

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Combined PCCs
of St Matthew's Harwell with All Saints' Chilton
held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 7.30 pm**

Present

(J) Denotes Joint PCC member. There were thus 12 voting members including the Rector at this meeting - all resolutions refer to Joint PCC votes

Hazel Benton (J)
Peter Cox
Sid Gale
Gordon Gill
Tony Hughes (J)
Phill Johnston (J)*

Rebecca Lewis (J)
Allan Macarthur (J)
Carol Pigott (J)
John Pigott
Alex Reich **
Jan Radford (J)***

Pam Rolls (J)
Judith Russell (J)
Yvonne Sanderson (J)
Eliza Wheaton
Jane Woolley (J)
The Rector (J, Chair)

* Present from the start of item B1.

** Present from the end of discussion of Proposal 1 in item B 5.

*** Present until the end of item B 5

By Invitation:

Sarah Barrett and Melanie Shields, Children and Families Workers for items A1 to B1.

The items were taken in agenda order.

A Preliminaries

A1 Opening & Prayer

The Rector read Luke chapter 19 verses 41 to 48.

The Rector said that this was the lectionary reading for today. He said it is usually read at a different time of year. It covers Jesus' arrival at Jerusalem and at the temple.

The Rector led the meeting in prayer.

The Rector thanked the Secretary for managing the agenda, uploading the papers and writing the minutes, then he thanked all involved in providing papers and other input.

A2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Stuart Gibson (J)*, Judy Gold and Patrick Moseley.

Phil Corbishley and Michelle Walker were absent.

Jean Barton and Helen Brook had also been invited as members of the SLT, but were absent.

A 3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Paper J refers: May 2021 Combined PCC Meeting Minutes for approval.

The Rector said that this version contained some short sections in red that were missing from the draft minutes. He thanked the Secretary for writing the minutes.

There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

Paper A refers: June 2021 Extraordinary Combined PCC Meeting Minutes for approval.

There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

As this meeting was held on-line, the minutes will be signed by the Secretaries and Rector in due course.

A4 Actions / Matters arising

Paper E refers. The matters arising are:

STATUS OF ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING AS OF 1st July 2021

FROM APRIL 2019 MEETING:

ITEM B 2.4.3 Didcot Emergency Foodbank

Heading 2: Response to Emergency Appeals.

Action: World Mission Group to consider giving to disaster appeals, and restricted giving to World Mission,

Status: In hand.

FROM THE JULY 2019 MEETING:

ITEM B 2.4.2. CAP Centre

Action: Rector to circulate CAP Centre Accounts.

Status: 2018, 2019 and 2020 accounts circulated April 2021.

Action: Rector to discuss SOFEA Oxford with Liz Roberts and Sue Bright.

Status: Rector has discussed this with Sue Bright

ITEM B 4.2 Proposed Albania Partnership

Action: World Mission Group to submit a paper on the proposal to support the Mission in Shkoze to the October Combined PCC meeting.

Status: In hand.

FROM THE JANUARY 2020 MEETING:

ITEM C 2.1 Fundraising strategy

Action: Jonathan Mobey agreed to co-ordinate the following approaches:

General giving:

Audiences: Congregations of both parishes.

Timing: Incorporate gentle references into services. Presentation by Treasurers in run up to Annual Meetings. Review in the autumn.

Status: Revised plans; Giving Day proposed 25 October 2020.

Update: Giving Day was held; plans now in progress to write to church members directly.

Update July 2021: Rector wrote to Chilton members, and letter to Harwell members was drafted but not sent due to improved financial picture; suggest to place on agenda of St M's PCC as to whether this letter should be sent.

FROM THE MAY 2021 MEETING:

ITEM C 3.2 Appointment of a New Safeguarding Officer

Action: Jonathan to instigate discussion at SLT of possible candidates for Safeguarding Officer and pastoral care lead in Harwell

Status: Potential candidates for Safeguarding Officer identified and being approached

Update at meeting – See item C 3.2.

ITEM C 3.4 Social Media Policy

Action: Judy Gold to check with Diocese regarding the reference to “para 5” in the Social Media policy.

The Rector gave an update on this item at the meeting:

Judy Gold contacted the Safeguarding department at the Diocese, who said that this policy is no longer current, hence the social media mentioned is just the older platforms. There is other more general guidance from the central Church of England Office. More specific guidance will be issued by the Diocese in due course. The Social Media Policy discussed at the May meeting will lapse.

A 5 Annual Schedule Items

The annual schedule items on the agenda are item B4 and the following item:

A 5.1 Staffing Review.

The Rector said that staffing is a significant responsibility of the CPCC. The Employment Group covers the legal aspects, the CPCC can consider the more strategic plans. He asked what else we should consider:

Suggested aspects included:

- Pastoral Care of staff members.
- Budget – the CPCC can take a long-term view of finance, staffing costs are a large part of the annual budgets and wider strategy
- Staff Appraisals. The Rector said that these are in progress for 4 of 5 staff members. The CPCC should also ensure any follow-ups take place as required.

A 5.2 PCC and CPCC Meeting Schedule 2022

Jane Woolley said that the 2021 schedule had gone through a couple of iterations, which had highlighted that this process could be improved. Tony Hughes suggested that a sub-committee is formed to consider this and propose a schedule. Jane Woolley suggested that the committee could consider facets including number of Combined and Individual meetings, location, in person or on-line meetings.

Jane Woolley suggested that the sub-committee consists of the two Individual PCC Secretaries, the Combined PCC Secretary and the Rector, and anyone else interested.

No Objections.

Jane Woolley will schedule the meeting of the sub-committee who will prepare a paper for discussion at the October CPCC meeting. Any suggestions of other facets to be considered should be sent to her.

ACTION: Jane Woolley to arrange sub-committee meeting.

A6 Other Joint Issues

There were none.

B Mission Strands

B 0 2020 Vision

B 0.1 Discerning a Vision – Lead Academy Update

The Rector reported that the Lead Academy had started in 2020 then the world changed due to the pandemic. The delegates from our benefice had continued with the program, and the final sessions were last week. In general, the program had been encouraging and positive with the opportunity to consider what the churches do and share ideas. They will give a more detailed report in due course.

B 1 Children, Youth and Families

B 1.1 Update and Plans

Paper D refers: CFW Report April to June 2021: Activities including Weekly Sunday Family Service, Fledgelings, Easter Trail, Holiday Club, Reflective Spaces and Parent talk course. Also, Actions to consider.

Sarah Barrett said that there were no decisions required. The Children and Families activities have moved back from on-line to in person. Parents had appreciated the free play in Fledgelings.

The Rector thanked Sarah Barrett and Melanie Shields for their report.

Sarah Barrett and Melanie Shields answered questions:

When will the Chilton Community Hall be available again for Fledgelings?

Once all of the national covid restrictions have been dropped they will restart, hopefully in September. If not, they will restart in the main Chilton Village Hall.

How many Children will attend Holiday Club?

There will be two weeks with 45 children attending each week. The CFWs considered that this was a sensible number that can be safely accommodated bearing in mind Covid and the number of volunteers available. There are two lovely teams but it would be quite tight if there were more children. This gives a total of 90 children compared to the usual numbers of 120-130.

The Rector thanked Sarah Barrett and Melanie Shields for their work. They have been a lifeline to many families, have been innovative and flexible, have carried themselves well, and are fighting the good fight in difficult times.

B 1.2 Greater Didcot Youthwork Trust and Youth / Secondary Schools Work

Paper K refers: Update on Youthwork Trust: Structure, budget, and employees. Executive summary of six key activities including: Discipleship Hub, Training and inspiration, School provision, Youth Café, Sports Outreach and Youth Alpha. These are aimed at different age ranges and have different start dates and frequencies.

The Rector added that the Trust started in May. A grant of £115,000 from the Diocesan Development Fund plus the financial commitment of the Partner Churches, provides 80% of funds required for the first five years of operation, which is a good start but more fundraising is required. The six key activities are above and beyond what is happening in the individual churches now. The two youth workers who will be employed are Hannah Field and Joe Loesher.

The Rector answered questions:

It is an ambitious program of work for the number of staff, will a lot of volunteers be needed?

The Rector agreed. The activities are at different frequencies so the number of volunteers needed will vary. Plans for the Youth Café are advanced and plans for the other activities are in progress. Melanie and Sarah will stay focussed on Harwell and Chilton as we fully fund their work. The other partners half-fund the Youth Workers, with the rest funded by the Trust, so they will have a wider remit.

Will there still be Youth Fellowship in the Benefice or will the trust activities take over?

Experience will show if the Trust activities do serve the needs of our young people. It may be that we host activities such as Discipleship Hub or Sports Outreach as we have a building, in the same way that the Baptist Church is planned to host the after school drop-in Youth Café.

How is the situation of the Children and Families Workers assured in the Trust, over time they may want to do other things?

This will be kept under review. Each partner church in the Trust has an ex-officio trustee, if the church has an employee, their line manager will be the Trustee (the Rector is the CFWs line manager). In extreme circumstances a church could withdraw from the Trust, but the arrangements should work well. The arrangements for the CFWs will be scrutinized and overseen by the CPCC, who will need to be content if the CFWs start to work more outside the Benefice.

Chilton Church has a shortfall on funding the Children and Families Work, how will this affect the finance and fundraising?

The last letter to Chilton Parishioners included an option to donate specifically for the CFW. We could make a fresh appeal for this work, and we could appeal to the wider village communities. Currently Chilton is drawing on the Church Hall fund. The fundraising for the Trust may eventually be sufficient to subsidise the Benefice's contribution.

What access will we have to the Youth Worker's time for specific events e. g. a Youth activity at Harwell Feast or Songs of Praise?

We would have access, and similar requests have already been considered by the trustees. They will be approved where the activity is likely to be fruitful. However, the youth workers are going to be very busy and only have so much time available. The trust will ensure there is no bias between areas.

Gordon Gill added that there is a mixture of Anglican and other denominations of the 6 in the trust, and 11 parishes in the Deanery. As Christ responded to need, there should be no demarcation between parishes. We are really all in it together, to reach as many as possible of the thousands of secondary age youngsters that do not come to church. We should step out in faith. Bishop Steven said that we should cast our net into the deep and take risks.

The Rector said that a lot of people are prepared to do just that. The Diocese has been encouraging by giving the grant, and they are keen to be involved. David Tyler (Assistant to Archdeacon Judy French) provides a formal ongoing link with the Diocese

How would differences in safeguarding rules between Anglican and other denominations be resolved?

Safeguarding is a key responsibility of the Trust and our benefice. The Trust is working to harmonise the rules and clarify the details, such as which rules - Trust or denomination - would apply in which venue. There are not thought to be major differences.

Would the Youth Workers be available to help with restarting and running a regular Sunday Youth Fellowship in our benefice?

The monthly Discipleship Hub will meet some of the aims of Youth Fellowship. Two key questions are how much is done centrally and how is dispersed to local churches, and how much the youth workers can resource local churches. Sunday is busy, and the youth workers will also need to connect with their local churches.

What about weekly provision for young people locally? Relationships are usually local.

A twice weekly Youth Café is planned, be held in the Baptist Church. This is on the school travel route for St Birinus school and is near Didcot Girls school. It would also fulfil some of these functions. Relationships can vary and change quickly, and year groups are different – what suits 13 year olds may not suit 18 year olds. There is a lot still to work out and the Trust will keep talking to the individual churches.

Hazel Benton reported that, as in Paper I, the Trust will not start until September so the CFWs contract has been extended until then. The Rector said that this will be formalised.

The Rector will continue to update the CPCC as more details are finalised. The school holidays are starting soon, and most activities will start in the autumn.

B 2 Evangelism and Discipleship of Adults

B 2.1.1 Home Groups

The Rector reported that Jean Barton has asked to step down as Home Group Coordinator. She will not be replaced yet, as the Rector wants to consider if there are other ways that Home Groups could link into other activities, so the role may be different.

B 2.1.2 Central Courses e.g. Bible, Lent Advent and B 2.1.3 Alpha and Christianity Explored

The Rector reported there are currently no courses underway.

B 2.2 Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

The Rector and Pam Rolls reported:

Baptisms

There have been some enquiries and a bit of a backlog due to the pandemic restrictions. Families want their children to be baptised before they grow bigger. A recent child baptised was 3 years old, another couple that have been shielding have also enquired.

Weddings

The first wedding for 20 months took place at Chilton last week, with another next week. There are more weddings over the next few months and enquiries coming in. There have also been quite a few banns to read, and the Rector meets with the banns couples.

Funerals

There have been a few funerals in the churches and local Crematoria.

B 2.3 Responding to financial Need

B 2.3.1 CAP Money Courses

Sid Gale and Carol Pigott reported:

- Daytime and student courses were advertised but there were no takers.
- Courses can and have recently been run for one person. This may be better for some who can't do on-line or need more anonymity.
- An online course was run with two people participating from outside the local area.

B 2.3.2 CAP Centre

Sid Gale reported that the 47th client in 6 years has gone debt free.

The Rector reported that work continues. Gathering information with the clients for the Debt Centre was more difficult during the lockdowns. The meeting room at St. Matthew's has been used for this recently.

B 2.3.3 Didcot Emergency Foodbank

The foodbank is working hard with lots of activity and clients. There is a large collection of donated food at St Matthew's to go to the food bank. There is none at All Saints', but donations may come in once more services are being held. The foodbank is well enough supplied and no emergency requests for specific items.

B 2.4 Social and Community

Yvonne Sanderson reported that she has contacted the people that were helping to suggest a meeting and is waiting to hear back.

The Rector said that there could be a difference between what is legally permitted and what people are comfortable to do. People may be uncomfortable socialising for some time. This may also apply to in-person services.

B 3 Pastoral Care

Paper H refers: The paper conveyed thanks to all who carry out Pastoral Care, and covered recruitment of a new leader for Harwell and of more carers, visiting and staying in touch, home communions to restart, weddings, funerals and Bereavement care and Generation Gold 'Summer-in-a box' and plans for September.

Pam Rolls highlighted the need for more visitors and someone to lead the Harwell team. The Staff Team has considered who might be suitable to be approached to lead, subject to the Rector's approval.

Visitors are continuing to visit more people in their homes as restrictions have lifted a bit, also by phone and email. The Easter Generation Gold was “in a box” and delivered, and a summer goodies box will be delivered in the coming days. Pam Rolls and Jan Radford are planning an Autumn Generation Gold service.

The Rector thanked Pam Rolls and Jan Radford for their work.

B 4 World Mission

Yvonne Sanderson reported that the World Mission Group will meet this week to consider the budget. The group needs more people, from the PCC or in the churches. There are currently four group members and sometimes only two are available to meet. It is very important that we look outwards to the world, and don't just concentrate on the local area.

The Sharlands (mission partners of the Benefice) are in the UK and can visit in September.

The Rector said that when regular in-person services are restarted, we could relaunch the WMG, to help recruit new members. He is planning the schedule of services at the moment

B 5 Worship Services

B 5.1 Fresh Expressions and Communication plan for the service pattern and rationale agreed at June Extraordinary Combined PCC meeting

Paper L refers: Services for 2021 and Beyond - Further Details.

The Rector apologised for the lateness of distribution of the paper. He described the background and proposals:

Following the May Combined PCC meeting and Extraordinary Combined PCC meeting in June, the agreed pattern of weekly Sunday services from September is as follows:

- 9.30am All Saints' Chilton – Service of Morning Worship and Holy Communion
- 10.00am St Matthew's Harwell – Informal 'interactive' worship service
- 11.30am St Matthew's Harwell – Service of Morning Worship and Holy Communion
- 6.00pm St Matthew's Harwell – Service of Evening Worship and Holy Communion

In addition, there will be services as follows:

- 2nd Sunday of the month, 10.30am Chilton Village Hall – Informal 'interactive' worship service
- Weekday service of Holy Communion at All Saints' Chilton and St Matthew's Harwell
- Additional services on 'festivals' and other special occasions

Decisions required:

1. Which of the 9.30, 11.30 and 6.00 Sunday services are services of Holy Communion.
2. What form the other services on other Sundays will take.
3. The day, time, location and frequency of the midweek Communion services.

NB Canon Law requires us to hold at least one service of Holy Communion each Sunday in the Benefice

The paper contains three proposals, one for each decision required. Proposals 1 and 2 are linked, but it was agreed that these were taken in turn.

Proposal 1: Sunday Holy Communion Services

Regular Holy Communion services in the following pattern

- **9.30am Chilton: 1st and 3rd Sundays**
- **11.30am Harwell: 2nd and 5th Sundays**
- **6.00pm Harwell: 4th Sundays**

The Rector answered questions:

- The 8am service was Holy Communion every Sunday, which covered the requirement in Canon law.
- He would steer baptisms towards the more formal version of the 10am service at Harwell church (not with groups) or possibly the 11:30 or evening service. It would be sensible to avoid Holy Communion Services.

- Holy Communion would be included in some 10am services, but would not be tied to the regular pattern.
- The pattern outlined above covers the legal requirement.
- It is part of the trial so could be altered again.

Resolution	Proposal 1 in Paper E is adopted.				
Proposed	Rector	Seconded	-	Passed by the JPCC	11 for, none against, 1 abstention.

Proposal 2: Non-communion services

Non-communion services as follows:

- **11.30am Harwell: ‘Morning Worship’ for other non-Communion services (formally services of Morning Prayer and Services of the Word from Common Worship).**
- **6.00pm Harwell: ‘Evening Worship’ for other non-Communion services (formally services of Evening Prayer from Common Worship).**
- **9.30am Chilton, for other non-Communion services:**
 - o **Option A: combination of ‘Morning Worship’ (Common Worship services as above) and services of Morning Prayer (from the Book of Common Prayer, BCP) – frequency to be determined**
 - o **Option B: ‘Morning Worship’ (Common Worship services, as per 11.30am Harwell above)**

Discussion ensued. Comments are gathered here together under the following broad headings:

BCP Services:

- A 6pm BCP evening service in St. Matthew’s is not in the plan. It is important and preferred by people who attend.
- The Rector said that the new pattern has BCP services in Chilton. Only a small number appreciate BCP services, though he is mindful that all individuals are valued and nourished. He is not convinced that it should be part of the mainstream services though this is a debatable point. We should look after those already attend and the 95% of people that don’t.
- It is important that we are working as a Benefice so there are alternatives for people to go to every Sunday. This is the loving thing to do – if a service at your local church is not your preference, then there will be one close by.
- It is important to have a small provision for those that prefer and value the BCP service.
- Some present did not prefer the BCP service, but were happy to have it for the benefit of others.
- There were various suggestions for frequency of the BCP services on Sundays and midweek:
 - once every two months at Chilton morning and once a month at Harwell evening
 - once every two months at Chilton when the other service (in the Village Hall) is informal worship.
 - quarterly in the evening and the midweek service.
 - Reinstate the 8am Sunday service
 - Midweek service only
- The 8am service would be better for BCP - mid-week is acceptable if you are retired.
- The Rector said that the 8am Sunday service would be another Sunday service to resource in addition to the current four. We could re-introduce it if the midweek service does not work.
- BCP Services could be made more accessible to people unfamiliar with them by explaining as the service goes along, which would serve as a reminder to the regular attendees.
- BCP liturgy contains beautiful wording which attendees appreciate.
- The Rector said that people who are familiar with church services, (which covers most on the CPCC), find it easier to understand what is happening in BCP services. However, we are not representative of the rest of the community. His concern is that someone may attend to try out a service, find it is BCP and not like it, and not turn up again. There was some sympathy with this opinion.
- People may be more put off by the national Church of England’s perceived attitude to (or silence on) issues important to them, such as LGBTQ+ equality, gender identity, the Black Lives Matter campaign and climate change etc.
- The Rector said that the numbers attending the BCP services are in decline and we really need to engage the other 95% of the community or we will become unviable in the next three years. Some

suggestions will take us back to almost the pattern we had previously This is a good opportunity to do something different with the evening service as well as the morning services.

- The Rector was concerned about consistency; regular attendees can understand the varying pattern of services but people attending sporadically or for the first time may not check the website or Broadsheet.
- This is a trial phase so we should try as many service types and get as much feedback as we can.
- We could try dropping BCP and see if anyone misses it. It was said that this would end the service.
- There was some discussion of the changes made so far.

The Rector said that as the discussion of this proposal was not drawing to a consensus, it should be left in abeyance to give more chance to reflect on the paper.

Review of new services/service pattern

- There needs to be a set date to aim for. The original timetable was for a review in September. The timetable is now for a September start, so the review should be moved back.
- There were suggestions of review dates.
- The Rector said that an interim review by the SLT is scheduled for October, and by the CPCC in November. The patterns agreed now could continue to run for longer, possibly until at least Christmas. There could be a further review after Christmas, e.g. in March. Changes could be made after either review as required.

Communication

- There was some discussion of communications by the Broadsheet and Church-wide email.

Proposal 3: Midweek Communion Service

Thursdays 11am alternating between All Saints’ Chilton and St Matthew’s Harwell, initially monthly in each, with a view to increasing to fortnightly.

Discussion ensued:

- The service could be at lunchtime to suit the growing number of people working from home or who work locally. It is a chance to do something new.
- This service is being offered as a replacement for the Sunday 8am Holy Communion.
- Older people tend to have their main meal at lunchtime and so an 11am service might clash with that.
- A late morning service could be followed by a light lunch possibly for Lent, this would not clash with the school run.
- We should ask the 8am congregation for their opinion, especially due to the long gap since the regular services were stopped.
- If we ask people first, then we would get too many options, we should decide on a day and see if people attend.

Resolution	Proposal 3 in Paper E is adopted.				
Proposed	Rector	Seconded	-	Passed by the JPCC	10 for, none against, 2 abstentions.

A request was made for numbers viewing the online services.

ACTION: Allan McArthur to provide statistics.

The Rector asked the CPCC to reflect on the options for the non-Communion services.

C 1 Communications and Operations

C 1.1 Update and Plans

Work is in progress to tidy up the database.

C 1.2 General Data Protection Regulations

Work on the database was started by Chris Pollard, but he has moved away, so this needs to be picked up.

C 2 Stewardship and Finances

C 2.1 Update and Plans

The Rector proposed that Item C 2.1 Fundraising Strategy still outstanding from January 2020 is discussed at the September Individual PCC meeting. (See also A 4 Matters Arising).

No Objections.

Phill Johnston said that there was nothing to report to the CPCC.

C 3 Safeguarding

C 3.1 Update and Plans

Paper C refers, written by Judith Gold, Deputy Safeguarding Officer: DBS Checks, Home visits, Training is available, DBS is to update their identification checking guidelines and Recruitment of Safeguarding Officer.

See also A 4 Matters Arising on Social Media Policy.

C 3.2 Appointment of a New Safeguarding Officer

The Rector said that he had approached someone about being Safeguarding Officer, but they had declined. The search continues.

C 4 Staffing and Leadership

C 4.1 Update and Plans and C 4.2 Employment Committee

Paper I refers: Update from Employment Group – extension to CFW contracts.

The Rector said that the extension to the CFWs contracts was considered under item B 1.2.

C 4.3 Permission to Assist at Communion - deferred

The Rector added that the Senior Leadership Team had recently considered how Holy Communion is administered, as this is under consideration more widely (see item C5.1). The SLT will revisit it in due course.

C 5 Wider Church

C 5.1 Deanery and Diocesan Synod

Paper E refers: Diocesan Synod Summary 19 June 2021

This was tabled with no comments or questions.

Terms of Office of Lay Members on Deanery Synods.

Paper G Refers: Amending Resolution to CCRs – Lay Members on Synods

Gordon Gill said that there is a move at the General Synod who are looking at good governance. A lot of committees are made up of white people who are over 50 years old. The synod wants the committees to better reflect the community not the congregation – younger, less white and more BAME and LGBTQ+. The Synod has put a limit on the number of terms a person can serve on Deanery Synods as a catalyst for change. However, this would also have the effect of lowering the time that new Synod members have to learn how the Synod works before becoming Deanery Lay Officers, so they may not feel that they are able to volunteer.

The Wallingford Deanery is proposing an Amending Resolution to modify the limit.

Common Cup at Holy Communion

Paper B Refers: Witney Deanery Motion on Common Cup at Holy Communion.

Sid Gale and Gordon Gill explained this motion. Due to the pandemic, there have been modifications to the way Communion has been distributed, which have caused upset in some cases. It calls on the Diocesan Synod to ask the House of Bishops to give advice on matters such as individual cups instead of the common cup, and online consecration, and just the Celebrant taking Communion.

The motion has been passed by the Diocesan Synod and will be considered by the House of Bishops, but they will not consider it until next year. Gordon Gill said that there was no desire to keep the common cup in the debate, the origins of which pre date understanding of public health and germ theory. All were in favour of doing something quickly.

The Rector said that we also need to consider what we do in the Benefice, and mentioned a couple of possibilities. People may also be staying away for now. He thanked Gordon Gill and Sid Gale for keeping us informed.

C 5.2 Great Western Park and Valley Park

The Rector reported that the new curate, Sasha, has arrived. She will be connected to All Saints' Didcot (and her Training Incumbent is Andy Lord), and living in Great Western Park, with a view to living and working in Valley Park when housing there is built and occupied.

C6 Any Other Business

C 6.1 Living in Love and Faith.

The Rector introduced this item: The world has changed a lot in attitude to gender identity and same-sex marriage. Before the pandemic, the Church of England had started a "listen and reflect" consultation, with resources and seminars on-line, designed to get churches thinking about these matters, then feeding back to the national church.

The timetable for submitting feedback was set before the pandemic. This is a significant issue and deserves time and effort spent on it. In addition to the extra work and pressures from the pandemic, our Benefice is currently restarting services and introducing some completely new services and a new service pattern. The Rector suggested that we consider this next year when we can give it the time and thought it deserves.

The material is interesting, and Eliza Wheaton, Jan Radford and the Rector attended one of the seminars. Eliza Wheaton agreed that the material is very interesting, with a book and podcast as well as the webinars. It is very gentle and covers disagreeing well whilst still loving each other and remembering why we are together and what we have in common. We should not put this off indefinitely but decide a date to start.

Discussion ensued:

- A PCC member said that it was a fantastic opportunity to reach out, and show that the Christian message is attractive and Christians have a wide range of opinions on these matters. It should be legitimate to be a Christian and support, or have reservations, or be against same sex marriage or transgender issues and live side by side with Christians who share different opinions. The consultation should be brought to the wider church's attention beyond the PCCs. If we are modifying our services to a 21st century style, we should also be able to hold 21st century ideas and opinions.

The Rector said that he would be happy if that were the case, without stating whether he agreed or not, but others have stated that they will leave if the church allows same-sex marriage. We already have enough to consider at the moment.

- There was some agreement that this is important and there is some urgency to consider it.
- A couple of youth group leaders said that their groups were keen to discuss same-sex relationships and gender identity, but they did not feel equipped to lead or teach on these subjects.
- It is important to maintain unity, it would not be good to be seen to be arguing in factions.
- If we do not feed back according to the timetable, will we lose the opportunity to give our input? Eliza Wheaton said that there are opportunities to feed back into next year and the Rector said that there are indications that the timetable may be altered.
- There was discussion of how the Benefice might use the material, with some section or all of the church, including as to whether this could be done as a "Lent / Advent Central" style course

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- The biggest criticism of young people was that the church apparently had no view on Black Lives Matter, and that we are not talking about gender identity or climate change, or being Christian by serving the poor. If we want to be an inter-generational church these things should be addressed.

The Rector agreed that these issues are difficult and we need to engage with the consultation and do it well.

The Rector thanked all present for their contributions

The Rector closed the meeting with the Grace at 10:06 pm.

Dates of next meetings:

Individual PCCs: 7th September 2021 online

Combined PCC: 5th October 2021 online

CHAIR

SECRETARY

DATE

DATE