

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor and Chesterton

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council held at the Parish Centre on Wednesday, January 24th at 7.45pm

Present: Dr R Dolton (Chair), Mr J Bathurst (Hon Treas), Mr H Gray (Hon Sec), Revd H Gilbert, Revd K Richardson, Mr J Light, Mrs S Beck, Mr M Radford, Mr H Kennard, Mr J Lawrence, Mr S Smith, Mrs B Springate, Miss P Phillips, Mrs M Austin, Mrs J Godsell, Mr M Stratton, Mr R Williams, Mrs L Ellis, Mrs H Hammond

1. Fr Howard opened the meeting with **prayer**.
2. **Apologies for absence** had been received from Mr P Cottey, Mrs D Miller, Ms C Luck, Mrs J Henson, Revd J Wilson, Mr R Marlowe, Mr D Henson
3. **Minutes of the last meeting:** There were 3 amendments.
 - a) The Pastoral and Spiritual Hub's email is you.matter@cirenparish.co.uk
 - b) It had been agreed that the selection panel for the forthcoming incumbent interviews would remain the same as before.
 - c) The matter as to whether staff should pay for their own Christmas meal would be discussed formally by the Personnel Committee.The minutes were then signed as a true record.

4. **Matters arising.**

- a. **The sycamore tree in the Parish Office garden.** The Secretary had received a communication from Mr R Hawes who had inspected the tree with Alex Evans on 7th December and reported that, as previously, they could find no reason to condemn/remove this now, although there will be a time when it does get too big for its location. They advise that, to reduce immediate concerns regarding damage to the Parish centre and help placate the neighbours, all branch lengths be shortened to 4 metres from the main stem and to carry out a crown thinning.
- b. **After discussion about the merits of the tree, it was proposed by Mrs Hammond and seconded by Mr Williams that the sycamore be cut down completely. It was agreed that the Wardens would contact Mr Hawes and Mr Evans regarding felling of the tree altogether and to ask Mr Evans if he could put in an application to the CDC with this outcome in mind.**
- b) **Venue Hire Protocol.** Mr Henson had reported that he is making progress in this area, that he will be seeking input from some members and will have more information for a future meeting.

5. **Finance Report**

Mr Bathurst reported that little had changed since November and that cash assets stand at £75,000 so we are ending the year quite well. Investments are up around £80,000. We started at £1.1m in our portfolio and now stand at £1.25m. Mr Bathurst said that growth had followed the market trend but cautioned that investments could increase or fall in value, depending on stock market performance. He outlined the percentage performance of some of the companies in which we had invested. He also recommended that those responsible for specific budget areas submit a short account. Dr Dolton asked Mr Bathurst to contact the budget area holders so that they know what he wants from them. Mr Bathurst added that he would be circulating budget figures shortly. Mrs Hammond said she had seen the job specification for a part time administrator for St Lawrence church, Ludlow, in which they stated a projected £22,000 profit on venue hire. Mr Light thanked Mrs Hammond for passing the information to him and was confident that Mr Henson's working party, due to consider our own venue hire costs, will come up with some excellent solutions.

6. **Reports from sub-committees**

- a. **Personnel Committee.** At this point Mr Kennard and Mr Lawrence were asked to leave the meeting as they expressed an interest in the items for discussion. Mr Light (Chair of Personnel) thanked Mr Stratton for his professional advice to the committee which enabled members to progress matters properly. He continued to say that there were two recommendations the committee wished to place before the PCC.

Firstly, after discussion with Mr Kennard, it had been noted that since the departure of Mrs J Norton as Youth worker in the Parish, Mr Kennard had been asked to take on her role and associated additional

hours. The meeting was informed that not all the salary paid to Mrs Norton had been transferred to Mr Kennard. The Personnel Committee had recommended to the Finance Committee that Mr Kennard be paid the additional sum. Following discussion, **it was proposed by Mrs Hammond and seconded by Miss Anderson that Mr Kennard should be paid an additional £2250.00 pa.** 18 members supported the proposal with 1 against. The Personnel Committee is requesting Mr Kennard to sign a disclaimer due to his working over the EU hourly working recommendations.

Secondly, Mr Light pointed out that event overtime payments to Vergers were made to them as agents of the hirers rather than as our own employed staff. This resulted in personal heavy tax demands. **Mr Light proposed that, in future, all overtime payments to our own employees be made through the parish staff monthly salary scheme. This was seconded by Mr Smith and agreed unanimously.** It was recommended also that Dr Hammond and Mr Kennard also be included in this but, Mrs Hammond said, Dr Hammond (Director of Music) might prefer his existing arrangements and so not be included.

Mr Light thanked Mr Lawrence and the vergers for their hard work over the Christmas period and said how much they had been appreciated by everyone.

Mr Light also suggested exploring the possibility of forming an executive committee from the Finance and Personnel committees.

Mr Kerton (Verger) completes his 3 month trial period on Jan 28th after which he can become a permanent member of staff.

b. **Finance Committee** – nothing to report

7. **Chairman's Notices.** We now know the date for the next round of interviews – 20th April – and we should advise the congregations through the pew leaflets. Shortlisting is 28th March. Mr Smith added that if any members knew of anyone who might be interested to apply then please encourage them. Advertising starts at the beginning of March. Interview panel remains the same.

8. **Secretary's Notices.** Ms Luck asked for an update on the pulpit rail. Mr Smith replied that he had spoken with the architect two weeks ago and the DAC is aware of the matter.

9. **Matters for Report from Churches and Halls.**

Parish Church: Mr Smith mentioned the Plough Service on Sunday with refreshments afterwards.

Holy Trinity: Mrs Springate reported that the long fluorescent light in the Hall had been changed. Moss has been cleared from the down pipe following the flooding. Guttering on the church is being fixed. She had received an e-mail from Mr Hopegood to advise that the quinquennial inspection was due this year and that there was a need to fix a leak in the porch roof. The lighting project goes to the DAC on 26th January after which they might want a tour of the church and then an application for a faculty can be made.

St Lawrence – No report

Dr Dolton added that, although the PCC knows about the purchase of the new Vicarage in Rendcomb Drive, the congregations may be unaware. It was agreed to place a notification in the pew leaflet.

10. **Matters for report from Churches Together in Cirencester.** Revd Katie reported the following from the minutes of the last CTiC meeting:

- a) **Sue Price** has resigned as Chair and Revd James Taylor has accepted the role of Acting Chair.
- b) **Abbey 900 United Service.** There are no further plans for the ceremony of burying a time capsule in the Abbey Grounds. The event will probably be post Easter.
- c) **Community Day Proposal** has been delayed.
- d) **Holocaust Day.** Due to the lack of a committee, nothing would be happening this year. It would be left to the individual churches to mark the anniversary on Jan 27th in whatever way they felt would be appropriate.

- e) **Safeguarding.** As far as CTiC events are concerned, where these take place it is the responsibility of the host church to consider Safeguarding and to make appropriate arrangements. Corporate events outside of a church building would be governed by the denominational church giving leadership to the event.
- f) **Walk through the Bible Course** will take place at the Salvation Army Hall on Saturday 3rd November.
- g) **Carols in St Michael's Park** had been a well-attended and successful event.
- h) **Christmas Day Lunch.** Pastor Obaro had reported that although the meal was less well attended than was expected, it was a good learning experience and valuable lessons had been learned as to how to organise it differently in future. £2000 had been collected against an outlay of £834.10. The remaining funds will be held over pending a decision as to whether to repeat the event in 2018.
- i) **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** is currently happening.
- j) **Women's World Day of Prayer** – March 2nd at Ashcroft Church
- k) **Easter March of Witness** this year will start from Holy Trinity.
- l) **Syrian Refugees.** There is a need for people to help with English language classes and to assist with transport.
- m) **International Café** continuing

11. **Matters for Report from Deanery and Diocesan Synods:** Neither had met.

12. **Items for Discussion/ Information**

- a. **General Data Protection Regulations:** Fr Howard said it was a serious piece of legislation which may have implications as to whether we can use the electoral roll as a source for communicating with people in the future. A small working party needed to meet and consider how best to gather contact information from people, renew the form and include tick boxes for people to give permission for us to use their information. Miss Anderson said she had looked into this carefully and had downloaded a good deal of information. The Diocese had produced good guidance and she also had information from the Historical Society. She had mentioned this to the PCC Secretary who, together with Miss Anderson, had been line managing the Parish Administrator during the vacancy. She continued to say that there was no recommendation in the guidelines for parishes to appoint a Data Protection Officer as such. Others felt, however, it might be useful to have someone to oversee the process. Miss Anderson (Safeguarding) and Mr Gray (PCC Secretary) both offered to join a working party. Mr Kennard suggested that someone from the Diocese could be invited to speak to the PCC at a future date. Fr Howard said that he had requested a speaker to attend the Deanery Synod and hoped that Judith Knight might be able to come. Fr Howard could then report back to the PCC. Mrs Hammond added that as employers we had a responsibility for training and advice to staff. Training and structure were both essential in the process. Fr Howard invited Mrs Hammond to join the working party but Mrs Hammond declined. Mr Bathurst offered his help also. Mr Kennard said he was trying to enlarge the Social media facility and would value advice to develop this. **The working party would be Fr Howard, Mr Bathurst, Miss Anderson and Mr Gray with others co-opted as necessary.**
- b. **Funding of Clergy Retreats.** Fr Howard asked the PCC to consider funding clergy annual retreats at £250 per person. Retreats last usually from a Monday to Friday. A decision would be needed as to whether this was just for stipendiary priests or to include non-stipendiary, part-time clergy as well. Bishop Rachel has said she expected staff to take their days off, all their holidays and to go on retreat. Dr Dolton commented that we were having many discussions about spending money and not giving time to consider raising money. This should be an item for a future agenda. **After discussion Mr Kennard proposed, seconded by Mrs Ellis, that we put £250 aside for our stipendiary and non-stipendiary priests. Mr Bathurst asked that this be amended to include a cap of £1000 (i.e. four individuals). All in favour with 2 abstentions.**
- c. **Should the PCC be reading a book together?** Fr Howard had suggested the 'Sailboat Church' and that, as a PCC, we spend the first 15 minutes of a meeting discussing what we have read. This is a book, he said, that is very much in line with where the Diocesan vision is taking us. It costs £9.35 a copy.

Revd Katie's suggestion was that we take a day away, maybe at Harnhill, to discuss the book and that trying to cram our thoughts into 15 minutes at a PCC meeting would be difficult. Mrs Beck and Mr Williams felt the PCC meetings should be for addressing Parish business. After discussion, **Mrs Springate proposed and John Light seconded a PCC day away. 9 in favour, 9 abstentions.**

Fr Howard proposed, seconded by Mr Smith, that we set aside 15 minutes during every other PCC meeting to discuss the book. 10 members supported the proposal with 2 against and 6 abstaining. It was agreed that the PCC would buy the book with individual members subsequently buying their own copy should they so wish.

- d. **Should we be asking the public to remove their hats in churches?** Prior to the meeting, Fr Howard had circulated two papers regarding visitors wearing hats into church and bringing food/drink with them. Mr Lawrence advised that during school services a number of parents brought coffee and food into church, leaving the remnants behind on leaving. At other times visitors often carried food and drink into church with some still wearing hats. PCC members agreed to Dr Dolton's suggestion that the wardens discuss with the vergers and welcomers how they might sensitively manage the situation.

In Fr Howard's paper there were two proposals:

- 1) **It is proposed that the PCC ask our vergers (and other staff and volunteers) not to require any particular head-gear to be worn or not worn in Cirencester parish churches until such time as a new vicar can give us more guidance on this matter.**
- 2) **It is proposed that the PCC ask our vergers (and other staff and volunteers) not to prevent people from consuming food or drink in our parish churches until such time as a new vicar can give us more guidance on this matter.**

There was no vote taken on this but members were in general agreement.

13. Any Other Business

- a. **The need for more Pastoral Visitors.** Fr Howard said that, in order to meet current needs, it would be helpful to recruit some more Visitors. This was especially necessary in view of the new Pastoral and Spiritual Hub initiative which might well see an increased need. He asked that should members know of anyone who might be interested and be prepared to attend a training course, to let him know.
- b. **Parish Church Washing Up facilities.** Miss Anderson showed the polystyrene and plastic lined cardboard cups currently used for coffee after service. She asked, in the light of current thinking regarding plastic waste, that serious consideration be given to providing a sink within the church as there may be a time when these cups will be banned. The costs of providing such a facility might be met by the Friends. Mr Kennard said the corridor, where the vestments are stored, might be suitable as there was already water provided for the toilet area. Mrs Springate suggested a visit to Lechlade church where they have a non-obtrusive kitchen. **Dr Dolton agreed that she and Mr Smith look into this matter and liaise with Miss Anderson.**

14. **Date of Next meeting:** Tuesday, 20th February. Parish Centre at 7.30pm