

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, LINTON
MINUTES OF PCC MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON THURSDAY 9TH JULY 2020

PRESENT

The Revd. Canon Dr Maggie Guite (Chair), Mrs J Burge, Miss C Ellis, Mrs S Ellis (Treasurer), Mrs H Evans (Churchwarden), Mrs J George, Mr A Gore, Dr C Morse, Mrs S Mudge (Secretary), Mrs J Nightingale, Mr J Organ, Dr D Parry-Smith, Mrs G Powell, Mr D Watts (Churchwarden) and Revd. M Wilcockson.

Mrs C Watts (Safeguarding Officer) was present until the end of item 6.

1. OPENING PRAYER

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs C Lockstone and Mr R Tonry.

3. MINUTES OF 12TH MARCH 2020

The minutes of 12th March 2020 were approved.

4. IMPACT OF COVID-19

4.1. SUMMARY

Church services were stopped before 18th March. The church building was closed to everyone by Sunday 22nd March when general lockdown restrictions were imposed. The Standing Committee held two meetings by Zoom. The first was on 11th May in place of the scheduled PCC meeting, to pick up any necessary business. The second was on 9th June to discuss the possible re-opening of the church for private prayer only, with social distancing and appropriate cleaning procedures. Minutes were circulated to all PCC members. Virtual services across the Team since mid-March have been a combination of YouTube videos, Zoom, printed services both on the website and hard copies which were distributed weekly for those not able to access online material. Members of the clergy and Ministry Team have worked really hard to keep in touch pastorally and to provide a variety of on-going worship.

4.2. STEWARDS IN CHURCH

The Standing committee on 9th June decided that the church would be open between 9-11 and 2-4 on weekdays, 10-12 on Saturdays and 2-4 on Sundays. A steward would be present to welcome people, check sanitiser was used upon entry and exit, record names and contact numbers in case 'Track and Trace' was needed and to clean any hard surfaces touched by people coming in for prayer and reflection. The numbers of people coming into church has been lower than expected – from 0 to 3 per session. Maggie Guite said that she was grateful to those who had volunteered to steward and to Jo George who had given the box to stewards each session, containing the church keys, instructions and Goodbox for donations. Maggie asked whether we should continue with the steward system.

Andrew Gore commented that he had reviewed church opening arrangements around the Deanery. Two thirds of churches were open as usual without anyone in attendance and a third were open for limited hours with stewards there. PCC members thought it important to provide a welcome and it was agreed to continue with the steward system for the time being. Jo offered to produce the rota each week and relieve Maggie of that task. The names and contact numbers collected should continue to be sent to Maggie, as in the instructions for stewards. The emails will be deleted after 21 days to comply with GDPR.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1. FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

Ref 5.2 - Margaret Cox, Secretary of The Friends of St Mary's, had written to Sue Mudge and PCC members suggesting a meeting to consider how to formalise requests for funding from the Friends. No progress had been made due to lockdown. Chris Morse, now well again and back as Chair of The Friends, offered to write a procedure for both parties to adopt.

6. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Cathy Watts reminded PCC members that they should have done the online training of C0 and C1 and then sent certificates to her. Some were still outstanding.

Cathy had circulated an extensive document from the Church of England highlighting possible safeguarding issues around social media use, (e.g. number of different Facebook pages for the church, operated by whom?) and the role of the PCC. Cathy suggested that forming a working group would be helpful to collectively understand the document and compile the answers for St Mary's. It was suggested that the group would consist of Cathy, Maggie, John and/or Sarah Thorne and Charlotte Ellis. The group was asked to produce a remit for PCC approval together with any recommendations.

7. INFANT SCHOOL REPORT

A report from Nicola Collard, Chair of Governors, had been circulated. It described some of the ways in which the staff and children have adapted to the new guidance. The school remained open during lockdown for a small number of key workers' children. More children were able to return after half term and there are currently 4 'bubbles', with an average of 48 children split between them. Governor meetings have been via Zoom. Nicola has maintained regular contact with Kelly Harries, headteacher. Staff appear to have responded well to the changes required and plans are developing for September. Please keep everyone in your prayers as they adapt to different ways of teaching and learning.

8. RECTOR'S REPORT

Churches were allowed to offer socially distanced services from last Sunday, 5th July. No books or paper service sheets are permitted, nor any singing. Maggie had discussed the options with clergy colleagues and the Standing committee. An 8am service was held in Linton, with communion in one kind only. The expected numbers could be accommodated and 13 attended. Most of the regular people know the words of the liturgy without needing to have books. The 10am service in Linton remained virtual, using Zoom. Ian Fisher opted to hold a service in Bartlow, open to the Camps and Horseheath people too.

David Watts has measured and marked out chair positions at 1m and 2m spacing in St Mary's, conducted a risk assessment for future services and has checked and tested the audio-visual equipment (all in good order). It will be difficult to seat more than 30 in the nave at 1m spacing and people will be required to wear face masks. The side aisles and chancel could be used but people sitting there will not be able to see the words for the service on the screen.

The 10am service on 12th July will be a simple one outdoors as the weather forecast is good. Maggie said that she is keen to gauge who is willing to come to an indoor service and is aware that many people may be unwilling or unable to do so, due to continued shielding. Future digital worship will be discussed by the Ministry Team and will be influenced by the findings of the survey, conducted by David Parry-Smith. Maggie hopes to stream the outdoor service on Facebook Live.

Maggie is considering using a platform called Faith Online which can be customised to record St Mary's sermon, prayers etc. People can access it via a local phone number. The first month's trial is free and then there is a monthly cost of £16 to the church. Maggie is immensely grateful to Anne Parry-Smith for her work producing paper copies of services in an effort to keep everyone involved, including those with limited or no digital access. Maggie can see the potential of digital options for the future.

David Parry-Smith spoke about the surveys. He is still waiting for the paper copies to be returned but has about 50 replies so far, across the Team. There appears to be a majority of people who will be confident to return to actual services. A question was raised about whether face masks will be necessary for services in the church. Interpretation of the guidance varies, but having seats at 1m spacing to accommodate more people would then require additional protection in the form of masks. Wearing a mask protects other people rather than being for the benefit of the user and therefore it shows consideration and respect for others.

9. MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

Several points have been included in the Rector's report above. A cost would be incurred if YouTube videos continue to be made. Maggie said that Nicola Collard had made several short videos, both for use in the Infant School and able to be sent to children not at school. The variation of recent ways to contact people shows the need for a communications officer to identify needs and control digital output. This was an item in the Mission Action Plan, but not yet implemented. Maggie appealed for people to think about who to ask; someone to guide and teach other people about best practice.

Minutes from the Ministry Team meetings on 20th May and 18th June were circulated following the PCC meeting.

10. FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Minutes from the committee meetings on 30th April and 2nd July had been circulated along with the balance sheet and budget summary for the six months to the end of June 2020 and also a draft Lettings Policy.

10.1. OVERVIEW OF ACCOUNTS

Sue Ellis had produced projected figures based on the income and expenditure over the last three months during lockdown when there had been no active services or worship and minimal fundraising. Income is below budget, in spite of some positive changes from individuals following David Watt's presentation on Giving at the last service in March. Fixed expenditure is expected to remain at £8,216 each month. The current lower income each month will result in a loss of about £18,000 by end of December. The PCC were advised that one third of the savings account (£6,000) would need to be transferred into the current account in September to pay the bills and maintain a credit balance. Sue concluded that considering the current situation for many households, the church was fortunate to have some reserves and that the situation could have been worse.

Andrew Gore said that he had contacted Deanery Lay-Chairs to assess how other churches were coping. Most expected to pay their parish share. The Diocese was forecasting a loss of £800,000 as investments had been badly affected. Andrew suggested that we could send a letter of appeal to every household in Linton. This was referred back to the F&S committee to consider. It was noted that given that we do have some reserves, it could be seen as insensitive when many households may yet be seeing loss of jobs and income.

10.2. CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Maggie Guite and David Watts had conducted an annual review for Anne, the Administrator. Since the start of the year, Anne has consistently worked more than the contracted 10 hours per week. The budget was set for 12.5 hours but Anne chose to continue to be paid for 10 hours. A proposal had been made by the F&S committee that Anne be paid the current budget surplus of £650 as remuneration of extra hours worked and recognition of her contribution each week, preparing service material and helping the smooth running of the church and secondly that the contract hours be increased to 13 per week (agreed by Anne). This was proposed by Sue Ellis, seconded by Gill Powell and agreed, with one abstention from David Parry-Smith who had declared a conflict of interest.

10.3. LETTINGS POLICY

A Lettings Policy was required for the church and pavilion, now that the pavilion could be used for regular lettings. It was drafted by Sue Mudge, based on material supplied by Cathy Watts and had been extensively discussed by the F&S committee. The document is in three parts; a series of policy statements, a booking form and a set of terms and conditions. The policy is for Anne Parry-Smith and Hilary Angetter who are likely to be approached by individuals or groups wishing to hire the church and / or the pavilion, so that consistent decisions may be taken over suitability of a letting. The booking form and terms and conditions would be sent to a hirer for them to complete and agree the terms of hire. There was mixed feelings as to whether commercial lettings in the pavilion should take precedence over church related activities such as funeral wakes. Securing regular lettings would help the financial situation. It was proposed and agreed that the PCC resolves to change the previous stance over lettings and to allow regular bookings to take place. Any further comments about the lettings documents should be sent to Sue Mudge within a week so that final revisions may be made.

11. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TEAM REPORT

11.1. GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR FUTURE INITIATIVES

A sub-group was set up following previous discussions at the March PCC meeting and F&S committee; comprising Maggie Guite, Sarah Thorne, Suzanne Dawkins, Cathy Watts and Sue Mudge. The group had produced a Guiding Document which had been circulated to PCC members and other members of the Children and Families Team. The document refers back to the Mission Action Plan and contains sections with the following headings: background, context, vision, strategy. Maggie Guite thanked Sarah Thorne for her ministry and leadership thus far and for writing the Village Profile document which shows that areas of family poverty exist within a reasonably prosperous Linton.

Maggie had consulted Debbie Hill, Diocesan Children and Families Adviser, about the proposals and the possibility of applying for funding from the Diocesan Growth Fund. Debbie's response was as follows:

Maybe a helpful way to look at it is a direction of travel. Is the whole church/PCC committed to developing a ministry to children and families? How might that look? It is obviously not just dependent on Sarah and your leadership. What can the church do now to show its commitment and what does it plan to do to move towards a greater commitment in, say, the next 5 years? What 'structural' changes will need to occur? What will success look like?

I think it is also helpful for the church to consider what would happen if Sarah suddenly couldn't perform her current role - how much work with C&F work would carry on? What would church then look like to the local community? Is her role predominantly dealing with those already part of the church (ie: formational) or more outward facing (missional?)

Regarding Growth Fund, I have no recent information on when and if funds will be made available (I have asked). The way funding was moving in principle before lockdown (I think it was just about to open again in the Spring) was only towards those projects that were focused on demonstrating growth-developing teams, growing a ministry rather than simply funding a leader (always the original intention but maybe not always realised).

Debbie's comments provide a useful basis for posing questions for St Mary's.
What does the church want to do for children and families in the next 5 years?
Is there support from the PCC for developing this work?
Can we see a way to finding £8,000 in the hope of attracting match-funding?

Gill Powell proposed that PCC members should reflect on future initiatives and in the meantime, let Sarah know that we recognise and appreciate her outward looking work and that we are looking for ways in which a leadership role may be developed and funded.
David Watts suggested that the sub-group be commissioned to explore potential sources of funding and to organise an imaginative presentation to inform and enthuse the congregation, taking into account the constraints of post-lockdown services.

11.2. HOLIDAY CLUB

Social distancing rules make it impossible to run a holiday club in the same way as last year. Sarah Thorne and Cathy Watts have devised plans for a low cost virtual holiday club for families to do from home. It will include a Bible story with games, craft, cooking, colouring and a village trail for each week. Photocopied sheets and craft materials will be available for families who register an interest. Sarah requested approval from the PCC to proceed with advertising via Facebook, church website etc and to access £242 left in funds from last year. Gill Powell proposed that approval be given; seconded Helene Evans and unanimously agreed – with thanks to Sarah and Cathy.

12. EVENTS REPORT

12.1. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

A brief report had been circulated. A number of events had been cancelled and replaced by some virtual activities, e.g a bake-off with adult and junior entries had been organised by Charlotte Ellis. Plans were in place for a virtual quiz and a garden show. Maggie Guite said that she was thankful that the committee was still working on events in such challenging times.

12.2. CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

Maggie announced that Pam Richardson had resigned from chairing the committee, due to commencing a new job. Pam has been the Chair since the Events Committee was formed in 2015. Sue Mudge was asked to write a letter of thanks to Pam. The terms of reference state that the appointment of a Chair is the responsibility of the PCC. David Parry-Smith proposed Charlotte Ellis; seconded by Gill Powell and agreed by everyone. Charlotte was thanked for accepting the role, in spite of being given no time to consider it.

13. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

A report had been circulated. The provisional date for the postponed spring fair is 10th October.

14. FABRIC REPORT

A report from Richard Tonry and Andrew Gore had been circulated.

- a. Item 1 - QI works and Item 3 - Norwich Architectural Lighting (NAL) visit: Andrew suggested that he and Richard should talk to Chris Morse, using the new process for

- requesting commitment from The Friends of St Mary's (see 5.1 above). If there was agreement to fund the NAL visit, it could be organised and the Standing committee be informed of the cost. David Watts asked that he be included in any NAL discussions.
- b. Item 5 - Pavilion ramp. A previous conversation with Crofton Engineering indicated that the replacement cost would be more than £10,000. Crofton require detailed drawings for their work which would be an additional cost. In view of the current financial position, it was agreed to defer contacting Crofton at this stage and to assess what interim repairs may be possible.
 - c. Item 7 - Noticeboard. Andrew had sent a letter to inform the two neighbours of the PCC plan to compromise by lowering the board and moving it further back. This would be done when the churchyard paths are resurfaced in August. Thanks are due to the person who has offered to fund the additional work caused by moving the board.
 - d. Item 8 - Pot hole in roadway near disabled parking area. PCC members authorised Andrew to ask the tarmac workers to fill this, when on site doing the paths.

15. **PROGRESS OF IMPROVEMENTS TO CHURCH INTERIOR**

Most initiatives ceased during lockdown.

David Watts reported that the DAC has granted permission to proceed with the **internet installation**.

David Parry-Smith said that some **organ surveys** had been received. Reports have been sent to Chris Morse and Hugh Paton (Friends of St Mary's committee members). An appropriate group should be instigated to discuss the implications.

David Parry-Smith commented that extra open space had been created at the back of church by moving the pews to facilitate social distancing. It would enable a welcome area to be ready when the church is available for greater use. This was referred to **Helene Evans and the De-cluttering group** to consider options.

The provenance of the pews is still to be investigated.

16. **AOB**

Jo George had researched rechargeable lightweight hoovers. Her preferred model was sold out. The cost was around £150. The PCC agreed a sum of up to £200 for Jo to buy a suitable model.

The meeting closed in prayer at 21.30

Date of future meetings: Monday 14th September, Monday 9th November, Thursday 14th January 2021, Thursday 11th March.

It is hoped that by 14th September, the PCC will be in a position to set a date for the postponed APCM. Sue Mudge was asked to prepare the report.