

Parish of Cirencester with Watermoor

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on Tuesday 20th June 2017 at 7.00pm at the Parish Centre

Present: The Right Reverend R Springett, The Right Revd R Evens, The Ven. P Andrew, Mr P Cottey (Vice-Chair), Mr H Gray (Hon. Secretary), Mr J Bathurst (Hon. Treasurer), Mr S Smith, Dr R Dolton, Mrs B Springate, Mrs M Austin, Miss P Phillips, Mrs J Godsell, Mrs H Hammond, Revd K Richardson, Mrs S Beck, Mr M Radford, Mrs C Luck, Mrs D Miller, Mr D Henson, Mr J Lawrence, Miss A Anderson, Mr R Williams, Mr R Marlowe, Mrs J Ivison.

Mr Cottey welcomed Bishop Robert, Bishop Bob and Archdeacon Phil to the meeting. Bishop Bob briefly outlined that Bishop Robert had asked him to oversee the work of the parish during the absence of Fr Howard. He would finish on 11th Sept when Fr Howard returned from his sabbatical. He would be visiting the parish on Wednesdays.

1. The Archdeacon opened the meeting with **prayer**
2. **Apologies for absence** had been received from Mr H Kennard, Mr J Light, Mr M Stratton, Mrs E Ellis, Mrs J Henson.
3. After inviting all members to introduce themselves, the Archdeacon outlined the process for the next few months which would lead to the appointment of a new Vicar. He referred to the Diocesan booklet 'What Happens when a Vicar leaves,' and briefly drew attention to the contents of some of the booklet's sections. He emphasised that the process was one of discernment rather than recruitment, a matter for prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit as the appointing of a new Vicar was God's choice, not ours.

The Archdeacon said that although Bishop Rachel ultimately makes the appointment, it is a collaborative one and he assured members that no one would be 'foisted on us'. He added that the vacancy was an opportunity to 'look in the mirror' and be honest about the challenges facing the parish and that it was essential to produce an honest parish profile outlining the parish's strengths and areas for potential development. He also advised that the Church Times was the best place for the advertisement and that we should ensure the profile was suitable for on-line viewing.

The Parish Profile, he said, will need to show what we are and what we need and we should commence work on this immediately. We should also differentiate the term 'want' from 'need'. The Archdeacon recommended the formation of a 'drafting team' of talented people with the purpose of drawing from the congregations the skills and aspirations people feel they need from the new Vicar and how, as a parish, we wish to be perceived. In summary, he felt it would be reasonably accurate to say that the new Vicar should be 'up for a challenge'.

The time line (mentioned at previous PCC meetings) was also discussed: summarised thus:

- Bishop Rachel formally issues a 'Notice of Vacancy' (Form 31) to the PCC secretary.
- Within the ensuing 4 weeks the PCC holds a Section 11 meeting at which it agrees the Parish profile and formally appoints its PCC reps (2). (Although, historically, we have included 2 extra observers from the other churches) Various forms are exchanged.
- A section 12 meeting can be called (recommended) to 'exchange views' on the Parish Profile and to finalise it.
- Advertising the post will occur on October 13th and 21st.
- Closing date for applications is November 7th.
- Shortlisting by Archdeacon, Patron, Area Dean, and Parish Representatives will be on 17th November
- Invitations to interview are then sent out by the Archdeacon for interviews on 5th December.
- Appointment agreed by Interview panel (subject to satisfactory references and DBS Clearance) and offer made.
- Announcement of the appointment made.

Discussion continued regarding the viability of the Vicarage as suitable accommodation. With the complex ownership of the building, it would be useful to begin serious consideration as to the possibility of selling the property and finding a better alternative, possibly with the assistance of the Diocesan Board of Finance. If this were not possible then maybe the PCC should make the prospect of living in the current Vicarage more attractive by offering to subsidise heating costs.

The Archdeacon requested guidance from the meeting as to how to proceed and whether all parties concerned should look to a sale of the property. The majority of members were in favour of a sale.

Regarding the selection of the 2 (4) PCC reps, the Archdeacon emphasised that these people should possess qualities of **trust, wisdom and integrity**.

4. **Under Bishop Robert's guidance**, members were asked, in groups, to discuss how we will showcase the parish; reflecting honesty and truth, hopes and dreams for the future. We need to consider the gifts and skills we would wish to see in the new incumbent and then display our parish in a way to catch the eye of prospective candidates. The discussions covered the **joys** the parish can celebrate, the **challenges** that God is laying before us, and the skills **needed** in our new appointee.

Summary of feedback:

Joys : Although there is diversity, we work together as a warm, loving and caring community. Our two C or E Primary schools are an important part of our life. We celebrate differences and having fun. Families are now worshipping at Parish Church and Holy Trinity. Large volunteer numbers. The Upper Room link. We can showcase inclusivity e.g. messy church/mass. Diversity of worship.

Challenges: Diversity can lead to differences. Maintaining cohesion essential. Managing the disparate groups. Reaching out to an expanding community. We have three churches with historical and international aspects. Pastoral care for those within and looking outward. High Church tradition with openness and informality. Inclusion of families. Central office.

Needs: We need to use the three churches effectively for mission, reaching out to town and community. We need to inspire unity. Pastoral care is essential with informal outreach to families. We need to see a democratic management style, open and consultative. In the rising population, we need someone to rise to this challenge of reaching out, someone with 'inner security.' We would like to see an incumbent with a diversity of experience, not just from one background.

Bishop Robert stressed that although all parishes are important, this one is particularly so. It casts a long shadow over town and its surrounds. It would be wrong to underestimate the importance of this appointment. It would be right to appoint someone with calibre. The congregations have gifts and abilities and these need to be harnessed and released constructively, so the appointee can be no shrinking violet, but one who can make decisions and work with us – but, at the same time, be no 'pirate king.' He added that it would be likely we would see someone who had run a parish already but not necessarily. It could be a curate who had a wealth of other experience. So the opportunities were wide open for us to appoint, although the Anglo-Catholic tradition would probably continue. So this appointment is a great challenge in finding someone who is strategic and pastoral. This is a complex ministry which will require understanding. Bishop Robert added that the Diocese would be looking to endorse someone who has their confidence in leading this significant parish, would be a blessing to this town and also beyond. He said this was a difficult time for appointments as there were fewer applicants coming forward.

Our task, then, is to compile the Parish Profile. A group is needed to commence that work after consultations with congregations, community groups and schools. We need an interesting, attractive and truthful Profile to include photographs of people being actively involved in church life. Obtaining other parish's profile could help as a starting point.

Mr Cottey thanked Bishop Robert and Archdeacon Phil for leading the meeting and he encouraged members to garner comments from their congregations and feed them back, in writing. It was agreed that the six wardens

should meet initially to produce a draft Profile for discussion and amendment. **Mr Cottey emphasised the need for initial confidentiality over everything discussed at PCC meetings.**

At this point Bishop Robert, Archdeacon Phil, Mr Marlowe and Mrs Hammond left the meeting.

5. **Minutes of the meeting** held on Tuesday 18th May 2017. There was one amendment - Mrs B Springate was added to the list of those who gave apologies for that meeting.

6. Matters Arising

- 1) Changes to Morning and Evening Prayer. Revd Katie said that a number of lay people had volunteered to help lead these services so they would occur at 9am and 4.30pm on week-days at the Parish Church. Mr Cottey volunteered to make the changes to the noticeboards, accordingly.
- 2) It was agreed to make a donation of £750 to the Holy Trinity Flower fund.
- 3) Election of two members to the Friends of the Parish Church.

Mr John Light (proposed by Mrs Godsell and seconded by Mr Smith) and Peter Cottey (proposed by Mr Lawrence and seconded by Mrs Miller) were elected. If it were found that Mr Light was already a member then Mrs C Luck would be elected.

7. Urgent Parish Items

1. Mark Stratton, Elizabeth Breakspear-Jones, Stephanie Robbins and Rosemary Gray were all approved as Eucharistic Ministers.
2. The Secretary informed the meeting that he had received an e-mail on 9th June from Mr. Lyndon Ford outlining that, at the time of writing, he had yet to be paid for work done for the Organ Festival. Mr Ford wrote that his invoice, submitted on the 1st May, was still outstanding and despite repeated requests, he had received no payment. Since he was considering court action to recover payment and since, as trustees, we had agreed the Organ Festival was a PCC supported event, the matter was passed to the Vice-Chair and Treasurer for comment. As it was noted there were insufficient funds in the Festival PayPal account to pay the bill, it was paid immediately through Parish Funds.

Mr Ford had voiced strong concerns over how his request for payment was handled and the tone of emails he had received from the Festival organiser(s) and says he will be registering a formal complaint with the Charities Commission unless he has assurances that this will never happen again to him or any other traders.

The question of who received the collections from the Organ recitals was also raised and it was understood that this money was put 'towards music'.

Mr Bathurst emphasised that the Organ Festival money was handled separately from Parish Accounts and no responsibility could be attached to the Parish Office staff for this situation.

It was agreed to convene a Standing Committee to discuss the incident as a matter of urgency.

8. **The date of the next meeting** would be Wednesday 26th July at 7.45pm at the Parish Centre.