to review some of the planned spending projects. It was agreed that the plans to appoint a Pioneer Worker should be put on hold for the time being.

22/76 PARISH CONTRIBUTION TO DIOCESE

The PCC considered the level of contribution to be made to the Diocese in 2023 in the light of information provided by the Diocese and the parish's financial position. Increases of 0%, 5% and 10% (i.e. compared to last year's contribution) were discussed.

The PCC **agreed** to make a 7.5% increase, with the proviso that this might be increased to 10% if the Parish's position at the end of the financial year was better than predicted.

22/77 **SOUND SYSTEM**

Ms Howard presented two quotations for improvements to the church sound system, costed at £27K and £32K. The objective was to provide a high-quality future-proof solution which would not only fix the current perceived problem with hearing the spoken word in church, but would also improve the sound coming from the choir and worship band, and provide future possibilities for visiting musicians/concerts.

After detailed discussion, the PCC **agreed** to approve the proposal of the 'NoiseBoys' (currently £27k) subject to clarification on training costs, orientation of microphones and a revision of the cost of the maintenance contract. The PCC agreed to consider and approve the revised terms by email.

22/78 **PLACE OF PEACE**

Ms Howard summarized comments received during the consultation period.

Five emails/messages supportive of the proposals had been received. Similarly, five quite detailed emails criticizing the proposals had been received. There were a number of common points raised.

The main area of concern was the proposed work in the existing memorial garden. The concerns were two-fold. Firstly, an earlier investigation had revealed that we have no accurate records of ashes interred or scattered in the area covered by the current designs (which is designated to be paved over). Secondly, the proposed area of development represents the most substantial remaining part of the graveyard where ashes may yet be interred or scattered. The proposed development could be seen as a change of use and moreover might require a faculty which might not be granted

Some, lesser, concerns were raised about the second (brookside) development, namely (i) that the proposed development would be more difficult than anticipated given that the area was the old entrance drive to the church and a layer of broken rubble and concrete was just below the surface (ii) a main sewer pipe runs directly under the area.

Finally, general concerns had been expressed about the likelihood of vandalism and the need to maintain the two areas.

It was agreed that the concerns needed to be addressed. The Vicar undertook: (i) to get in touch with Mr Barnacle to see if a proper survey of ashes interments could be done in the Memorial Garden; (ii) to obtain from the Council details about the precise route/depth of the sewer pipe and to see if they had any concerns about the proposed development; (iii) to discuss a possible redesign of the memorial development which did not involve paving it over.

22/79 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the PCC held on 7 June and 7 July 2022 were taken as read and approved.

22/80 STANDING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee held on 8 September 2022 were received.

22/81 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The PCC agreed that Ms Howard should make enquiries about cost of obtaining and installing a defibrillator in the church,

22/82 SUB-GROUPS

It was noted that the Social Committee would have another meeting on 24th October to discuss further the proposal for a social event in the church on 17th December, open to the public, involving food, drinks and secular music provided by our band.

22/83 SAFEGUARDING

It was noted that a new safeguarding officer had not been identified. In these circumstances the role would default to the Vicar. This was not desirable in the longer term.

At a previous meeting, it had been suggested that all members of the PCC required to have a DBS check This was not strictly the case, but certainly anyone working with children in the church ought to have one, e.g. the leader(s) of the youth club.

The churchwardens still need to do the higher level of online safeguarding training. They agreed to rectify this as soon as possible.

22/84 FUTURE BUSINESS

No specific items were identified.

22/85 FUTURE MEETINGS

The PCC Awayday was scheduled for Saturday 8th October, but the likely absence of some members was noted.

The next meeting of the PCC was scheduled for Tuesday 25 October.

The meeting closed with Grace.

Chairman