

PARISH OF ST PETER'S, COLCHESTER
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council
held on Monday, September 9, 2024

1. Opening Bible Reading and Prayer: Proverbs 3: 3-12
2. Apologies: Clare Reid (was to attend as Parish Safeguarding Officer)
3. Declaration of conflicts of interest
4. Responses to papers for (cancelled) July 2024 PCC meeting
 - a. Matters arising: None
5. Short Reports
 - a. Safeguarding Report
Mark expressed thanks to Anne as the interim PSO. She has handed on the brief in an improved state.

- b. Ministry Report
The number of SPK helpers and leaders is more critical now than previously. Bible Tots and Diggers each have only one leader, which means they are on duty every week.

Pastoral situations: Mark has arranged a meeting for the Lloyds, with himself, a churchwarden, and an independent person recommended by the Archdeacon.

The Sunday numbers mentioned (125 adults and 30 children) are impressive, and it is good that most people are involved in ministry somehow.

The feedback from Contagious is very good and those who attend seem to gain something very positive, including friendships, that may continue for a long time. Whether we can we fully fund all the young people to attend was discussed.

This would not be cheap. The cost has been found to be a barrier, especially where parents are unsure of the merits of attendance.

It would be good to get younger children to go. As attendees need to sign up in January or February, this would be a good time to promote, and to offer any agreed financial assistance. As it would be a challenge to fund everybody, it may be realistic to have a ring-fenced fund. Perhaps we could fund each for the first time of attendance, or maybe provide a grant towards the cost.

Action: Look into bursaries (ring-fenced, or for the first year)

- c. Churchwardens' Report
Some people have said that the increasing numbers in attendance on Sundays make it difficult to know who's who; we may ask key leaders to wear lanyards. It was suggested that it may be worth emphasising readers' (and others') names more.
 - d. Fabric, Building, and Redevelopment Report
Tower clock
Mark thanked Wendy for her hard work regarding the clock repairs. Although the financial report mentions the Heather Loyd legacy as paying for the clock, there is also some money that Alan Gray raised.

The discrepancy between the figures of £7000 and £8000 is due to VAT having been added into one. The details of the job are available from Wendy, and they make it very clear why the job is so expensive. The timeline would hopefully be around 2-3 weeks.

Action: Richard to check whether we can reclaim the VAT on this.

Proposal (proposed: Wendy Whitfield; seconded: Duncan Breckels): That the PCC accepts the revised quotation to repair the clock mechanism and the additional cost of cleaning the clock faces, and instructs A. James Ltd to carry out the work.

Result: Agreed.

Action: Wendy to contact the contractor, and to make an entry in the Update at the appropriate time.

Hall boiler

This could be dealt with in 2-4 weeks if we move quickly. The costs of £5100+ (i.e. original: £3800+VAT; and scaffolding: £500+ VAT) should be covered by Section 106 funds. Although the additional scaffolding fee has not quite been agreed yet, it should be unproblematic. Another company was considered but the larger company was preferred. Replacing the hall boiler is challenging because it is not against an outside wall hence the decision to go with the larger company.

This should be a 2-day job. **Perhaps Sally can suggest which days to avoid.**

Proposal (proposed: Richard Lawn; seconded: Anne Kavanagh): That the PCC approve the plan to contract Blueflame to carry out the work.

Result: Agreed.

Action: Sally to speak to the company.

Action: Richard to remind that the scaffolding will not be on our property.

There has been some graffiti near the gates, and the architects have been contacted about how to approach this. The council senior operative has offered to clean up the graffiti.

Action: The PCC agreed that Wendy should confirm this with the council.

After heavy rain, there is a large damp patch in the ceiling near the font and also water on the floor. If the plaster is wet, it may fall. This is probably quite serious. Mr Lamb is due to look at the gutters. The quinquennial inspection reports will probably say the roof should be examined.

Hall roof

Mr Lamb is to quote to replace the material beneath the ridge caps.

The solicitor has not been approached for an update because we might incur charges for a response. The protocol re following this up with the rental company ourselves is unclear.

- e. Church Manager's Report
Bernice is stepping down at the end of the week. Exit interviews have taken place. There will be a presentation to Bernice after the service on Sunday.
- f. Deanery Synod Report
The next meeting is at Saint Peter's.
- g. Financial Report
As was mentioned on Sunday, more giving is needed. Although there are reserves, they are limited.

Richard confirmed that the card reader donation figure is over and above cash received in the traditional way, and that (subject to a small fee) we do benefit from Gift Aid if money is given to Saint Peter's via the Ephesian Fund.

Regular givers (by standing order or envelope) stand at around 35 or 36, some of these being families, and some couples. One person has stopped regular giving, and one is giving via the Ephesian Fund. Mark stated that it takes about 6 to 18 months for new arrivals to become regular givers.

Mark also reported that we seem to have been hit less hard than other churches by the effects of LLF, and reminded us that we need to be prayerful in advance of the Gift Day.

6. Parish Share

The PCC is being asked to commit to contributing the stated sum. The parish share we pay *does* come back (i.e., we are net beneficiaries).

Proposal (proposed: Richard Lawn; seconded: Trevor Froude): That the PCC commit to contributing the sum requested.

Result: Agreed

7. Confirmation of future meeting dates (see below)

Agreed.

8. PCC Safeguarding Policy 2024

The safeguarding policy was discussed; specifically looking at which items engender confidence, and which do not.

Comments:

- some concern re Items 6, 8, and 9
- the policy needs to be raised in church, so that everybody knows
- the training provided is good, but it is important to make sure people raise concerns
- we should not say we have 'created' a safe environment because we cannot rest on our laurels; we should always keep an eye on Item 1
- Can it be for 'all'?; we tend to focus on children
- the major recent safeguarding concern is children being in church without parents/guardians; the policy is that there should be no under-14s in church without parents or guardians

Action: Mark will take the PCC's comments to the Safeguarding Committee.

Dan asked that the PCC express our thanks to the safeguarding team

The PCC agreed to the policy, which was then signed.

9. Spotlight Report: Sabbatical Report & Reflections

The first part of the paper was written with another audience in mind as well as the PCC; a sabbatical report was required.

Regarding the questions which follow the report, Mark asked for any clarification needed, and also whether any other questions would constitute a priority.

Clarification/comments

Re Q1, some volunteers have had to step back, and this, along with feedback from Bernice implies, while not a crisis, that it is not clear whether we have got things quite right yet.

Re Q6: Privacy: Mark is quite generous with the parking at the Vicarage, but there must be an impact on the privacy of the family. Could some things be moved into the church hall?

Priorities

Q9 is a priority.

Enlisting parents with SPK would be worth doing - which is starting to happen.

Q4: Should we reassess how much non-ministry work we do? Is it there *for* the ministry? Perhaps much time and money are spent on the 'trellis', but relatively little on evangelism. Should we turn our minds and resources to spread the word better (perhaps especially re Mark's efforts/energy)? How can we let Mark delegate more?

Qs 4 and 9 will be taken back to the Standing Committee to consider how to progress.

10. Correspondence: None

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

12. Future meetings

- a. Full PCC meetings: November 11, January 13, March 10, May 12
- a. Standing Committee meetings: October 14, December 9, February 10, April 14
- b. Annual Church Meetings (AMP & APCM): Wednesday, May 7, 2025

13. Closing Prayers