

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 1 March 2016 at 7.30pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey (present for items with "JM" after the heading)	Jane Woolley (Secretary)	Hazel Connelly (present from item 2)
Jean Barton (Chair)	Christina Wood	Lizi Bowerman
Andrew Keene	Mel Gibson	Monika Buxton
Peter Barclay-Watt (Treasurer)	Tony Hughes	Frances Taylor

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1 and 2. The PCCs then dispersed into separate meetings to cover item 3 onwards.

1. Opening & Prayer (JM)

Revd Dr Jonathan Mobey opened the meeting by reading Hebrews 12: 1-3 ("Let us run the race...").

Jonathan commented that this passage paints a picture of a race, and of fixing our eyes on Jesus. This means not allowing ourselves to be distracted by other things. Likewise, as a PCC, everything we do needs to be focused on Him.

Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Any items of joint business (JM)

Benefice Songs of Praise

Jonathan Mobey proposed that we organise a Songs of Praise for the Benefice, to be held in the Harwell Feast marquee on Sunday 29 May, with a focus on the Queen's 90th birthday.

Jonathan said that Pam Rolls has a book called The Servant Queen. This talks about the Queen's life and her faith, and how her faith drives her life and service. We could perhaps draw on this book to create the theme for Songs of Praise. Jonathan also suggested drawing in various groups e.g. the Celebration Choir, Harwell Young Singers, etc.

There was then some discussion about the best time to hold the service. It was noted that there is a Harwell Feast-related Vikings session for children at 3pm on the same day, so we need to avoid a clash with that. There would also be implications for the Sunday evening service, due to be held in All Saints', Chilton.

Liz Morris (All Saints', Chilton PCC) confirmed that there are no plans for a Queen's 90th birthday event in Chilton.

There were no objections to the proposal to hold a Songs of Praise. Jonathan asked that anyone who is interested in joining a planning group for the event to let him know.

Benefice Harvest Barn Dance

It was reported that Chilton village hall and also a band have been booked for this event, which Alex Reich (All Saints', Chilton PCC) is leading on organising.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Pam Rolls, Jan Radford and Gordon Gill.

4. Minutes of the January 2016 meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved, provided that the stray first line at the top of page 5 in the “subject to approval” version circulated is removed.

A copy of the minutes without this error was then signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

There were none.

6. Decisions between meetings by Standing Committee

Jane Woolley was appointed Deputy Electoral Roll Officer by the Standing Committee, to cover the absence of the Electoral Roll Officer (Mike Pepper) in the run up to the Annual Meeting.

There were no objections to this, and the meeting expressed its thanks to Jane for being willing to act in this capacity.

7. Approval of the Year-End Financial Statements

The Treasurer pointed out one small amendment to the year-end accounts since we discussed them in detail at the January PCC meeting, and now that they have been independently examined. This was a small amount of interest received which had been previously overlooked. The result is that deficit is lower by c.£14.

Resolution	To approve the year-end financial statements.				
Moved	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Mel Gibson	Passed	Unanimously

8. Approval of the Annual Report

There was one minor amendment request to the Annual Report – that the caption under the photo of the church interior on page 19 should say “2013” rather than “now”.

Resolution	To approve the PCC Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2015, subject to the minor amendment noted above.				
Moved	Frances Taylor	Seconded	Christina Wood	Passed	Unanimously

The following action was agreed following a query raised by Tony Hughes:

Action: Jane Woolley to check with Jonathan Mobey if arrangements are in hand to print “sub-reports” on the following three topics to accompany talks in church in the run up to the Annual Meeting:

- Finance
- Children & Families
- Buildings

9. Preparation for churchwarden and PCC elections

The two current churchwardens indicated that they are willing to stand for annual election again.

The elected Deanery Synod representatives on the PCC are still within their three year term and none is known to be standing down early.

Monika Buxton was elected to PCC for three years in 2013 but will not be standing for election again in 2016 because she is moving away. Five PCC members were elected in 2015 for 3 years.

The Secretary explained that there will therefore be seven vacancies for elected PCC members at the Annual Meeting (we can have up to 12 and we currently have five). One of the eligibility criteria is that candidates must have been on the church electoral roll for at least 6 months. We can only co-opt two people to the PCC who have not been elected at the Annual Meeting.

The meeting acknowledged the importance of encouraging church members to stand for election to the PCC, and of ensuring that potential candidates are on the electoral roll in time. The Secretary handed out paper copies of the PCC nomination form for PCC members to pass on to potential candidates.

Action: Jane Woolley to circulate a copy of the electoral roll so that PCC members can see who is eligible for election to the PCC.

10. Format and agenda of Annual Meeting

The proposal is that the Annual Meeting will follow the main Sunday morning service, as in 2015.

The meeting remembered that the 2015 Annual Meeting did not successfully provoke any discussion or questions. The Secretary read out from the May 2015 PCC minutes the thoughts and ideas recorded then about how we might improve this situation.

It was agreed that the most appropriate stimulus to prompting discussion and questions would be if Jonathan Mobey were to give a brief talk at the Annual Meeting on the PCC's broad vision for where the church is going (the “grow the church” vision), including making the case for widening the use of the church building and the rationale for improving the heating and seating, along with a broad indication of costs. It was suggested that Jonathan could display some questions on the overhead screen to prompt members of the audience to give their reaction to, or to raise other questions about, what they have heard.

A further suggestion was to invite church members via the service noticesheets to think in advance of any questions they have for the PCC, and either to bring these to the meeting, or to submit them to Jonathan in advance.

The meeting also agreed that there should be a specific item on the agenda to thank (in general, not by name, and not exhaustively) all those who play a role in helping church life run effectively.

11.

Action: Jane Woolley to relay the above views to Jonathan Mobey and agree with him a revised agenda for the Annual Meeting, and any other associated arrangements.

Action: Mel Gibson to let the coffee servers know that coffee will need to be served at 11.40 on the day of the Annual Meeting.

Lunch

Opinion was split on the issue of whether we should arrange for the Annual Meeting to be followed by a bring-and-share lunch. Practical drawbacks of a lunch cited were:

- those playing in the orchestra would have been there since 10am and just want to get home by the time it gets to 12.30, and don't want to have to think about their bring and share contribution on top of this commitment;
- older members of the congregation typically don't find a buffet-style/BBQ/picnic format very easy to manage physically;
- many members of the congregation are wedded to having a hot meal at Sunday lunchtimes.

PCC members acknowledged the importance of members of a church "family" socialising together. However, due to the limited enthusiasm for a bring-and-share lunch after the Annual Meeting, it was agreed that this would not take place this year.

An alternative suggestion was to arrange a social occasion at some other point in the year, and not necessarily linked to the timing of a church service. Tony Hughes suggested that the PCC social secretary appointed at the May 2016 PCC meeting might be asked to consider this matter further.

Circulation of reports, agenda, etc. in advance of Annual Meeting

The Secretary confirmed that this is in hand.

12. Finance Report

There was no Finance Report as such, it being so early in the financial year.

The Treasurer verbally reported the following information:

- As well as the recent legacy of c.£20k mentioned at the January PCC meeting, the Treasurer has been advised that St Matthew's will be receiving another legacy but he doesn't yet know the size.
- The PCC has received a donation of £4,000 plus gift aid towards the cost of chairs for the Chancel. This should more or less cover the cost of the chairs in full.
- Pledges to cover the cost of an additional three year Children and Families worker contract for the Benefice have reached about 90% of St Matthew's share. If we assume that the total cost of a further three year contract would be c.£105k, St Matthew's two-thirds share would be c.£70k. So far we have pledges of a little over £60k from 15 individuals. That suggests that there is plenty of scope for further pledges to be forthcoming. Furthermore, some existing donors no doubt intend to continue their donation but have not appreciated the need to confirm this with the Treasurer.
- The Treasurer will be sending all existing donors to the Children and Families worker fund a thank you letter, and a request to confirm whether or not they would be willing to continue donating to cover a further three year contract.

- There is still a shortfall of c.£17k in the fund to cover the Children and Families worker's current three year contract. This shortfall is underwritten by PCC reserves.
- If we project forward the level of general giving from the nine Sundays so far this financial year, we are on track to meet the general giving budget (although this still leaves us with a c.£8k deficit).

The Chair thanked the Finance Committee for all their work.

13. Buildings Committee Report

The Buildings Committee Report was noted.

14. Improvements to St Matthew's building (JM present from the place indicated)

Chancel re-ordering

Tony Hughes gave the following verbal update:

We now have a certificate from the DAC agreeing to everything in our proposal, with one condition. This is that the colour of the chairs be matched to the lightest colour of wood in the chancel, rather than to the colour of wood on the communion rail. Tony Hughes said that these two colours are very similar, and so this condition should not pose problems.

The next step is to apply for a Faculty. For that we need quotations. Christina Wood is updating quotations for the chairs. Tony Hughes is pursuing quotations for the joinery work. Tony hopes to be in a position to apply for a Faculty by the end of March.

The cost of the chairs will be covered by the donation referred to in the Finance Report item above. The remaining cost will be that for the joinery work.

It is hoped that the work could be carried out sometime this summer.

In response to a question from a PCC member, Tony Hughes stated that this DAC certificate is specific to the chancel and has no bearing on whether we would be successful in obtaining a DAC certificate for replacing pews with chairs in the rest of the church.

Seating in the rest of the church

Tony Hughes said that there is nothing to report. We are awaiting further PCC consideration following the Fit for the Future consultation.

Heating

Tony Hughes gave the following verbal update:

Effectiveness of central heating radiators

Tony Hughes has been looking into the extent to which radiators around the walls would heat the whole church. Mr Dunphy, the contractor who gave a scoping quote for a central heating system in autumn 2015, expressed the view that radiators would be successful in heating areas of the church not in the immediate vicinity of the radiators. Mr Dunphy recommended talking to other local churches he had fitted with radiators, namely Ewelme church, and All Saints' Headington.

Contacts at each of these two churches confirmed to Tony Hughes that they were indeed satisfied with the distribution of heat from the radiators.

Tony Hughes visited Ewelme church and measured the temperature there when the heating had been on for some time. He found it was 1-2 degrees lower in the centre than at the walls but that the temperature did not *feel* noticeably lower. Ewelme has no gas supply, so their boiler is electrically heated, which must make their running costs a lot higher than ours would be.

Running costs for central heating radiators

Tony Hughes explained that radiator-based central heating systems work by heating the air, and subsequently the fabric of the building, rather than heating people per se. They therefore take a while to have an impact. Radiant heaters (such as those we already have in the church) work by focusing heat directly at people. They therefore have a more or less instant impact – but also the church feels cool again almost as soon as they are turned off.

Tony Hughes has tried to obtain figures for the running costs for central heating radiators from other churches but such figures are not easy to come by. The churches he has spoken to could not provide their true heating costs, and any figures available are therefore not very precise.

The most well-informed figures have been provided by All Saints' Sutton Courtenay, which has gas-fired central heating radiators. Their figures would suggest that the running costs of such a system would be rather higher than previously stated in the paper at our July 2015 PCC meeting.

Tony Hughes has done some rough calculations and has concluded that the running cost of gas fired central heating radiators for church usage similar to ours is about half that of radiant heaters. The paper in July 2015 assumed that the running costs would be about a third of that of radiant heaters. This reduces the economic case for installing and running gas fired central heating radiators over a 20 year period. The previously calculated 20 year cost for gas fired central heating radiators (i.e. installation plus running costs) was c.£100k for current levels of church usage. The revised running cost estimate now raises this to c.£110k. This compares with the c.£55k cost of the existing radiant heater system over 20 years (which has no installation costs attached).

However, usage levels have a key impact on projections of costs over 20 years. If we were to use the church/put the heating on a lot more, then the economic case for gas fired central heating radiators is strengthened. The economic case for gas fired central heating would win out over radiant heating when we need to use the church for about **three times as many hours** as we do currently.

Tony reported that All Saints' Headington uses a mixture of central heating radiators in the nave and radiant heaters elsewhere. Their representative told Tony that although their system is good there are still *"draughts around the feet"*. When given information about our system and how it was currently used he said *"Your system sounds pretty good and economic, and hardly worth changing!"*

So a key factor in all this remains our assumptions about how many hours we expect the church to be used per year in future (and therefore needs to be heated – at least in the colder months). In economic terms the extra expense of installing gas fired central heating radiators is only justified if usage increases substantially. (The July 2015 PCC paper did however refer also to other non-economic factors.)

The case for upgrading our existing radiant heating system

If PCC members are sceptical whether usage of the church building will increase sufficiently to warrant the cost of installing a central heating system, an alternative solution would be to replace those of our radiant heaters that are old and less efficient (half of them). This could be done for an installation cost of under £10k. It would also slightly reduce the running costs compared to the current radiant heaters. We could see how that performs over a couple of years, in combination with replacing the pews with chairs. We could then see if more flexible seating plus slightly better heating results wider usage of the church.

Peter Barclay-Watt pointed out that using our existing system for more hours, whilst increasing annual running costs, could over many years add up to less than the cost of investing in a new system.

The downside of these options is that even an improved radiant heating system will not be as effective as a central heating system in improving the church interior from a comfort perspective in the colder seasons. This in itself might then be an inhibitor to wider church usage even with improved seating. It should though be borne in mind that heating is not needed anyway for several months of the year.

Jonathan Mobey joined the meeting at this point.

Questions from PCC members

PCC members had the following questions, which Tony Hughes answered as follows:

Q. Could we just put the existing heating on for longer e.g. put it on further in advance of the start of a service?

A. Yes. That would improve the temperature comfort somewhat - although expenditure would of course increase accordingly.

Mel Gibson informed the meeting that the current average weekly heating bill is £83 when the heating is on for Sunday morning services. It has been as high as £120 if it has also been on for Godspell rehearsals in the afternoon.

Christina Wood commented that it has felt pretty cold during the main Sunday morning service recently, even with the heating on e.g. she has felt the need to keep her coat on.

Q. If we upgraded to better radiant heaters, what would the temperature impact be?

A. It won't ever feel as "toasty" warm in the church as in a modern well-insulated house, even with central heating system. Ewelme church is a similar size to St Matthew's. When Tony Hughes visited, they had put the radiators on boost for five hours prior to his arrival. The church did feel warm on entry, but when he walked round there were still cold spots, and the church representative said that some people still complain that it feels cold. If we were to put the blower heater on in the porch it would help it to feel warm on entry. However, once people sit down, they would feel the effects of draughts.

Jonathan Mobey said that he felt that until the heating is significantly improved, we will be unable to make more extensive use of the building, even with improved seating. For instance, the Fledgelings group involves babies, and they need a significantly higher ambient temperature than the average adult.

Tony Hughes said that he felt that changing the seating was the more significant factor than heating in potentially increasing usage. Many of the envisaged extra uses of the church would not be feasible without a flexible floor space, whereas they don't necessarily depend critically on improved heating. Jonathan Mobey disagreed and felt that improved heating was critical to increasing usage.

Q. If we changed the seating first without installing central heating radiators at the same time, would it be feasible to install central heating radiators later?

A. Yes. If we took the pews out, we would presumably cover the floor with carpet. We could take the carpet up to fit central heating piping and radiators, and then relay it afterwards. NB: A cross-nave water pipe to serve radiators on the south side could come across the building along a cross beam rather than under the floor, so we might only have to take the carpet up at the edges.

Mel Gibson and Jonathan Mobey expressed reservations about changing the seating without also improving the heating significantly. They felt that spending c.£10k on better radiant heaters might not result in much improvement, and therefore be wasted, and also possibly deter us from ever abandoning radiant heaters in favour of central heating.

Mel Gibson expressed the opinion that there would be plenty of church members who would be willing to donate to improve church heating significantly.

Jonathan Mobey said that he felt that we should be aiming for the church to be in use all day every day if possible, and therefore an efficient and effective heating system is essential. In particular, putting on existing church activities currently held in other venues, such as courses, is simply not viable in the church building at the moment because it is not warm enough, even with the radiant heaters on.

Jonathan Mobey asked the PCC whether or not it is in a position to make a formal decision about how to proceed, and if not, what should be the next step.

There then followed a debate about whether or not there is sufficient evidence of demand for wider usage of the church which would warrant installation of a central heating radiator system, what such evidence would need to consist of, and whether it would be feasible to obtain it. There was also a debate about the merits of the approach of changing the seating first and significantly altering the heating system later rather than investing in both at the same time.

Jonathan Mobey said that he felt that even use of St Matthew's for current church-related activities (e.g. alpha and marriage courses, Fledgelings, Scouts, etc.) would suffice to make the economic case for gas fired central heating. This is without any additional community use.

PCC members were divided into the following two camps on the heating question:

- Those who would prefer to change the seating and the heating at the same time, and for the heating to be changed to gas fired central heating radiators.
- Those who would prefer to change the seating first, and limit the change in heating arrangements to just an upgrade of the radiant heaters and/or putting the radiant heaters on for longer, until we see the impact of changing the seating on church use.

There was no one who was opposed to changing the seating, or to installing gas fired central heating radiators if necessary in due course.

There was also a debate about the need for clearer buy-in from other church members to these possible changes. Some PCC members suggested the need for further engagement with the congregation, given the small proportion who had commented so far, and the lack of costs information provided at the consultation. Others expressed the opinion that the level of response to any consultation is often low and that there is nothing more to gain by consulting further.

The conclusion drawn and action agreed was in line with paragraph 3 of Item 10 of these minutes i.e. for Jonathan Mobey to use the Annual Meeting to cast the PCC's vision for where the church should be heading, and the broad principle of improving the heating and the seating as part of achieving that vision. Jonathan would then ask the Annual Meeting to comment on whether it agreed with the PCC's vision and the associated principle of improving the building's seating and heating.

Fit for the Future consultation – actions from previous meeting

- *Jonathan Mobey to communicate the church vision to church members, and the link with improving buildings.*
- *Jonathan Mobey to encourage further church members to consider the proposals and to give their views.*

These two actions will be carried out via the Annual Meeting, as mentioned in the paragraph above.

- *Jonathan Mobey to arrange a notice in the Broadsheet & service sheets about the feedback generated by the consultation.*

DONE.

- *Hazel Connelly to organise a day of prayer, and to speak to Pam Rolls about this.*

DONE. The day of prayer is set for Saturday 16 April 2016, the week before the Annual Meeting. It was suggested that this might also include thanksgiving for the Children's and Families work.

15. Church Hall Management Committee report (JM)

The Church Hall Management Committee report was noted.

16. Health and Safety (JM)

Extending the Concerts Policy to events other than Concerts – actions from previous meeting

- *Jonathan Mobey to broaden the name and references in the Concerts Policy document to the "Events Policy".*
- *Jonathan Mobey to make other regular users of the church building aware of the Events Policy, and in particular its health and safety requirements – currently only Harwell Young Singers/Zara Zimmerman falls into this category.*

Both actions are DONE.

Risk assessment for activities in the church building – actions from previous meeting

- *Hazel Connelly to make a list of risk assessments required for the church building, and to pass this list to Jonathan Mobey.*

DONE. Hazel has identified c.20 risk assessments required.

- *Jonathan Mobey, Mel Gibson and Christina Wood to check if any of the required risk assessments have already been done.*

DONE. 4/20 of the required assessments exist currently.

- *Jonathan Mobey, Mel Gibson and Christina Wood to ask Hazel to carry out any further assessments required.*

DONE. Hazel Connelly has agreed to draw up the remaining assessments required. Hazel reported that she is going to enlist the help of another health and safety expert.

Jonathan Mobey reported that James Hallam, All Saints', Chilton, is going to carry out equivalent assessments there. Hazel said that she would liaise with him.

Action carried over: Hazel Connelly to carry out the required risk assessments.

17. Harvest 2016

In addition to the discussion about the barn dance recorded until Item 2, the following actions from the previous meeting were covered:

- *Jane Woolley to let the Village Hall Bookings Secretary know that we do not require the Village Hall this year.*

DONE.

- *Identify a St Matthew's volunteer to liaise with Alex Reich about the Barn Dance in Chilton*

DONE. Becky Lewis has volunteered, and has been in touch with Alex.

18. Evening service on the second Sunday

No change for now. Review again at the July meeting.

19. Harwell Feast, Monday 30 May 2016

The Feast Committee would like the church to organise the manpower for the Feast BBQ once again. Jane Woolley said that she is willing to handle this once again. PCC members expressed their thanks to Jane for taking on this task.

20. Future dates to note

6 March – Mothering Sunday

27 March – Easter Sunday

16 April – Day of Prayer

24 April – Church Annual Meeting

30 April – PCC Awayday (will be at Aston Tirrold again – further details tbc)

29 May – Songs of Praise

30 May – Harwell Feast

21. Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE