

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, LINTON
MINUTES OF PCC MEETING HELD BY ZOOM
ON THURSDAY 14TH JANUARY 2021

PRESENT

Dr D Parry-Smith (Chair), The Revd. Canon Dr Maggie Guite, Mrs J Burge, Miss C Ellis, Mrs S Ellis (Treasurer), Mrs H Evans (Churchwarden), Mrs J George, Mr A Gore, Dr J Hall, Mrs S Mudge (Secretary), Mrs J Nightingale, Mrs G Powell, Mrs P Schofield, Mrs S Thorne (LLM), Mr R Tonry, Mr D Watts (Churchwarden), Revd. M Wilcockson and Mr M Younger.

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

1. OPENING PRAYER

After the prayer, David Parry-Smith asked each participant to take a few moments to rank their current stress levels between 1 (no stress at all) to 10 (extremely stressed), identify a good thing from the day and mention any challenging aspects in their lives where prayer would be appreciated. The aim was to allow people to share personal concerns and in doing so, empathise with each other and create a calm focused atmosphere for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

3. IMPACT OF COVID-19

Agenda order was adjusted to take this item first.

3.1. THIRD LOCKDOWN IMPOSED

The government had altered the tier system the previous week and ordered a 3rd national lockdown. Each lockdown had different rules. Schools were closed, other than for key workers' children and vulnerable children. Nursery provision could still operate and churches were allowed to remain open for communal worship. Non-essential shops had to close and people generally were asked to stay at home and work from home if possible.

3.2. ONLINE SERVICES

A letter from the Bishop of Huntingdon had been circulated, which strongly recommended moving to online services in order to minimise the risk of spreading the new more-easily transmissible strain of the virus and to encourage people to reduce the need to leave their homes. Services in Linton church had been cancelled the previous Sunday. Maggie Guite had held a ministerial team meeting on 14th January so that the team could reach a decision. There are legal requirements to hold public worship within the Church of England and therefore parishes and benefices which suspend actual services are required to inform the Bishop's office using a recommended form of words. Maggie has written to the team PCC members to ask for agreement. It is appropriate that this PCC should vote on the following motion; proposed by Maggie Guite, seconded by David Parry-Smith.

Maggie Guite, Rector, and the parochial church council of St Mary the Virgin, Linton acting jointly authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14, until the next PCC meeting on 11th March. This was approved with 17 votes for and 1 against the motion.

3.3. UNLOCKING / LOCKING THE CHURCH

The church can still remain open for private prayer and Anne Parry-Smith had suggested that people might volunteer to unlock and lock the church to save the burden falling upon Nanette Blackmore and Maggie. Andrew Gore, Judy Nightingale, David Parry-Smith, Patricia Schofield and Michael Wilcockson volunteered to cover Monday to Friday

respectively, 9.45 – 3.00. Maggie said that the church could be left open following the Facebook live service on Sunday mornings. **Sue Mudge** was asked to pass this information to Anne so that Anne could liaise with Nanette and email people to confirm what was required.

David Watts said that he would review and update the church risk assessment to comply with the revised regimen.

4. **MINUTES OF 9TH NOVEMBER 2020**

The minutes of 9th November 2020 were approved.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

5.1. **CHURCH ZOOM ACCOUNT**

At the end of November, the Standing Committee had approved expenditure of about £470 to set up a church registered Zoom account. Considerable delay had been experienced due to a query over charitable status (different names registered) and the method of payment. Sue Ellis said that the account had finally been set up with 7 hosts at a revised cost of £560 including VAT. A discount was gained by buying through Charity Digital website. Everyone approved of this action. The hosts are Sue Ellis, Maggie Guite, Michael Wilcockson, David Parry-Smith, David Watts and John Thorne. It was agreed that Molly Warrington should be the 7th host. This group of people should be able to cover all church activities and meetings on behalf of the various other leaders.

Maggie said that there would be a Facebook live service from the church as well as a Zoom service each Sunday for the next few weeks. John Thorne had already offered to host the Zoom service for the next Sunday.

6. **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

Cathy Watts reminded members of the main points in her last report which was circulated after the meeting. The recommendations from the **Digital working group** were:

- to have a named person for social media accounts;
- to have church email addresses for PCC members for security and accountability;
- to have a paid Zoom account for all church meetings (done);
- the need to update the website with information about GDPR, digital safeguarding etc (action by social media group);
- to set up a G Suite for accessing important church documents (follows on from arranging church email addresses);
- to buy a mobile phone for Maggie – agreed to ignore as she doesn't use one for parish work.

There were no questions or dissension about the above points.

The **Safeguarding Dashboard Action Plan** (level 1) aims to demonstrate that the church has appropriate procedures in place to deal with any allegations. Some training still has to be undertaken before this can be approved. Cathy, Maggie and Anne Parry-Smith have training arranged. Some PCC members are still to do C0 and C1 online modules. This training is required in order for the PCC to be fully compliant. Cathy is organising DBS checks for eight helpers for the TLG Make Lunch project. Maggie and Cathy are in the process of reviewing and writing job descriptions for volunteers in other areas of church activity where people may be in contact with vulnerable persons or children.

7. **FABRIC REPORT**

The committee had not met since the last PCC meeting. Richard Tonry had circulated a report to provide updates on the various ongoing items.

- It was noted that Chris Morse had resigned from the committee for medical reasons.

- In addition to the report, the annual **service of the roof alarm** had taken place the previous day. Extra fobs had been requested, as agreed would be sensible last year.
- Michael Younger queried **disposal of pews** and the expected timeframe. Richard said that it would need a Faculty and DAC approval. He reminded the PCC that we had been advised by Geoffrey Hunter to co-ordinate proposals rather than submitting several smaller ones at separate times. It was suggested that the chart showing church improvements, produced by David Watts (v5 from March 2020), should be sent to the three new PCC members to demonstrate the overall plans.
- The installation of the **telephone line** was awaiting DAC approval. It will then require input from the Diocesan Architect and Archaeologist.
- David Parry-Smith said that he expected to recommend a phased approach with the organ builders, in view of the significant cost. The work approved in March 2020 on the **organ swell bellows** has started, taking advantage of lockdown as it means that the organ will be out of action for a few weeks.

8. MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

There has been no meeting since 4th November, which was prior to the previous PCC meeting. Maggie Guite commented that she wished to include those people leading house groups in the ministry team. Some roles of ALMs have expired timewise but the person is continuing their ministry in a different way. David Watts offered to update the terms of reference to reflect this - **Action DW**.

9. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TEAM REPORT

The team had not met recently but a report had been circulated from Sarah Thorne to update PCC members.

- The Advent Windows trail had been popular and some lovely window displays were created around the village.
- ‘Nativity in a bag’ was delivered to 29 families and also to each class at the Infant School. The virtual Crib service / Christingle was posted on YouTube and had 53 views.
- The Make Lunch project was launched on 15th November at a team Zoom service and distribution of a leaflet appealing for funds to all on the electoral roll resulted in donations of £1,003 and ongoing promises of £45 per month. Sponsorship of Sarah’s personal ‘Miss Lunch to Make Lunch’ effort created another £1,055. The application to the Parish Council for £2,177 was successful and will be available in April. The core leadership team for Make Lunch have set up their training schedule.
- Eleven families were supported with a food hamper during the first week of the Christmas holidays in conjunction with the Linton Community Help Team. It is expected that similar help will be needed at February half term.

10. INFANT SCHOOL REPORT

A report from Nicola Collard, Chair of Governors, had been circulated. Nicola recorded the intensely difficult first week of term. Children returned to school on Monday 4th January (some other schools had a training day then); only for the government to announce that schools would close again the next day. Vulnerable children and key workers’ children are allowed to continue in school and teachers are expected to provide online learning as well. Nicola was in frequent contact with Kelly Harries, Headteacher and a full Governing Body meeting was convened for the Thursday evening of the first week in January. Governors are very conscious of the anxiety and stress levels of the staff. Kelly presents an assembly by Zoom on Mondays, focusing on one of the school values and Nicola presents an afternoon assembly on Fridays, using Zoom to reach as many children as possible.

PCC members were keen to show their support for the staff who appear to be working under very difficult circumstances and trying to keep the children and their own families safe and well. There are around 28 members of staff including the caretaker, kitchen and admin staff. It was agreed that a selection of biscuits, coffee, tea etc. should be given as a token of appreciation. David Watts offered to consult with Jacqui Burge, Michael Younger and Cathy Watts (governors) and was authorised to spend up to £50 - **action David W.**

11. APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNOR

A vacancy had arisen for a PCC appointed governor following the resignation of Hilary Angetter. Nicola had put a notice in the pewsheet inviting anyone interested to speak to her about what is involved in the role of a governor. Michael Wilcockson had volunteered. Michael was proposed by Sue Mudge, seconded by Gill Powell and elected unanimously. Michael has filled in the application form and Sue Mudge will complete the recommendation section and submit the form to the DBE. Michael Younger suggested that Sue should inform Emma, clerk to the governors, and ask that Michael be invited to meetings as an observer, as the official appointment can take a while to be ratified.

12. EVENTS REPORT

Charlotte Ellis had circulated a brief report detailing the virtual events and the paper quiz which took place across Christmas time. Charlotte announced that the sum of £422.25 had been raised for church funds from these activities.

13. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

David Parry-Smith had circulated a report of items from the November Deanery Synod, including mention of the 'Living in Love and Faith' report - see Rector's report below. Andrew Gore added that the Diocese was keen to progress the Deanery Planning exercise, looking at clergy provision, but most deaneries have said that it is not practical to do so until after Covid restrictions are lifted.

14. RECTOR'S REPORT

Maggie Guite is finding it helpful that the ministerial team is doing more planning together; as in plans for a Team Facebook Page, and for a joint Lent Course of sermons. She was very grateful to everyone who helped to run things throughout December; creating booking systems for services etc. David P-S thanked Maggie, Malcolm and Michael for the Christmas services and also Molly Warrington and Gill Powell who, at short notice, put together a Zoom service for Christmas morning.

Maggie said that parishes are encouraged to study the 'Living in Love and Faith' report about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage resources, perhaps during Lent. Maggie feels that it would be more effective to do in face to face groups later, not by Zoom. She proposes to offer Lent sessions on understanding the Bible.

(The Deanery Synod business summary was forwarded by Sue M – email 17.01.21. It contained a link to Pastoral Principles, the precursor to the Living in Love and Faith report to explain the background and context.)

15. REVIEW OF MISSION ACTION PLAN

The previous review was in May 2019 and it would normally have been reviewed last May but that meeting was replaced by a Standing Committee meeting in the first lockdown period. The timeline summary update for 2019 - 2020 was circulated and the text of the MAP can be found on the church website - select About Us, then Mission and Vision.

David Parry-Smith explained that items in brackets had not yet happened. Items in italics were recent initiatives in the last 18 months.

Obj 1: To train people in discernment of skills, gifts and ministry

- No progress - discernment training deferred.

Obj 2: To declutter the church building and improve the music area

- Music stands were designed, trialled, commissioned and are in use.
- Other aspects fall within the improvements to the church interior which are under consideration and have been separate PCC agenda items or are in fabric reports.

Obj 3: To facilitate spiritual growth

- Several new initiatives have become regular events; e.g. monthly prayer meeting, Advent Promise, Passiontide Promise, regular Morning Prayer Podcasts, monthly Space for the Spirit adapted for Zoom.
- Ecumenical liaison with other churches – less progress and open to development.

Obj 4: To raise the profile of justice, peace and the integrity of creation

- Peace garden is well established, grateful to volunteers for maintenance, sad to see evidence of petty vandalism.
- Social Justice group not yet operative, lack of leadership, thus membership of social justice groups has not happened.

Obj 5: To improve communication (within congregations and across wider community)

- No progress on setting up communications team and activities directory.
- Developed a church identity and logo now used on range of church material.
- Website designed, installed, regularly updated and now essential to weekly activities in all church life. Ongoing maintenance.
- Increased use of social media across all services and activities.
- New noticeboard in churchyard and continue to review other boards in church.
- Links across 5 parishes continue to be developed.

Obj 6: To develop ministries with children, young people and families

- Godly play roll-out paused.
- Sarah Thorne trained for 2 years, then was licensed as Children and Families minister Oct 2020.
- Several new initiatives especially post-lockdown – **Sarah to itemise and email David P-S** to update plan.
- Continued financial support for Beacon Youth Trust.
- Monthly St Mary's Youth Group (SMYG), ages 9-13, run by Maggie and Youthinc worker, then Michael Wilcockson plus input from Lizzie Bottrill (Beacon Trust).

Obj 7: To enhance hospitality

- Organised annual team socials pre 2020.
- David W worked with sidespeople to improve welcome for services. Have not restarted welcome lunches.
- Improvements made to north porch, photo board for ministry team and PCC.
- Initial conversations about turning boiler cupboard into kitchenette, stalled on funding issues.

Michael Younger wondered whether we should be drawing back from some projects given the current financial deficit. David Watts responded that while the financial position was kept under review, he would be concerned to say no to anything and hopefully the situation will ease. There have inevitably been delays and slower progress due to Covid restrictions. Jackie Hall said that from her perspective, some things discussed at PCC meetings did not appear to relate to MAP objectives. David Parry-Smith accepted that point and agreed that there should be more transparency between expenditure and priorities.

16. AOB

16.1. REACH ELY PROJECT

Sue Mudge said that she had received an email from Bishop Stephen about the ongoing REACH Ely - Audit of Church Buildings and Communities, in association with Cambridge Judge Business School. St Mary's had taken part in a pilot study and now all parishes were asked to respond to a survey. The Bishop asks the PCC to send a corporate

response but expects that in reality most of the questions would be answered by clergy and churchwardens. It is part of the Diocesan 10 year Strategy, ELY2025, which in turn informed the St Mary's MAP. It encourages parishes to look at their buildings, how they are used, how the wider community is involved and what could be done in the future. David Watts said that he would consult with Helene Evans and Maggie to compile the response and send it to the Standing Committee before the required date of 31st January.

(You could use this link to the Diocesan website to learn more about the project - SM)

<https://www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/reach-ely/>

16.2. RESOLUTION TO RE-ACTIVATE PAYPAL ACCOUNT

Sue Ellis (Treasurer) has been unable to access the church PayPal account due to some confusion about the church charitable status and number of Trustees. The website is asking for ID to be provided from all 17 PCC members, as Trustees. Some funds / donations are waiting to be transferred from the PayPal account to the main church account.

Sue proposed the following resolution: *The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Linton, Diocese of Ely known as St Marys Church Linton PCC authorise Mrs Susan Mary Ellis to act solely in respect of our PayPal account.* This was seconded by Sue Mudge and agreed with 1 abstention.

16.3. RESOLUTION FOR THE STERLING BOND FUND

Sue Ellis (Treasurer) is still waiting to receive the funds from the Sterling Bond. She was notified some time ago that the Fund was closing but the sum of around £52,000 has not appeared in the church Barclays account. Her emails have so far only received holding responses. Certified ID and verification is requested from all the Church PCC members. Sue has pointed out that this is impossible to achieve (while some people are shielding due to Covid measures) and noted that the investment was made in the name of the Churchwardens to avoid this situation. The company confirms that they have had ID and verification from David, Helene and Sue. Sue has also pointed out that the Sterling Bond fund has been listed in the Church accounts for at least 12 years and this can be verified on the Charity Commission website and that we are only asking for the funds to be repaid to that account. Sue suggests writing once more enclosing a resolution from the PCC authorising payment to be made to the bank account and confirming that if no response is made within 10 days, the Jersey Financial Services Commission will be contacted.

Sue proposed the following resolution: *The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Linton, Diocese of Ely known as St Marys Church Linton PCC authorise Mrs Susan Mary Ellis to act on behalf of the Churchwardens in pursuing repayment of the Sterling Bond fund to the Church's Bank Account and if required to contact the Jersey Financial Services Commission.* This was seconded by David Watts and agreed unanimously.

16.4. STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

David Watts suggested that the Standing committee should meet in February and he would conduct a Doodle poll to find a suitable date.

The meeting closed in prayer at 21.33

Date of next PCC meeting: Thursday 11th March 2021