

## PARISH OF ST PETER'S, COLCHESTER

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on Monday, January 15, 2024

**Chairman: Rev'd Mark Wallace**

1. Opening Bible Reading (from Psalm 55) and Prayer

2. Apologies

Brian New; Tim Hearn

3. Declaration of conflicts of interest

None

4. Minutes of the previous meeting (November 6, 2023)

a. The previous Minutes were approved as amended and signed by the Vicar.

b. Matters arising

Responding to Item 6, Mark referred to texts included in recent Updates. In addition, this (January) meeting would lead to clarity on further steps towards a letter to the congregation. Regarding the meeting with St James re the reredos (Item 4b), Mark confirmed that they are interested.

**Action: Mark to follow-up with James.**

Re 5c, Anne emailed Mark and Bernice about the Colchester Library closure, which could lead to groups needing a venue. Mark additionally reported that the *Sharesy* app (to advertise the church hall) is being explored.

5. Short Reports

a. Vicar's Report

b. Churchwardens' Report

c. Fabric, Building and Redevelopment Report

Bakers have eased the doors.

A faculty related to the regimental colours has been submitted.

Regarding the application (for tower clock repairs) via Church Care, the question was raised as to who would undertake to complete and submit such.

**Proposal re Clock Repairs: Grant application to be made via Church Care by 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

**Result: Agreed.**

**Action: Mark to ask likely application volunteers.**

a. Church Manager's Report

Several volunteers are to undertake the online Food & Hygiene course.

Bernice is stepping down from her role but is willing to stay on during the Vicar's sabbatical, and hopefully to complete an overlap with a new appointee.

Safeguarding Report

6. Spotlight Report: Finance

Mark thanked Richard for his accurate accounting and sound analysis.

The church hall continues to be a drain on finances. Richard has proposed a simplified charging structure, and has given Bernice a list of websites on which to advertise the hall.

The report's three suggestions were discussed: i.e., that: a) a Gift Day be held in 2024; b) the church hall be let more; c) newcomers to St Peter's should be encouraged to provide some financial support.

Some general strategies to encourage giving may help: e.g., a message from the front of church; annual encouragement to give; making the PCC banking details more accessible (e.g. in the Update; on the website); reporting on finances in church from time to time.

**Action: MW and RL to consider this latter.**

One-off giving could benefit from an update to the traditional collection box. While most giving is done by Standing Order, there are frequent questions, especially at one-off events (e.g. funerals, weddings) about the whereabouts of the collection box. (The collection usually attracts around £20-£60.) If a terminal of some kind were employed, concerns included: whether it would need to be attended; who enters the figure on the device (i.e. privacy); how much it would cost; and its placement in the church. Advantages would include: additional use for, e.g., book sales; and convenience (e.g. a device like *Payaz* offers the giver several on-screen amount options, plus an option to enter their own figure). There was agreement that spending, e.g., £250-£350 would be worthwhile.

Gift Day: There was general agreement that a 2024 Gift Day would be advantageous. Some language here might change (e.g., to 'Giving Review Day'/'Stewardship Review Day'). A September event could link loosely with Harvest and coincide with Mark's return from sabbatical.

Regarding the encouragement of giving from newcomers, they receive a card after they have attended two or three times. But there is a balance to be struck; while giving does need to be encouraged, it is important not to give the impression that we are overly keen to relieve (especially new) attendees of their money.

**Actions:**

**Mark and Richard to investigate a suitable device.**

**Mark and Richard to consider a financial report for the congregation before Easter.**

## 7. S106 spend

The council receives money from developers to subsequently distribute. £11,032.34 has been offered. Unlike previously, this can be used on the church as well as the church hall, on condition that a community benefit accrues. There are four possible projects:

- the tower clock (people outside the church seem to notice it is not working; a possible grant is an unknown quantity; there is uncertainty as to whether the quotation includes scaffolding);
- the church hall boiler (costs, at 3K-£5K, are relatively reliable; it is perhaps more significant than the roof, given the use of the hall by, e.g. Tiny Tots);
- the decoration of the church hall office (in the hundreds rather than the thousands of pounds);
- the flat roof above the toilets in the church hall (2022: £3K-3.5K). Currently the underlying timbers are an unknown quantity; the skylights may need attention; and there could be a problem in terms of the difference in height between the flat roof and the hall roof. This project might be better done during the summer holidays.

There may be more S106 cash later, which would help with a more expensive project like the church hall roof. Although the promised funds should be spent without delay, we might be able to show that some is being saved in order to do a bigger job later.

***Proposals: Decorate the church hall office and replace the church hall boiler; and in the meantime clarify the clock repair costs (including scaffolding).***

***Result: Agreed.***

***Actions:***

***Wendy and Mark to investigate clock repair and scaffolding costs.***

***Wendy to liaise with Bernice on boiler quotations.***

## 8. Responses to the House of Bishops commendation of PLF

This is a 'season of contending'. The CEEC are assisting with two ways for orthodox churches to react to the House of Bishops commendation:

1. Ask for ASO (alternative spiritual oversight). This differs from the current oversight by the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, which could be removed at any moment. ASO implies something more substantive and secure. Exactly what might be offered should become clearer later.
2. Utilise the Ephesians Fund. (Although this fund takes 3% in commission from individual giving, or 3.5% if gift-aided, Parish Share is commission-free.) The PCC can pay Parish Share through this fund to ensure the money will only go to orthodox ministry.

***Proposals:***

1. ***That the PCC should ask the CEEC to arrange ASO.***

2. That the Treasurer continue to pay 100% Parish Share, but through the Ephesians Fund, starting as soon as possible.
3. That the PCC express support for the CEEC.
4. That the above be kept under review.

**Results: Agreed.**

**Actions:**

**Mark to liaise with the churchwardens on a letter to the congregation, copied to Bishop Guli, and keep the congregation fully informed.**

**Richard to make arrangements re Parish Share.**

9. Proposal to delegate to the Standing Committee approval of the Annual Report and Accounts

**Result: Agreed.**

10. Church of England National Safeguarding Standards

The CofE has a new safeguarding policy which includes improvements, but will require changes to posters, forms, etc. The posters will be modified in the next few weeks. The Safeguarding Committee will need to put the new policy into action, but not all the paperwork has been released yet.

11. Vicar's sabbatical

Conversations have begun regarding what will be involved to facilitate Mark's extended study leave. John has suggested a committee to look at all of this. There could be an appeal for some help.

- Some things are likely to stop (e.g. the 9:00 a.m. communions; weddings are very unlikely).
- Some things will need to be delegated to others (e.g. the Vice-Chair will chair PCC meetings; safeguarding will fall to the Parish Safeguarding Officer).
- Sunday services will involve other clergy (e.g. Aella), and others such as Duncan Breckels and the churchwardens. It will also be possible to invite others. Regarding materials, along with Bernice, volunteers might produce service sheets and PPTs (each of which would take 1-2 hours weekly). Another possibility for the service sheets is a laminated version to be used week after week; for singing there could be a songbook for the whole three months. It would be worth setting a deadline (the first Sunday of half-term: February 18) to decide on a 'screen + paper' model. If that deadline were not met, the other options could be considered.

## 12. Appointment of Church Manager

Thanks to Bernice's generous offer to continue in post for some time, she hopes to be able to overlap with any new appointee. There is sufficient funding for a new appointee and there is enough flexibility to deal with different hours if need be. If the person wants to do more hours and could possibly do some youthwork, funds sufficient for a full-time post may be available for a year. There is the question of whether to change the title of the job. The intention is to look internally until February 11, after which an external advertisement can be used.

**Proposal: That the appointment procedure be initiated.**

**Result: Agreed.**

**Proposal: That the possibility of extending the role in this way be explored.**

**Result: Agreed.**

## 13. Correspondence

An email to Mick Kavanagh, from Diane Hardy (Diocesan Administrator for Mission & Ministry), re Lent Modules; that is, courses in mixed modes (face-to-face, Zoom, Online Moodle), being offered by the diocese in the run-up to Easter.

## 14. AOB (to be raised with the Chairman before the start of the meeting)

The term-end dates for PCC members were clarified.

The point was raised that the church is now more diverse than previously, and that the PCC could better reflect this.

**Action: Mark to ponder the possibility of ensuring greater diversity on the PCC.**

## 15. Future meetings

- a. Full PCC meetings: March 11, May 13, July 8, September 9, November 11
- b. Standing Committee meetings: February 12, April 15, June 10, August 12, October 14, December 9
- c. Annual Church Meetings (AMP & APCM): Wednesday, March 20, 2024

## 16. Closing Prayers

## Appendix I

Mr Ed Bradley	present
Mr Duncan Breckels	present
Mr Trevor Froude	present
Mr John Hartwell	present
Mr Tim Hearn	absent
Mrs Anne Kavanagh	present
Dr Mick Kavanagh	present
Mr Richard Lawn	present
Mrs Val Morris	present
Mr Brian New	absent
Mrs Clare Reid	present
Revd Mark Wallace	present
Dr Dan Watts	present
Mrs Wendy Whitfield	present