

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 9 January 2018 at 7.30pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey (Chair)	Martin Gibson (absent for part of item 19 and items 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 & 22)	Frances Taylor
Andrew Keene		Sid Gale
Peter Barclay-Watt (Treasurer)	Gordon Gill	Lizi Bowerman
Tony Hughes	Tim Paget (present from item 11)	Becca Lewis
Jane Woolley (Secretary)		
Hazel Connelly	Christina Wood	

Agenda items are recorded here in agenda order but were in fact taken in the following order: 1-15, 19, 16-18, 20-22.

1. Opening & Prayer

Revd Dr Jonathan Mobey opened the meeting by reading Revelations chapter 1, verses 4-8. God is described by John here as he "who is, who was, and who is to come". This is appropriate as we look back at last year and also forward to the coming year. Jonathan suggested that, as John is given a revelation of the spiritual realities that lie behind world events, so we should ask God to help us to see beyond the figures and the schedules and to discern what He really wants us to do.

Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Pam Rolls, Jan Radford and Jean Barton. Michelle Walker was absent.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting (October 2017)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

There were none.

5. Decisions by the Standing Committee between meetings

The Standing Committee voted unanimously in favour of the resolution below when it was gathered on the occasion of the Combined PCC meeting in November 2017.

Resolution	We the Standing Committee of the PCC of St Matthew's, Harwell request the Parish Giving Scheme to commence operation of the scheme on our behalf.
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6. Decisions arising from Combined PCC meetings

The resolutions below were prompted by the September and the November 2017 Combined PCC meetings respectively. The first is triggered by the scheduling of the Annual Meeting straight after the main Sunday morning service.

Resolution	To make the 11am service on 29 April 2018 a service without Holy Communion				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

Resolution	To delegate to the Joint PCC the PCC's data management/compliance responsibilities.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

7. Security of extension door

Paper B refers.

PCC members weighed up the cost and the effectiveness from a) a security point of view and b) a fire exit safety point of installing a mortice lock versus installing crash bars plus protection of the glass. Tony Hughes answered various queries arising from PCC members.

A vote was taken on the Buildings Committee's recommendation of crash bars plus protection of the glass. Twelve out of the thirteen PCC members present at this point in the meeting voted in favour. The Buildings Committee will now implement this change to the extension door.

8. Buildings Committee report

Paper C refers.

In view of the 2018 budget discussions to follow, Tony Hughes drew attention to the following two issues which have implications for expenditure in 2018:

- The 5 year full electrical inspection of the church. The likely cost of this (£2,000) has been set aside in the 2018 budget.
- Some of the rendering on the middle section of the west wall of the tower is starting to peel away. This came to light when the Christmas tree was being erected on the tower. It is not clear yet how best to deal with this or what it might cost to repair. The first step is to get it inspected by the church architect. This alone will incur expense - for the architect's time and for some sort of apparatus to support him safely at height. The 2018 budget has set aside £1,000 for this inspection but the cost is more likely to be around £3,000. The cost of any repairs would be additional still. We would have to look at how to fund those repairs once we have established what is required and how much it will cost. It could be a substantial sum. It will be at least a month before the architect can undertake an inspection and we can obtain quotes for the work required. In the meantime, Tony Hughes will arrange for the area beneath to be fenced off and for an explanation to go in the noticesheets. Tony has already informed the Parish Council because it has responsibility for maintaining the churchyard, so that they can brief any staff working in the churchyard.

PCC members noted the report of work done in 2017 and expressed their thanks to Tony Hughes and all the Buildings Committee members for all their work in maintaining the church building.

9. Improving church seating – update

Paper D refers.

Tony Hughes said that the work to remove the pews, to get the floor ready to be carpeted and to re-install the hearing loop is all in hand, and so far it is going to plan.

The plan is for the new carpet to be down and the new chairs in place for the first Sunday in February.

Peter Barclay-Watt will let Christina Wood know the details of any “in memory” plaques for chairs requested by donors.

PCC members expressed their thanks to Tony Hughes, Christina Wood and others involved in the project for all their work on the seating project.

10. Improving church seating – costs and funding

Paper E refers.

Peter Barclay-Watt summarised the position as being that fundraising has fallen short of the total costs by about c.£8,350. This shortfall has been split 50:50 between the 2017 accounts and the 2018 budget. This has led to a budgeted deficit in 2018.

11. 2017 draft accounts

Papers F, G & H refer.

Peter Barclay-Watt explained that draft accounts only are available at this stage because we don't yet know the interest received in 2017 on fund balances. However, the adjustment required to finalise the accounts should be less than £100.

Peter Barclay-Watt talked PCC members through the headlines in the 2017 accounts:

- An effective deficit of c.£9k (the apparent surplus of c.£10k is because of movement of money between funds)
- Giving increased by 6% but there were heavy buildings maintenance costs and a deficit in the fundraising for the seating project
- St Matthew's share of the cost of the three year Children & Families worker contract from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020 will be covered in full by additional giving.
- The Missions budget is 10% of unrestricted giving received in the previous year, and 10% of that part of the Talbot legacy appropriated against church expenditure.
- The total in general, restricted and unrestricted funds sum to c.£140k.

Peter Barclay-Watt formally recorded his thanks to the book-keeper, Brenda Pyke, for all her work on the accounts, and for preparing them so quickly after year end.

Action: Jane Woolley to prepare a letter of thanks to Brenda Pyke from Jonathan Mobey

Peter Barclay-Watt then invited questions on the accounts from PCC members.

Martin Gibson wondered if more might be done to promote legacy-giving. Peter Barclay-Watt commented that for estates subject to inheritance tax, there is a tax incentive whereby a legacy of a minimum 10% of a net estate to a charity can reduce the inheritance tax on the rest of the estate and hence have a substantially less than 10% impact on the amount of the estate passed on to relatives. Whilst not wanting to imply that the vast majority of people would be in this category, Martin offered to put together a worked example to help communicate this. Hazel Connelly said that she thought she had seen such an example in a past edition of Which? magazine. Hazel said that she would look it up and send it to Martin.

Action: Martin Gibson to work with Peter Barclay-Watt to draft a communication to promote legacy-giving, for consideration by the Benefice Stewardship Committee.

Sid Gale said that he was uncomfortable with the proposal that approval of the final accounts should be delegated to the Finance Committee. This was on the grounds that it doesn't feel right for a significant proportion of those involved in preparing the accounts to be the ones who also approve them. It was suggested that holding the PCC meeting later in January avoid the need for draft accounts in future.

After some discussion, the following alternative resolution was passed:

Resolution	The PCC approves the 2017 final accounts provided that any variation in net surplus/deficit compared to the draft accounts is no more than £100.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

12. 2018 budget

Paper I refers.

Peter Barclay-Watt talked PCC members through the headlines in the draft budget:

- The £3,732 deficit is due to the shortfall in fundraising for the seating project. This might reduce if we raise more than expected from the sale of pews or if we received more donations for chairs.
- The budget assumes a 5% increase in giving, based on the 6% increase in 2017

Peter Barclay-Watt mentioned that neither the 2017 accounts nor the 2018 budget takes into account an unrestricted legacy of c.£11,000 from the estate of Alma Staples, which we have only just been notified about. In due course, we can decide whether we want to designate this legacy for a particular purpose.

Peter Barclay-Watt then invited questions on the proposed budget from PCC members.

Gordon Gill enquired whether All Saints' PCC is budgeting to pay its Parish Share for 2018 in full. This is because the Diocese had flagged to the Deanery that All Saints' PCC has set up a direct debit for 12 monthly payments of £2,000. This would total less than required. Jonathan Mobey confirmed that All Saints' PCC is intending to pay its Parish Share in full.

Resolution	The PCC approves the proposed budget for 2018.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

13. Finding a new Treasurer and Book-keeper

Book-keeper

Nick Clarke, one of the bell-ringing team, was approached by Peter Barclay-Watt and has agreed to serve as Book-keeper. Nick is a qualified accountant, and has recently retired from the National Audit Office. He has served as Treasurer for the PCC in Drayton. The proposal is that Brenda Pyke hands over to Nick by the end of January.

Jane Woolley informed PCC members that new Church of England rules require all PCC members to be DBS checked if the PCC effectively sponsors work involving children or vulnerable adults, which we do. Also the porting of DBS checks from other organisations is now no longer allowed by the Church of England. In view of this, and in view of the significance of the Book-keeper role, Jane Woolley proposed that any new Book-keeper should also be asked to undertake a basic (criminal record) DBS check. This recommendation was agreed. On this basis, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution	To approve the appointment of Nick Clarke as Book-keeper				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	13/14 in favour. One abstention.

Action: Jane Woolley to liaise with PCC Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer and Book-keeper to arrange a basic DBS check for the new Book-keeper

There was some discussion about responsibility for counting cash after each week's services and for the regular banking of cash.

The Book-keeper traditionally is responsible for banking the cash each week. There was speculation that this might become a more onerous task soon because the Nat West branch in Didcot is closing and the nearest branch will then be Abingdon. Lizi Bowerman pointed out that Post Offices now seem to be accepting deposits for various other banks. It would good if cash could be banked via one of the post office branches in Didcot or at Harwell site rather than in Abingdon.

The Book-keeper is not currently responsible for counting and bagging up each week any donations collected during services. That task is currently undertaken by someone else. However that person wishes to step down from this role. There was then a discussion about the need to avoid this task falling by default on to the Book-keeper or Treasurer. Peter Barclay-Watt confirmed that Nick Clarke would not be expecting to take on this task.

Peter Barclay-Watt said that in other churches it is common for this task to fall to the sidespeople. Christina Wood pointed out that this might be more difficult at St Matthew's because we often have several Sunday services, each with its own sidespeople, whereas what we need to give the Book-keeper is one overall total for the week, and one set of bagged cash.

PCC members drew the conclusion that a replacement volunteer should be sought to count and bag donations each week. Jonathan Mobey invited PCC members to send the name of anyone suitable that they can think of to him.

Action: Jonathan Mobey, Tim Paget and Christina Wood to recruit a new volunteer to count and bag donations collected during services each week.

Treasurer

Jonathan Mobey confirmed that he is taking the lead in finding a replacement Treasurer before the Annual Meeting in April, at which Peter Barclay-Watt will be resigning. At present, Jonathan has no progress to report, but the matter is at the top of his to do list.

14. Bank signatories

In view of the appointment of Nick Clarke as the new Book-keeper at this meeting, and of Tim Paget as a new churchwarden back in the spring, the following resolution is required to remove the current Book-keeper (Brenda Pyke) and to add Nick Clarke and Tim Paget as signatories to the bank accounts. The wording is that required by the bank. "Section 5" referred to in the resolution contains a list of the signatories being removed. "Section 6" contains a list the signatories being added.

Tim Paget abstained from voting on this resolution on the grounds that he is one of the people being added as a signatory.

Resolution	It was resolved that the authorised signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	13/14 in favour. One abstention.

15. Comments on Christmas services

In terms of the content, there were no particular comments other than that one PCC member commented that she thought the services had been lovely.

In terms of practicalities, the following items were noted for incorporation into the churchwarden's handbook and for planning for next year:

- High attendance at the crib service necessitated seating some people in the chancel. We should plan to bring over the TV monitor and extra chairs from the Church Hall to accommodate them, especially given that the pews will have been removed and this reduces the seating capacity unless we bring in extra chairs.
- We need to try and avoid damaging the new carpet with wax dripping from the candle holders during the carols by candlelight service. The old carpet had various wax stains arising from this. We would like to continue with the candlelight ambience if we can. We need to work out how best to protect the carpet, or to avoid the wax dripping. Tony Hughes remembered that some years ago better candle holders had been investigated by the PCC and the conclusion was that they would be rather expensive. Sid Gale confirmed that he had carried out that investigation and his report should be amongst the past PCC papers. One possibility would be to see if Chilton's candle holders are better at retaining wax and if we could borrow them.

16. Improving church heating – update

Tony Hughes reported the following progress:

- Mel Gibson has obtained some usage data from Dunblane Church who have recently installed the Ecomiser electric central heating system. This will be useful although it is not straightforward to project this data onto St Matthew's possible patterns of usage.

- In March 2017 the DAC had thought that the quote we had obtained for a gas fired central heating system looked expensive. Tony Hughes has now obtained another quote. This will require some analysis to ensure a like for like comparison. At this stage, Tony thinks this second quote will be in the same ballpark as the first quote.

Tony Hughes reported that it is unlikely that we will be ready to make a new submission to the DAC until May at the earliest. Tony also commented that the DAC considers substantial requests less frequently now than in the past. So it will be the summer at least before we have any hope of having a Faculty. Jonathan Mobey remarked that winter, rather than the summer, is the best time to fundraise from the congregation for heating. Jane Woolley said that will only be considered seriously by grant awarding bodies once we have the requisite permissions. In our case, this means once we have a Faculty.

Action: Jane Woolley to check the timetables for submitting applications and awarding grants for the three organisations shortlisted by the seating and heating fundraising group.

17. Church Porch – Glass Doors project - update

Tony Hughes reported the following progress:

- A Steering Group has been formed, consisting so far of Jonathan Mobey, Christina Wood, David Pyke and Tony Hughes. The group could accommodate one or two other interested people¹.
- The Steering Group sent a brief to the church architect and asked for a quote to prepare some design options. The quote received back was that the cost of preparing some design options would be close to £2,000.
- The Steering Group accepted this quote at the beginning of December. The church architect was unable to start work on design options until after Christmas.
- The Steering Group expects to receive design options in time for the March PCC meeting.

Tony Hughes said that he would consult the church architect about the best time to involve the DAC. Tony recommends involving the DAC only once we have something specific in mind for them to comment on.

18. Church Hall Management - update

Jonathan Mobey reported that the Hall has accepted a couple of new bookings. In Vicky Johnston's absence, Jonathan has been handling Hall enquiries and bookings. On this basis, he can confirm that this is not an insignificant amount of work for the Church Administrator.

Sid Gale asked about the appropriateness of the use of the Hall by a yoga class. Jonathan Mobey said that the PCC had considered that this sort of issue could arise and booking requests would need to be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Jonathan has explored the content of the class with the teacher, and been assured that there is no spiritual content.

¹ Becca Lewis has now also agreed to serve on this group

19. Health and Safety

Hazel Connelly reported that she, the Rector and the churchwardens had met in October to discuss various health and safety matters. The main remaining issue to resolve is a lone worker protection system for the Church Administrator. Hazel has investigated various possible alarm systems. The one used by the NHS looks to be the most suitable. Hazel has been in touch with the supplier for more information on it.

This system allows the wearer to discreetly press a button if they feel in danger. They can then either speak to the alarm control centre directly, or the control centre will listen in to any conversation which the wearer is having with someone and they can call the police on the wearer's behalf. The system also mitigates the risk of a lone worker falling unconscious when on their own. The device detects if the wearer is unconscious and not moving. It can tell the difference between that and someone just sitting very still. The control centre would then try to rouse them via the device. If they got no response, the control centre would call an ambulance. When not being worn, the device has to be put in its charger to avoid the system thinking that the wearer is unconscious. The system also works if it is away from the office, and it can pinpoint the wearer's location via GPS. So it could also be used when out and about on Church business. It can also be used by anyone, so another member of staff could use it if the administrator is not using it.

Hazel Connelly has also contacted the Diocesan safeguarding adviser but the Diocese has no experience of such systems and so had no advice to offer.

It is possible to take out a yearly contract, or we can pay less per month if we sign up for a three-year contract. From memory, Hazel Connelly said that she thought the cost of a three year contract is c.£10 per month.

Action: Hazel Connelly to confirm the monthly cost of a lone worker alarm system for a one year contract and for a three year contract.

Resolution	To enter into a contract for a lone worker alarm system for the Church Administrator. To delegate the decision to the Standing Committee about whether to enter into a one year contract or a three year contract, once the relative costs have been considered.				
Proposed	Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

Action carried over from last meeting:

Action: Hazel Connelly to send the (revised) Health & Safety Policy to the Church Administrator and to ask the Administrator to:

- ask Jonathan Mobey to sign it
- display a copy of the signed Policy on the Church website and in the porch
- send a copy of the signed Policy to the Deanery Secretary

20. Evening service on the second Sunday

Jonathan Mobey reported that he has opened discussions with the new Children & Families workers about using this slot for a Fresh Expression of worship. It is too early to report if there is any proposal in the offing. So there is no change for now. It was agreed to review this again at the next meeting.

21. Future dates

- 6 February - next Combined PCC meeting
- 6 March - next Individual PCC meeting

22. Any other business

Jane Woolley reported that Jan Radford, Alex Reich and Pam Rolls had asked for their thanks for their Christmas gift from the Benefice to be passed to the PCC.

Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting with The Lord's Prayer at 10pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE