



ST MARGARET'S CHURCH

To know and share God's transforming love with one another,
our local community and the wider world

Minutes PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING held at 8pm in the Parish Office on Monday September 25th, 2023

Present; Revd Hannah Gordon (Chair), Jenny Smith, Nigel Smith, Jill Lindsay, Ray King, Tom Sanderson, Kat Wicksteed, Janice Whittle, Perry Esparon, Ian Thirlwall, Revd John Wates, Eamonn Davern, Rosalind Lumberg, Sally Bowes

1 The meeting was opened at 8.00 pm with a hymn, bible reading and a prayer.

2 Apologies were received from Madeleine MacCallum

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on July 24th, 2023, were approved, and were signed by Revd Hannah Gordon.

4. Matters Arising.

Faculty Application: Sally reported that she continued to progress the application with the architect's firm.

Request for pre-faculty approval for grave cover: Ian and Hannah had met with the grave owner who had agreed to the plot being grassed over. She also confirmed she was content for Ian and the Church Yard Team to tend the grave.

Anti-Slavery Pledge: Deborah has contacted the Church Warden of the Good Shephard. He provided information on their Parish's plans to promote the Pledge and details of Deanery contacts who could provide advice on how to support the initiative. Eamonn would explore how the Good Shephard's material might be adapted for use by St Margaret's and speak to the Deanery about implementation.

Action: *Eamonn will contact the Good Shephard and Reigate Deanery to obtain further information on implementing the Anti-Slavery Pledge and report back to PCC.*

Contactless Giving: Hannah reported that installing a Card Reader in advance of the installation of the new AV system would require a separate Faculty B application. In the interim wedding parties would be advised that cards with QR Codes could be issued to enable Giving.

Parish Support Fund Pledge: Eamonn had reported PCCs decision to the Archdeacon, i.e. advising that a further contribution, following the initial £100k Pledge, would be considered during the year if the financial position enabled this.

Communications: Some information on the Web Site is still inaccurate, including details of when the Parish Office is open. Church opening remains a problem for volunteers who, unless they are key holders, often encounter difficulties in accessing the building, not all volunteers wish to become key holders. Hannah advised that the Church is normally open on Monday and Wednesday mornings, the Web Site would be checked to ensure that it contained correct information. Hannah would also welcome any proposals to assist with the access issue. She added that the Web Site was a work in progress and suggested that a PCC Group could consider improvements in advance of a discussion to be held at the Vision Day.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments need to be systematic, should be reviewed yearly, and should include Assessments completed by staff.

Actions: Perry and Nigel will review the current Risk Assessments, identify a common format for these and liaise with Josh to store these on one common file.

Hannah will speak to Deborah to arrange Risk Assessments of staff roles.

5 Stewardship of our Resources

PMT Fund Update

Hannah advised that funds received had been placed in a separate bank account from other Parish funds (£50k as a personal donation -£60k with Gift Aid – and £100k as a company donation). The latter included a suggestion that some money could be dedicated to improving disabled access, this was now being discussed (see next agenda item).

The *Standing Committee* has agreed the purchase of 2 new laptops to replace existing damaged kit, one for the Administrator and another for the AV system. PCC agreed the purchase of a lectern to assist service leaders.

It was confirmed that funding from the PMT donation can be used for general Church maintenance and heating/fuel efficiency measures.

Premises Team Update

The full Team had not yet met, Nigel summarised current issues.

Church Lighting

Madeleine had spoken to Rick Lancaster who offered some informal opinions on lighting in the church. Sally has requested copies of the Church of England and Diocesan church lighting guidelines. These will be passed to the Premises Team who will take this issue forward and report back to PCC .

Disabled Access

The Premises Team will meet with the Diocesan Disability Officer (DDO) to discuss potential improvements. It was difficult for some people (with restricted mobility, wheelchair users, pushing prams/buggies etc) to access the steep gradient of the pathway to the Orchard in the Churchyard. Proposals would need to be developed to reduce the gradient to be no more than 1 in 20 as required to comply with DDA. There was also a suggestion that the side gate onto Church Lane should be replaced and worked commissioned to enable access for wheelchair users and parking for 2 cars for disabled passengers. A Reigate and Banstead Disability Foundation Group offer advice and can potentially provide grants to improve accessibility ensuring that public facilities are DDA compliant.

Proposals will be finalised following the discussions with the DDO.

Car Parking

Large numbers of parked cars sometimes cause access problems, particularly at the end of Church Lane. The Chipstead Village Preservation Society (CVPS) had occasionally agreed to The Paddock being used for events (such as siting a wedding reception marquee), but not for parking. The Premises Team will contact CVPS to enquire if they might agree to occasional use of The Paddock for parking.

Fabric Report

The Fabric Reports for July and September were noted. A meeting is to be arranged to consider several repairs to the Mugswell Hall. These are the responsibility of St Margaret's and the PMT fund can be used to cover costs.

Heating

Church heating was discussed, whilst it was important to ensure that the building was adequately heated for services and other events there could be savings from adjusting the timer so that costs were not incurred when the Church was not being used. Ian described issues relating to the thermostat controlling the system. PCC agreed with his suggestion that the setting should be reduced from 22C to 18C which would maintain an adequate level of heating in the Church. Ian also advised that adjustments could be made to the timer so that the building was not heated when closed.

Action: The Premises Team will prepare a summary of Church usage and present this to PCC prior to the timer being adjusted. Ian will lower the Thermostat setting.

Future Work

As agreed at the July PCC the Premises Team will produce a potential schedule of work which

could be funded from the legacy, Hannah will review proposals which will be presented for PCC to consider in Spring 2024. This could include work to improve the Church entrance.

Finance Team

Following the decision at the July PCC to establish a Finance sub - committee Kat Wicksteed has suggested that, with the addition of new members with expertise in finance issues, the remit of the HR Committee could be expanded to incorporate a finance function. This would cover provision of advice to Hannah and PCC on managing the budget and support for the Treasurer when appointed. PCC agreed to this proposal. Hannah advised that she was aware of two people with appropriate skills who she could approach to join the Committee, and reiterated her message from the July PCC that she would welcome proposals for further members. When established the newly combined HR/Finance Group will meet and agree Terms of Reference (TORs), including those discussed at the July PCC i.e. *accounts preparation, Gift Aid, Stewardship, Long-term Vision, and setting next year's Budget.*

Action: Hannah will ask potential members if they would agree to join the HR/Finance Team.

Safeguarding

Hannah will, meet with Samantha Esparon to discuss Safeguarding procedures, and arrange for a review of Parish staff and Volunteer roles to ensure full compliance with Safeguarding requirements. Samantha will also be asked to provide details of Safeguarding audit procedures (e.g., scope and frequency).

Actions: Hannah will ask Deborah to compile a list of staffing and volunteer roles to enable a Safeguarding procedures review.

Eamonn will ask Samantha to confirm Safeguarding Audit requirements.

Sparkfish

Harriet Pearce, the Director of Sparkfish, has written to Deborah to advise that the organization is facing funding difficulties and is requesting support from local Parishes. Deborah referred this request to Steve Chang-Whitehead (as Chair of the Mission Committee).

St Margaret's has, in the past, partnered with Sparkfish where people under their training have worked some of the time in schools and helped the Parish with junior church and youth work. Josh currently supports some Sparkfish activities.

Steve has confirmed that the Mission Committee budget has already been spent for this financial year (the contingency was allocated to the Syria Earthquake appeal earlier in the year.) Any additional funding would require agreement to additional support from the PCC.

PCC noted the excellent work that Sparkfish does across several local Parishes, and in principle would consider supporting a feasible funding arrangement. The consensus view was that before this could be investigated it was important to ascertain how much support the organization was seeking and the future delivery plan that this would enable.

As Sparkfish works across the Deanery it was suggested that it might be appropriate for a cross-Parish discussion to be convened by the Deanery Synod.

Hannah will meet Harriet to obtain more information on; Sparkfish's current financial situation, and recovery plan , and report back to PCC.

Action: Hannah will report back to PCC following her meeting with the Sparkfish Director

Update: Eamonn has written to the Deanery Synod suggesting that it could convene a discussion to consider Sparkfish's funding request.

6 Planning for our Future

Parish Magazine

The number of subscriptions has reduced significantly in recent years and Magazine income from sales and advertising only marginally exceeds production costs, this reflected the overall decline in print media. The role and purpose of the Magazine as part of the Parish's communication strategy was discussed, e.g., as a source of general information, a notice board, and the balance between a Church focus or wider community news.

It was decided that the size of the Magazine would be reduced from January 2024 including removing the Parish Pump section. *The Parish Magazine Team would review the future of the publication and be ready with proposals for future direction by June 2024. The review would include consultation with current subscribers, seeking views from the wider congregation, reviewing sales points, investigating advertising potential, exploring the feasibility of a move to an on-line format or mixed media, considering frequency of publication, possibility of changing to an annual "glossy" production, considering the future purpose/role of the Magazine as a communication vehicle.*

Holy Communion

Self - Intinction by members of the Congregation receiving Holy Communion was contrary to instructions issued by the Diocese, and inconsistent with public health guidance. Bishop Christopher wrote to all clergy in March 2022 to encourage them to return to the common cup when administering communion, Hannah had reintroduced this when arriving at St Margaret's. Some members of the congregation had expressed concerns at receiving the common cup.

Following a wide-ranging discussion, it was agreed that from 29th October 2023 one half of the rail will offer communion in two kinds: the wafers and the cup separately, alongside gluten free and alcohol-free alternatives. The other half of the rail will offer simultaneous administration. Self intinction will no longer be allowed. Each side will receive at the same time, supported by additional communion administrators.

Hannah will compose a draft letter for PCC consideration to advise the congregation of the background to the changes. This will cover, practical health, canon law, and theological considerations. The changes will also be communicated to the congregation on three consecutive Sundays following the letter being issued on Friday October 6th. The practice will be kept under review for 4 months and PCC will then formally assess the situation.

7 Date of next meeting

- 6th November 2023 – 8pm in the Parish Office

The meeting closed at 10pm.