

**Minutes of the Section 12 meeting
of St Matthew's Harwell with All Saints' Chilton
held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 23rd August 2022 at 8.15 pm**

Present

Deanery Representatives:

David Tyler, Vacancy Lead Associate Archdeacon (Chair)
Gordon Gill, Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod (Also PCC member)
Rev Helen Kendrick - to observe

Patron Representatives:

John Cook, CPAS representative.
Nigel Edward-Few, ODCP representative.

Harwell with Chilton PCC members

Hazel Benton	Steve Hale	Liz Roberts
Hazel Connelly	Tony Hughes	Pam Rolls
Peter Cox (Secretary)	Rebecca Lewis	Judith Russell
Debra Dewhurst	Allan Macarthur	Eliza Wheaton
Sid Gale	Liz Morris	Jane Woolley
Naomi Gibson	John Pigott	

By Invitation: Jean Barton, Home Groups Coordinator.

The items were taken in agenda order.

Apologies were received from:

Andy Lord, Area Dean, Sarah Barrett, Brendan Bailey, Deborah Evans, Stuart Gibson, Phill Johnston, Patrick Moseley, Alex Reich, Jan Radford, Yvonne Sanderson.

Helen Brook had also been invited as leader of the World Mission Group, but was absent.

1 Opening Prayer

David Tyler led the meeting in prayer.

2 Welcome & Introduction to Meeting

Section 11 Meeting

It was confirmed that the Section 11 meeting had been held immediately before this meeting, and that the Parish Representatives had been appointed. David Tyler asked that the relevant forms are completed and sent to Sarah Brennan, Assistant PA to the Bishop of Dorchester, as soon as possible.

David Tyler said that many of those present had also attended the Patrons meeting on 23rd May when he had run through the items to be covered at this meeting so he would give a summary of each item with opportunities for questions.

Introductions

David Tyler thanked the PCCs for allowing Rev. Helen Kendrick to attend. She is one of the new Assistant Archdeacons and observing a Section 12 meeting will be helpful.

He welcomed the Patrons representatives to the meeting:

Nigel Edward-Few said that he was glad to be here as we look to a new future with a new Rector. He aimed to walk alongside, to share and help us select the right person.

John Cook said that he is the Vicar of Wargrave with Knowl Hill parish, and is a patron trustee of CPAS, he is very excited by the profile and the opportunities looking ahead.

David Tyler said that Gordon Gill is present as Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod.

Parish Representatives

David Tyler asked the Parish Representatives to make themselves known and explain their connection to the churches:

Naomi Gibson said that she worships at All Saints' church and is also PCC Secretary.

Alex Reich had sent in his apologies for the meeting. It was confirmed that he was happy to be nominated as a Parish Representative for All Saints' church.

Allan Macarthur said that he is one of the churchwardens at St. Matthew's church.

Eliza Wheaton said that she is the other churchwarden at St Matthew's church and does some preaching and leading of services.

3 The Process of Appointment

a) Roles of PCCs – Benefice Profile, Person Specification, Role Description

David Tyler thanked the PCCs for all they have done. They have done so well to have got to this stage in a very organised way and produced good documents. Their involvement is not over yet, but the substantial part is completed.

The profile looks really good and includes the Person Specification – which is used to judge the candidates as they apply. The representatives look at what competencies are asked for and see if the candidates have these skills.

b) Patron – Presents the candidate to the Bishop

The Patrons role is to be confident that they can present the successful candidate to the Bishop so he can licence them.

c) Bishop – Needs to agree to licence or institute the candidate

Bishop Gavin feeds into the shortlist of candidates, he is present on interview day and chairs the selection panel. He has to be happy that he can licence the person chosen by this process.

d) Parish Representatives

Individually have the right of veto over each and every candidate provided it is not discriminatory

e) Area Dean and/or Lay Chair – Advisory

Andy Lord and Gordon Gill act in an advisory capacity to show candidates how the Deanery can support them and fit in to the Deanery. They are an important link for the new Rector.

f) Wider Ministry Team – Advisory

A meeting with the Ministry team should be included in the interview day and we need to consider how it is included when we work out how the day is set up. They have no veto, but can look at how they relate to each candidate.

In fact, all involved, the Bishop, Patrons representatives and Parish representatives will come together to pray and work together collaboratively to discern who God is calling to be with you.

g) Wider Congregation – Practical help and prayer

An act of worship should be included in the interview day, at which the shortlisted candidates preach for 5-7 minutes. The wider congregation are often invited.

There will be a number of meetings, tasks and visits for the candidates to attend on interview day as already mentioned. We should have a good strong field with between 3 and 5 candidates shortlisted.

So, a number of volunteers will be needed to move and rotate the candidates, spouses and their families around the various visits and meetings. The number required will depend on the number of candidates. We will know more after the shortlisting has been done.

If PCC members or members of the congregation are interested in helping there will be plenty to do.

The decision on which candidate will be successful will be made by the Parish Representatives only, as they will have seen all of the candidates in all of the interview tasks and will have a broader and wider picture than the volunteers. The volunteers and congregation do not provide feedback on the candidates.

David Tyler answered questions:

Has having the congregation present when the candidates preach caused issues?

The congregation is usually invited, and there are normally no problems if you explain that they are invited but don't give feedback. They can feel some ownership and it can build more - even a large parish normally only has two representatives.

Five minutes seems a very short time to preach?

If we shortlist five candidates then 10-minute sermons would take nearly an hour. There are other tasks to fit in such as visiting the school, meeting the ministry team and looking at the Rectory. Most candidates will have sermons available online e.g. Youtube so you can see them preach a longer sermon. A 5-minute sermon will be very polished and they may not normally preach like that. In another parish, the 5 candidates had very different styles and the interview panel found it did help with discernment though it is not necessarily representative.

What passage will the candidates preach on?

Usually the following Sunday's passage. This is helpful to the candidates as they will have prepared it already.

Nigel Edward Few said that this will help compare the candidates.

4 Going through your Documents - Parish Profile and Person Specification and Draft Advert.

David Tyler said that normally it takes quite a long time to go through these documents, but the PCCs have done an excellent job. The Patrons and others have seen them, and we are at a position where everyone has seen them, made comments and new drafts made, and everyone is now happy with them. He congratulated all involved.

The advert sits very happily alongside the profile. He asked if all present were happy with the Profile and Advert.

Nigel Edward-Few said that the profile is now a completely different document, the pictures really bring it to life. There are two quotes on debt management on pages 16 and 28. The quote on page 28 is alongside a picture of children and outreach and does not sit well. The document as a whole is excellent.

There was some discussion and Jane Woolley said that the Profile team will find a different quote to use.

There were no further comments.

David Tyler asked the profile team to amend the profile and send it and the advert to Sarah Brennan after the meeting. It would be helpful if the advert is sent as soon as possible.

ACTION: Profile team to amend the profile and send the profile and advert to Sarah Brennan

5 Costs - Advertising/Accommodation/Travel/Lunch

David Tyler said that we have a quote of just under £1000 for advertising. There will be other costs too:

If candidates have come a long way and need accommodation, it is important that they are not put up by parishioners. They should be put up in a cheap local hotel. Most candidates will have friends locally who can put them up but there may be some who need accommodation.

The PCCs should offer travel expenses and lunch.

6 Short-Listing – How this is done and where

David Tyler said that shortlisting has been booked in. The panel will look at the profile and assess the applications against what you asked for to decide who we want to shortlist.

The Diocese will bring every credible candidate who applies on the Pathways system to the panel, unless they are not ordained, randomly applying, or they cannot apply – e. g. they are in Curacy.

Confidentiality

David Tyler said that confidentiality sets in now and continues. There will be local candidates so this is even more important than usual. The candidates' parishes would rather not know if they are applying for other jobs.

References

When the shortlist is complete, references will be taken up by Sarah Brennan. There are three references, two of which are seen by the panel. The third is the "Bishop-to-Bishop" reference, which is only seen by Bishop Gavin and David Tyler. It enables the interview day and questions to be framed to bring out candidates' strengths and weaknesses.

7 Interviews – Timetable Elements – Panel Interview, Sermon/Presentation, School Involvement, Ministry Team Meeting, Wider Group (Lunch, Eucharist)

The administration needs to be worked out, including how the candidates are rotated, where they will visit and at what time. The PCCs also need to work out who to liaise with at the schools.

The main elements of the interview have already been mentioned. The candidates are sometimes also asked to do a presentation on a particular subject, such as "What do you want to achieve in the first five years?". This can be really helpful. There will also be questions from the panel members covering all areas.

Other elements are the visits to schools, meeting the ministry team, and a meeting a wider group at lunch.

David Tyler answered questions:

How do people apply?

People apply through the on-line system "Pathways", the applicants are likely to be familiar with it, also some details can be uploaded and can be used on other applications they make. Paper application forms can be provided if required.

The deadline is 12th October and shortlisting is on 19th October. When will the Parish Representatives receive the applications?

The representatives will receive them early on 13th October.

Does Pathways indicate if the candidates have applied for multiple posts?

Pathways does not state this. However, the Diocesan recruitment officers have grown to recognise the people who apply for lots of jobs, especially if they are applying to Dorchester or Oxford Diocese.

It is also easy to spot an untailed application, submitted by a less suitable candidate, for example where only the job title has been changed, the rest is the same and they just list their experience, which may well have nothing to do with the role. Applicants should look at the person specification and explain how they meet it.

When do we post the advert on our website?

It should be posted on the same day as it is published in the Church Times. If it is posted earlier, then the candidates will be unable to find the job on Pathways. It will be put on the Diocesan website on the same day.

The meeting discussed posting the profile on the websites as a flip-book like "Reedly".

David Tyler said that we already had a really good professional profile and it stands out well anyway, due to all of the hard work put in by the Profile team. So it's not necessary to publish in a flip-book format. The candidates will also check our website.

8 Any Other Business – Bishop’s letter

a) Would you welcome applications from under-represented groups?

David Tyler said that the Bishop’s letter included in profiles for recent roles had included this sentence. It would only be included if everyone is comfortable with it. Applicants are predominantly white middle class and able-bodied. We are hoping to do this in conjunction with BAME UK. The sentence can make people from under-represented groups more confident in applying.

There was a General Sense of Agreement.

David Tyler said that he will include the sentence. It is important to say that we will appoint the best candidate, but encourage everyone who could possibly apply to do so. There is no intention of positive discrimination.

Nigel Edward-Few said that the phrase “under-represented groups” could be “anyone and everyone”. David Tyler said that this could end “..is welcome to apply”. He will tailor the wording to suit. It is important to encourage all relevant people to apply.

Gordon Gill said that we often talk about white middle-class churches. At a recent Ridgeway Community Church Pentecostal service, representation was 50% UK BAME background. A number of our community is of this background. It is a very welcome to see this statement put in, and positive promotion.

b) What are we looking for in our Rector?

David Tyler added this extra item that was not on the agenda. He asked all present in turn to state, in a couple of words, what they are looking for in a new Rector (without referring to the Profile).

Each member of the PCCs made a short statement.

David Tyler said that he would take some of these themes and combine them together. This would form the main part of the Bishop’s letter at the start of the Profile. All the things that the PCC members had said were reflected in the Profile already.

David Tyler answered questions:

How do we get the letter into the Profile document?

David Tyler will draft this tomorrow for approval by Bishop Gavin, then send it back to the Profile group with a photo of the Bishop. He read back a summary of the words that people had said.

He continued that we had done a wonderful job on the Profile, but it is just one tool that the candidates will look at, they will also look at the benefice web site to work out who we are. It is important that the Bishop’s letter at the beginning of the Profile captures what you have just said.

Can we edit the letter?

Yes, if it is wrong, though he did not sense any particular unhappiness when he had read the PCCs’ words back, so he was hopeful that he had included everything.

9 Closing Prayer

David Tyler asked Rev Helen Kendrick to close the meeting in prayer. She thanked all present for allowing her to shadow David Tyler and gave a closing prayer.

The meeting closed at 9:15 pm.

Dates of next meetings:

Individual PCCs: 6th September 2022, All Saints’ Chilton

Combined PCC: 4th October 2022 online

These minutes were approved at the CPCC meeting on: _____ Date

CHAIR

DATE

SECRETARY

DATE