

St Mary's Church, Hadlow

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the PCC Meeting held on Tuesday 20 March 2018

1. OPENING PRAYER The meeting began with the first part of Compline.

Present: Rev'd Paul White [Rev'd Paul]; Barbara Smith [BS]; Francis Griffiths [FG]; Val Newell [VN]; Kelly Parsons [KP]; David Gater [DG]; Judy Gater [JG]; Jenny Hopkins [JH]; Eleanor Livett [EL]; Katerina Nixon [KN]; Rachel Packham [RP]; Michael Payne [MP]; Annie Young [AY].

(Minutes: Judy Gater)

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Rev'd Nicola Harvey; Martin Massy; Kirsty Finch; Mark Totty; Sharon Vanns;

3. Approval of Minutes of PCC meeting held on 15 January and the Standing Committee Meeting on 19 February 2018

The January minutes had already been approved by email but were formally approved and signed. The Standing Committee minutes were also approved and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

All matters arising were already on the agenda.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT (DG)

DG began by reminding the PCC that as charity trustees they are responsible for proper stewardship of funds with the aim of supporting the church building and mission. It is by PCC decisions that all the expenditure is governed. Inevitably most expenditure is routine, such as the Parish Offer and utility bills.

DG was able to report that the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the PCC was now complete and had been cleared by our Independent Examiner, David Stephens. Producing the report had meant hours and hours of work by our bookkeeper, Alan Knowles. The PCC wished to record a vote of thanks to Alan for all his work. He would be stepping down from his bookkeeping role

after the APCM and Duncan Murray would be taking over. Duncan had already made a start, with Alan, on the 2018 figures.

Turning to the report of the state of the church accounts at the end of 2017, DG pointed out that there was again a situation of incoming payments of about £100,000 and outgoing resources of £100,000. We had ended the year with a small surplus of £4,672, which when added to the fund balance at the start of the year gave a total of £14,594. This latter figure included designated funds for youth work and fabric improvements so our genuinely unrestricted reserves were rather less, at about £7,000. The recommended level of our reserves was £30,000 to £50,000, so it remained necessary, as agreed in November 2017, to implement ways of building up our reserves to this level.

St Mary's currently paid £60,000 per year in the Parish Offer and was one of the more generous parishes in the Diocese and nationally. It would theoretically be possible to reduce our Parish Offer in order to build up our reserves, and there was some discussion of this point. Reduction of Parish Offer was seen as undesirable and only to be considered if there were no other options. We are one of the more fortunate parishes in the Diocese and therefore our financial contribution to the Diocese should reflect this as long as possible.

The accounts having been cleared by our Independent Examiner and studied by the PCC, DG proposed that they be adopted. RP seconded and all present then agreed with the proposal. Three copies were signed by Rev'd Paul and DG.

DG referred to the fact that by virtue of the recent loss of certain members of the congregation it was clear that the level of voluntary giving would decrease by about £6,000 if no action was taken to remedy this. He had made an appeal to the congregation to consider increasing their monthly giving, where possible, to cover this shortfall. The initial response had been encouraging.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATION (KP)

- The Beacon service was going well and has very sociable elements and a 'youth club' feeling. It would take place regularly on the third Sunday of the month. The team were grateful for help from Rev'd Nicky, and she was also involved with Messy Church. The first of these would be on Palm

Sunday, and the plan was to have four a year, including some at Golden Green.

- The Sunday morning clubs during the 10 o'clock service would continue in term time.
- The services could be financed from the Young People's Fund.

FABRIC (BS)

- The minutes of the February meeting had been circulated.
- The display unit for the back of the church was nearly finished and the plan was to unveil it at Pentecost. The existing notice board would be used in the children's corner.
- The lovely old Jacobean altar table had been valued. Because of extensive additions and alterations it was not valuable, but it was in constant use in the occasional vestry and could be used as a nave altar occasionally.
- The understairs area in the occasional vestry was underused and it was hoped to tidy it up and use it as much needed storage space.
- Work was continuing on the repair and redecoration plan.
- There had been some improvements to the sound system and we had had two quotes from audio engineers. The replacement of the radio microphones could be done first, as there had been an offer from someone in the congregation to pay for the work. The cost for a full replacement of the sound system would be around £7,000.

FUNDRAISING/OUTREACH

There was a full programme in place. Some more fundraising for the Kibakwe link was also being planned by Sue Mason and the Junior Singers.

WORLD MISSION (BS)

The Lent lunches had been well attended and the money raised would go our local food bank, in Paddock Wood.

7. MISSION ACTION PLAN

Rev'd Paul outlined the plan. Parishes are being asked to look at MISSION, ie what they are doing already and then to set OBJECTIVES to further that mission.

It will be useful as a way to formalise what we are already doing and to recognise it, so should be of great benefit to the parish.

8. SAFEGUARDING COURSES

Safeguarding was an important issue in the Church of England, and the level of training was being raised. New training programmes are being rolled out for choir members, helpers in youth groups etc.

Awareness programmes were labelled C0, C1, C2 and so on. The first two levels could be done individually online. Rev'd Paul had negotiated with the Archdeacon and it was now possible for him to train a group of people together. It was suggested that we offer two such sessions after Easter at times to suit people who are working during the day.

No deadline had been set, but we would aim to comply by the end of this calendar year. It was emphasised that although some members of our congregation had already undertaken safeguarding training through their jobs, for work at St Mary's it would have to be the C of E course.

9. DATA PROTECTION

New regulations were coming in May. We would need to do an audit of who holds data such as email addresses and telephone numbers. Consideration would be given to what it was used for and consent from individuals would be sought.

10. POLICY FOR LETTING CHURCH TO OUTSIDE BODIES

This item would be discussed at the next meeting.

11. APCM DETAILS (JG)

- Electoral Roll revision was going well, the closing date being 1st April
- Nomination forms for elections of Churchwardens and two PCC members would be available after Easter

- The APCM booklet was being efficiently edited by Linda Yabsley and was nearly complete. Copies had been emailed to the PCC for their comments. After completion, the booklet would be available on the church website and copies would be made for those in the congregation who were unable to access it online.
- On the day of the APCM there would be a non-Eucharistic service so it should be possible to start the meeting at 11.30. The layout would be a semicircle, as last year. The coffee preceding the meeting would be accompanied by doughnuts and KP volunteered to order and collect these. There would be opportunities for questions at each stage of the meeting.

12 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

- St Mary's had been approached about the 2018 Heritage Open Days, which were planned for 6–9 and 13–16 September. We had participated in previous years, but attendance had been affected since the Castle Tower had been closed to visitors.
- The Kent Ride and Stride event would be on 8th September and the church would be open that day anyway, so it was decided to restrict our Open Day to the 8th and provide tea and cakes for that.

13. SUNDAY FUNDAY

The event in the summer of 2017 had been a great success and enjoyed by all who participated. St Mary's had been approached about the possibility of another Sunday Funday in 2019, with a date of 14th July. The PCC was keen to be involved again and it would be a good opportunity to publicise our church.

14. TONBRIDGE RAMBLE

Tonbridge Ramble would be on Sunday 23 September between 10am and 2pm. Tonbridge Area Churches Together (TACT) wished to be involved and had suggested that local churches could join in, meeting on Castle Lawn at about 1.30pm. After some discussion it was decided that we should agree to join in the event and await further details.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

- JG mentioned a letter from the Diocesan Finance Director about Stewardship materials which the Diocese was making available. This might be useful at a future date.
- JG had received a letter from Geoff Marsh. He had been gradually improving conditions in the Churchyard but was withdrawing from the task. He had made some helpful observations for future reference; these were discussed by the PCC and it was resolved that JG should write to Geoff to thank him and to let him know that we were grateful for all that he had achieved.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The date for Holiday at Home had been changed to 20/21 August

JH was now the church's representative for the Women's World Day of Prayer

The dates of 2018 meetings were discussed and fixed as

APCM 29 APRIL followed by short meeting of PCC

FULL PCC MONDAY 21 MAY

STANDING COMMITTEE MONDAY 18 JUNE

FULL PCC MONDAY 16 JULY

FULL PCC MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

STANDING COMMITTEE MONDAY 15 OCTOBER

FULL PCC MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER

PCC COMMISSIONING WOULD BE SUNDAY 6TH MAY