

Minutes of a Meeting of Harwell PCC
held on Tuesday 4 October 2016 at 7.30pm in St Matthew's, Harwell

Present

Jonathan Mobey – Chair for items 1 & 2 and present where “JM” is indicated in the item heading	Andrew Keene Jane Woolley (Secretary) Christina Wood	Lizi Bowerman Frances Taylor Sid Gale
Jean Barton (Chair for item 3 onwards)	Mel Gibson Tony Hughes	Martin Gibson Pam Rolls (items 1 & 2 only)
Gordon Gill	Hazel Connelly	

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 Galatians 6 v.1-10 on the subject of bearing one another's burdens. Jonathan particularly highlighted v9: *“So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest.”*

Jonathan then led the meeting in prayer.

2. Items of joint business with All Saints' PCC (JM)

(i) Benefice financial priorities for 2017

Papers A, D and E-H refer.

Jonathan Mobey explained that each PCC needs to decide what it will contribute towards the £3,500 needed from our Benefice to run a CAP centre in OX11 in 2017, in partnership with other local churches. This is an initiative that we have previously agreed in principle that we would like to support.

Jonathan explained that each PCC needs to make this decision bearing in mind that a 4% Parish Share increase will be due in 2017, equating to £2,785 at a Benefice level (we had previously been expecting a Parish Share increase “holiday” in 2017).

During the ensuing discussion, it was clarified that Benefice expenses (including Parish Share) are normally apportioned two-thirds to St Matthew's and one-third to All Saints'. So if one PCC is unable to meet its share of any Benefice expenses, it affects the Benefice as a whole. In the case of Parish Share obligations, it could also affect the financial viability of the Deanery. In the case of CAP obligations, it could affect the other participating churches or the viability of the OX11 CAP centre.

Jonathan pointed out that it is therefore helpful for the two PCCs to have a joint discussion about financial priorities for 2017. In particular, PCC members should try and come to a common Benefice view on the priority to place on financially supporting a CAP centre in OX11.

In the ensuing discussion it was clarified that:

- St Matthew's operating finances are in a less precarious state than All Saints'. In particular St Matthew's has already received a £1,500 donation specifically for CAP.
- St Matthew's could choose to subsidise All Saints' share of Benefice expenses.
- The Deanery's position is that Parish Share payments must take highest priority i.e. take precedence over mission-giving (of which CAP would be an example).

In relation to CAP, the discussion also clarified that:

- The £3,500 p.a. includes all mandatory expenses i.e. no further unexpected costs are anticipated.

- We would be required to pay our CAP contribution monthly.
- The participating churches can extract themselves from their CAP centre obligations by giving notice to CAP¹ that they intend to close the centre.
- If we cannot contribute the £3,500 p.a. required, the OX11 CAP centre is unlikely to go ahead.
- As far as we know, the other two OX11 churches are able to find their share of the money.
- There is likely to be pressure to increase our annual contribution in due course – maybe after a year or two. Initially, the Wallingford churches would continue with their current level of financial support for the CAP centre in OX10; the OX11 churches would simply cover the additional costs of running the OX11 centre as a satellite of the OX10 centre. But in the longer term it would be more equitable to share the costs more evenly between the OX11 and OX10 centres, if possible.
- It is possible that other local churches might come on board with the OX11 CAP centre in future and thus help to share the financial burden, but we shouldn't rely on this.
- We could fundraise retrospectively to help cover CAP financial commitments, including amongst the wider community. It was acknowledged that there is widespread agreement in society as a whole that it is in everyone's interest to constructively help people to extract themselves from being in unsustainable debt and to help people to avoid such debt in future. It was also acknowledged that there are many people in our area who might be willing to support a local endeavour such as this. We could also apply for grants.

There was some discussion about whether expenditure on a CAP centre should come out of our World Missions budgets, despite CAP's local focus. Some advocated this suggestion. Others disagreed and felt that we should focus that budget on supporting mission in the developing world, given the relative economic prosperity of even the most disadvantaged members of UK society, and that we have an on-going obligation to our long-term world mission partners.

In the ensuing discussion, there was enthusiasm amongst members of both PCCs for giving the OX11 CAP centre a high financial priority, provided that we can also meet our Parish Share obligations. For example, Jonathan Mobey expressed his sense that God does seem to be leading us towards supporting a CAP centre. For instance, the inter-denominational partnership aspect is very positive thing.

As an indication for the subsequent individual PCC meetings, Jonathan Mobey asked for a non-binding show of hands in favour of the Benefice allocating £3,500 to the CAP project in 2017. The result was 21 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

(ii) Ministry apprentice/intern

Jonathan Mobey said that there is no progress on appointing an apprentice, and that the advert is still running with an open deadline for applications.

Jonathan also clarified that the intention is to continue to run the advert until Christmas and to review the situation again at that point. Jonathan said that he was pessimistic about finding a suitable appointee unless we take a radically different approach to publicising the post.

In response to a question from Gordon Gill, Carina Lobley (All Saints' PCC) said that the Science & Faith project could re-allocate the £3k for staff costs in the grant we received to other aspects of the project e.g. physical resources. Carina also said that we would need to return any unspent portion of the grant.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Peter Barclay-Watt (Treasurer), Michelle Walker, Pam Rolls (from this item onwards), Jan Radford and Juan Bowerman.

¹ The "CAP Debt Centre Terms of Service" document says 6 months' notice is required to close a centre, and that payments to CAP of at least £100 per month would need to continue for a further 12 months after closure of a centre to cover the cost of ongoing support to centre clients.

4. Minutes of the July 2016 meeting

The minutes were signed as a correct record.

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting, not covered elsewhere

Church heating/seating

Christina Wood has checked with the manufacturer of the “Abbey” chair about whether the chair trollies push easily on a carpeted surface. The answer was yes, provided that the carpet does not have a thick pile. In answer to a question from Gordon Gill, Christina confirmed that her understanding is that the manufacturer was talking about when the trollies are fully loaded with chairs.

Lessons for Concert Policy from Godspell

Jane Woolley confirmed that she relayed the two further issues raised by Liz Roberts to Mel Gibson and Christina Wood, as covered in Paper K.

6. Finances

Parish Share increase in 2017

The meeting passed the following resolution:

Resolution	To pay St Matthew's share (two-thirds) of the Benefice Parish Share increase in 2017				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Mel Gibson	Passed	11 in favour 1 abstention

CAP centre in 2017

Lizi Bowerman is employed by CAP. Therefore she was required to abstain from voting on the following two resolutions about funding a CAP centre.

The meeting passed the following two resolutions:

Resolution	To pay St Matthew's share (two-thirds) of the £3,500 Benefice contribution in 2017 for the OX11 CAP centre				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Mel Gibson	Passed	10 in favour 2 abstentions

Resolution	If All Saints' Chilton PCC is unable to pay all or some of its share (one-third) of the £3,500 Benefice contribution in 2017 for the OX11 CAP centre, to authorise the Standing Committee to agree that St Matthew's will make up the difference using St Matthew's PCC finances.				
Proposed	Mel Gibson	Seconded	Hazel Connelly	Passed	11 in favour 1 abstention

Distribution of 2016 World Missions budget

Paper I refers. This paper was distributed at the meeting. Sid Gale talked to the paper. Sid reminded PCC members that the budget for 2016 was set at 10% of giving received in 2015. This is down from 12.5% in 2015 and so two of the previous recipients have not been included this year.

Sid Gale reported that Jonathan Mobey has been encouraging the World Missions Group to prioritise whom the PCCs support financially and then for us to continue to support that set of people for the long-term.

Sid explained that ideally the distribution of this budget would have been agreed much earlier in the year, but for one reason or another that was not possible.

Martin Gibson thanked the World Missions Group for its work. This was echoed by Jean Barton on behalf of the PCC as a whole.

Sid pointed out that there is an £800 discrepancy between the total to be distributed (£7,380) and the budget (£8,180). This is because this represents 10% of a portion of a legacy that has been received and spent, but is being held back until a suitable partner project is identified.

The meeting passed the following resolution:

Resolution	To agree the proposed distribution of the 2016 World Missions budget				
Proposed	Martin Gibson	Seconded	Frances Taylor	Passed	Unanimously

In relation to our income from giving, there was then a short discussion about the Rector's practice of saying (and projecting on the screen) in services that if people are a visitor or give in another way, they should feel free just to pass the collection bag along.

Martin Gibson wondered if this was unnecessarily discouraging donations from visitors.

Sid Gale said that his recollection is that some members of the congregation who donate via standing order felt that others might judge them harshly for seemingly not donating. So Jonathan started using this phrase to make it clear that some people give via other mechanisms.

Gordon Gill added that another possible reason behind the phrase is that churches can get a reputation in the community for only ever talking to people when they want their money. So this phrase might be designed to reduce the likelihood of occasional attendees finding it off-putting to be asked for money. Furthermore, some people unfamiliar with church might not realise that a collection is taken and could be embarrassed about not having any money on them.

Gordon Gill said that another church he knows of presents income and expenditure figures to the congregation every month. His sense is that people are much more accepting of being asked for money when they can see all the good and necessary things it is being spent on.

Action: Jean Barton to discuss with Jonathan Mobey about the pros and cons of saying in services that if people are a visitor or give in another way, they should feel free just to pass the collection bag along.

7. Improvements to church building

Chancel re-ordering

Tony Hughes gave a verbal update as follows:

- Changes are well underway
- There is a delay in disposing of the removed choir stalls
- The new chairs are expected anytime now
- Of the 12 remaining tasks associated with the project, 5 are complete, 3 are in hand and 4 are awaiting the disposal of the choir stalls
- The cost will come in under budget

Jean Barton thanked Tony Hughes for all his work.

Heating & Seating (JM)

Tony Hughes reminded PCC members that the PCC voted at its July meeting to approve the project. Since then, Tony Hughes has been preparing information to enable other relevant bodies to be consulted.

Tony reported that, following advice from the DAC he had consulted with Historic England and with The Victorian Society. Tony wrote to both organisations in the first instance at the end of July. Historic England requested some further information. Tony chased The Victorian Society for a response at the end of August; they also requested some further information. In view of this, Tony decided to incorporate all the required information into a draft DAC paper (see Paper J). He sent this paper to Historic England and The Victorian Society a couple of weeks ago. He is yet to hear back from them.

Jonathan Mobey joined the meeting at this point.

On **heating** specifically:

Tony Hughes reported that Mel Gibson has contacted six churches who have installed the Dunphy Economiser electrical central heating system. Of these, three have replied. These have all commented favourably on the installation, but are unable to comment fully on how the system performs until they have been through a period of cold weather. So Mel will contact them again in due course, in time to feedback to the January 2017 PCC meeting. This should not affect our ambition to submit a paper to the February DAC meeting – unless there is an adverse report from these other churches. Once we have DAC approval, we have to apply for a Faculty. The earliest we are likely to be granted a Faculty is late May 2017, but there could be delays. Therefore, the earliest that the improvement works could realistically commence would be July.

Sid Gale asked if there were any plans to protect the windows and any other vulnerable parts of the building if the building is going to get greater usage once it is improved. Tony Hughes said that this is not something he is looking into at the moment, but it might need to be considered in due course.

There were no other queries arising from Paper J. Jean Barton thanked Tony Hughes, Christina Wood and Mel Gibson for all their work.

Where to hold services whilst the church building is out of action during improvement works (JM)

Tony Hughes explained that, based on a first look at scheduling the project, we would need to allow at least eight weeks for the improvement works to be carried out. This is because some tasks have to wait until other tasks are completed. Also, there will be several different contractors involved, and there might be times when we have to wait for a contractor to be available.

Tony said that the most obvious timeframe for the work is between around the second half of July and the end of September. Ideally, we want to avoid impinging on Harvest and Remembrance Sunday services.

Jonathan Mobey noted the requirement, therefore, to avoid booking summer weddings. Tony Hughes noted that there are weddings booked for 27 May and 4 November 2017.

The meeting then discussed possible locations for Sunday services whilst the building work is taking place.

Suggested venues were:

- Village Hall
- School hall
- UTC hall (although not ideal as it is not in the village itself)

Other suggestions considered, but which could only accommodate a small service were:

- The Chancel (with access either via the Priests Door or down a side aisle)
- Church Hall
- British Legion

Action: Jonathan Mobey to have an exploratory discussion with the Village Hall and School about availability and cost for the period from mid-July to end of September, and to make a provisional (cancellable) booking, if appropriate.

Sound system

Tony Hughes said that he had noticed in Harwell News that the Harwell Feast Committee had made various grants to St Matthew's. Jonathan Mobey confirmed that one of these was for upgrading the sound system. Tony Hughes asked that if there were any changes or extensions to the wiring contemplated soon it would be a good idea to do them during the seating and heating project, to avoid a second set of disruptions. Jim Sinclair had designed the current system and he would need to be involved.

Jonathan Mobey said that his plan was to build up a fund for the longer term, when a better sound system would be needed to go with further improvements to the church. There were no immediate changes to the wiring planned.

8. Church Hall Management (JM)

Terms of reference & finding a new Chair

The action from July meeting to be carried over:

Action: Jonathan Mobey to draft some terms of reference for the church hall management committee, including the role and responsibilities of the chair. Jonathan to check with Tim Roberts first in case he has something suitable already.

Tony Hughes commented that as time goes on, it is becoming more and more of a problem that there is no proper Church Hall governance structure in place. Tony said that he will be unable to help as much as in the past because of the work for the main church building, including the improvements. Tony said that if people come to him to, report defects, he will now refer them to the Hall Manager, Brian Zimmerman.

Hazel Connelly reported that her work on risk assessments has identified some risk-related actions for the Church Hall, but there is no one to give them to.

Cleaning arrangements

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Hall is currently without a paid cleaner. It needs a paid cleaner because of the level of use and because Scouts make specific payment for a cleaner. Robert Connolly had been the cleaner. He was then replaced by Dan Stevens, but that arrangement and another possible one have now fallen through.

Jonathan Mobey reported that Juan Bowerman is willing to be the paid cleaner. However, the fact that he is a PCC member, and is married to another PCC member, complicates things. This is because of the rules around payment for services to charity trustees, or to people "connected" to charity trustees.

Jonathan Mobey explained that the Charity Commission rules depend on whether a connected person is to be an employee or a contractor providing services. It is simpler if the arrangement is as a contractor. Jonathan reported that he had taken advice on this from HR specialist, Liz Thorley. Liz confirmed that it would be legitimate to deem Juan a contractor rather than an employee.

Jonathan Mobey explained that the next step would be to prepare a written agreement with Juan in line with Charity Commission stipulations. Jonathan has already asked Brian Zimmerman to draft this agreement.

Jane Woolley, PCC Secretary, stated that it would also be necessary for PCC accounts to show that it had made a payment for services to a PCC member / a person connected to a PCC member. Jane also stated that Juan Bowerman must not start cleaning work until the written agreement is in place.

At this point, Lizi Bowerman (Juan's wife) was asked to leave the meeting temporarily, in line with Charity Commission rules, so that she could not influence discussions about Juan Bowerman and cleaning. (Juan Bowerman himself was absent from the meeting.)

After a brief discussion, PCC members indicated that they were happy to proceed with engaging Juan Bowerman as a cleaning contractor for the Hall.

Gordon Gill pointed out that it is wise to undertake a risk assessment for cleaning work that is tailored to the cleaner's particular physical capabilities, given the manual nature of the work.

Action: Jonathan Mobey to:

- Oversee putting in place a written agreement with Juan Bowerman;
- Ensure that a risk assessment is carried out with Juan for the work, and actions arising are taken.

Lizi Bowerman returned to the meeting at this point.

9. Events Policy (JM)

Paper K refers.

Christina Wood introduced this item, about updating the Events Policy in the light of experience.

Jonathan Mobey voiced the following concerns about the proposed changes to the Policy:

- Charging an hourly rate makes it feel very commercial, and that feels like a significant change of approach. We don't want to make money out of use of the church building.
- The principle that we work under is that anyone who wants to come into the church building for religious purposes – for example to pray – should be able to do so freely during normal opening hours. Might the proposed re-wording of the Policy lead users to believe that they have exclusive use of the church building? For example, might a group refuse entry to even the Rector or churchwardens during a "hire" period?

Other PCC members countered these points as follows:

- It costs £50-£100 per day to maintain the church building. Any user should really bear a fair proportion of these costs.
- One of our Concert/Event managers will be present during any rehearsals and performances. It is therefore extremely unlikely that a group could "take possession" of the church and not allow other legitimate users in.

Following discussion, it was agreed that it would be more appropriate to call the charge a flat "event fee" and to make this £40 or £50 per performance (plus heating and lighting costs). This fee would go to the church rather than to the Event Manager. There would still be no fee for rehearsals, just heating and lighting costs.

Action: Christina Wood and Mel Gibson to revised the proposed re-wording to:

- Refer to an "event fee" not an hourly charge.
- Ensure that there is no implication that event organisers/participants have exclusive access to the church building.

10. Decisions about services (JM)

It was agreed that there would be:

- No communion service at the 11am service at St Matthew's on Sunday 30 April due to the APCM (there would still be communion at the 9.30am service at All Saints', Chilton).
- No evening service at St Matthew's on Sunday 25 December. This would have been a communion service, but there would have been communion services at 8am and 12 noon at St Matthew's that day already.

11. Buildings Committee Report (JM)

Paper L was noted. Tony Hughes pointed out that there is a lot going on.

The meeting passed the following resolution:

Resolution	To replace the lead stolen from the south aisle roof on a like for like basis, and to make good minor damage to the paintwork of the interior ceiling of the south aisle.				
Proposed	Gordon Gill	Seconded	Frances Taylor	Passed	Unanimously

The meeting expressed its thanks to the Buildings Committee for all its work, especially Tony Hughes and David Pyke.

12. Health and Safety

Risk Assessments

Hazel Connelly gave a verbal update. Hazel has carried out risk assessments for the church building and the Church Hall. This has given rise to a list of actions. Hazel has discussed this list with Tony Hughes of the Buildings Committee. Some are things which the Buildings Committee already has on its Action List.

The next step is for Hazel to talk to the relevant people before the January PCC meeting and draw up a plan of action to implement the list of actions.

Hazel would like the PCC Secretary to circulate the risk assessments that she has conducted, and for PCC members to let Hazel know if they have any comments – for example if there is anything that Hazel has missed.

Martin Gibson commented that it is very important to take risk assessments and actions seriously.

Action: Jane Woolley to circulate Hazel Connelly's risk assessments and list of actions arising.

Action: Hazel Connelly to draw up a plan of action arising from the risk assessments

13. Other Finance items (JM)

Papers D, N and O were noted. There were no comments or queries.

14. Other services-related items (JM)

A decision about whether to reinstate an evening service on the second Sunday of the month is still on hold pending a decision about Fresh Expressions.

15. Christmas

The churchwardens confirmed that they have actions arising from the Christmas checklist in hand.

Tony Hughes reported that the Christmas Trees and lights would be erected on Saturday 26 November.

16. Decisions requested of Standing Committee between meetings

The Standing Committee of each PCC agreed to convert the advert for an intern to an open one i.e. no deadline for applications – see also item 2 (ii).

17. Future dates

There were none to note.

18. AOB

There was none.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm with Jean Barton leading the meeting in prayer.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE