

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held at St Matthew's Harwell on Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 7.30 pm

Present

Eliza Wheaton (Chair for items 1-5)	Phill Johnston (Treasurer) (present from item 3 onwards)	Jane Woolley (Secretary)
Tony Hughes (Chair for item 6 onwards)	Pam Rolls (present for items 1-5)	Liz Roberts
Hazel Connelly (present from item 3 onwards)	Sid Gale	
	Allan Macarthur	

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-5. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

Items were taken in the order on the agenda.

1. Opening & Prayer

Pam Rolls read from Ephesians 2: 15-23. Pam remarked that we who believe can know that we have God's hope and that everything is under the rule of Christ.

Pam Rolls led the meeting in prayer.

2. Rector appointment process - update

Paper L refers. There were only two applicants. Both have been invited for interview. Allan Macarthur commented that the diocese thought that the small number of applicants is probably due to there having been a relatively high number of vacancies recently in our area. We will only appoint if the panel feels the person is right. If the panel decides not to appoint, the outcome will be communicated to PCC members and congregations the following day. If the panel does decide to appoint, the announcement will be made once the appointed person's own congregation has been informed. The candidates will be told that the previous Rector, Jonathan Mobey, is remaining in Harwell village.

3. Funding the Church Administrator post

Proposed text of fundraising appeal email

Paper A refers. Allan Macarthur explained that the group looking at this had decided not to use the more formal approach of a hand delivered letter. Instead, the communication would be via email and via hard copies of the email available in church.

Notwithstanding the fact that the wording would need to be adjusted if the PCCs subsequently do **not** agree to underwrite the cost of the Administrator post, PCC members approved unanimously the proposed email text subject to the following minor adjustments:

- Fifth bullet point: amend "*..plug the hole..*" to "*..meet the gap..*"
- In the fourth paragraph: amend "*To fully plug the gap that we have in funding..*" to "*To fully meet our funding commitments for this post..*"

Request for underwriting by PCCs of the cost of the Administrator post to be extended to 31 Dec 2023

Paper B explains the rationale for extending the underwriting to the end of 2023 to give the current Administrator more certainty and a new Rector more time to review the shape of this post.

There was an indicative straw poll on the extension of the underwriting. None was against; Four members of All Saints' PCC abstained. The remaining PCC members voted in favour.

The underwriting decision itself is for the individual PCCs – see item 14.

It was noted that if one PCC did not agree to underwrite the cost then the fundraising email would still go out but the wording in the second bullet point would need to be altered.

4. CAP Debt Centre request for additional funding for 2023

Paper C refers – requesting an additional £1k from our Benefice due to exceptional pressures on Debt Centre clients and staff. There are seven churches (of which we are two) who collaborate to fund the Centre and to provide trustees.

Tony Hughes asked whether additional churches in the area had been approached to see if they might contribute financially. Naomi Gibson said that the CAP model is predicated on participating churches providing a trustee and befrienders, not just money. As such, it is a long-term aim to expand the number of churches involved but this was unlikely to happen during 2023.

The decision about providing the additional funding is for the individual PCCs – see item 16.

5. Communications – replacing the Broadsheet with a section in Harwell News and Chilton Chronicle

Paper D refers. The Parish Councils have been approached and are happy to oblige.

Chilton Chronicle is delivered in hard copy to each household whereas the distribution of Harwell News is mainly via email and a website, supplemented with some hard copies. Therefore, Chilton Chronicle would need the Benefice to bear the extra printing costs involved. We would still deliver a Church Christmas card and Easter card to each household.

There would be an announcement when the publications first include Church News to explain what is happening. There was a discussion about how long the trial should be before it is reviewed.

Several PCC members pointed out that this approach of inserting church news into the secular parish newsletter was common practice in many places.

PCC members unanimously agreed to trial a Church News section in the Harwell News and the Chilton Chronicle from January 2023 and to review the situation after 12 months.

6. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jan Radford, Gordon Gill and Rebecca Lewis.

7. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 6 September 2022 were approved and signed.

8. Decisions made between meetings

The Standing Committee made the following decisions since the September PCC meeting:

- 1) To cease publishing online Sunday services

- 2) To spend £1,280 on cavity wall insulation for the church extension
- 3) To cancel the St Matthew's morning service on Sunday 1 January (New Year's Day). There would still be a 9.30am service at All Saints' Chilton

9. Matters/actions arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere

Event manager role description

Liz Roberts confirmed that she had sent a copy of the role description to other Event Managers and had asked Deborah Evans to put a copy on the church website.

10. Finance: Harwell Helpers Fund

Action from September 2022 meeting: Allan Macarthur to contact Cath Convery about the fund to suggest that the sum currently held by the church be donated to local organisations with similar charitable purposes. Allan to bring a proposal for next steps to the November PCC meeting.

Allan Macarthur reported that he had contacted Cath Convery. Cath said that she was happy for the PCC to decide on the use of the funds, taking her views into account. Cath asked for the PCC to communicate its decision to the community.

Cath's views were that the funds should be given to an organisation active in Harwell. Cath was not keen for funds to be donated to an overtly Christian organisation. Cath suggested that the Harwellian Club could be one recipient. However, Allan is concerned that it is not clear how it could be ensured that the money would be used to specifically help people in need.

The Treasurer stated that the Fund currently stands at c.£3,900.

Allan Macarthur suggested making a donation to Didcot Foodbank.

Jane Woolley suggested making a donation to the local CAP Debt Centre, given its work among local people who are struggling financially. CAP is a Christian organisation but its services are open to all. Liz Roberts said that the local Debt Centre is currently working with 19 families in Harwell.

Liz Roberts raised the question of how much, if any, of the funds had been raised via grants as opposed to private donations and whether this should be considered in our decision-making.

Subject to finding out how much originated from grants, PCC members agreed provisionally that the following donations should be made as soon as possible from the Harwell Helpers fund with the destination for the remaining c.£900 decided upon in due course:

- Didcot Foodbank: £1,000
- CAP Debt Centre: £1,000

PCC members agreed that this decision would be ratified by the Standing Committee once further information about the origin of the funds had been obtained and considered.

Action: **Allan Macarthur** to ask the bookkeeper about the origin of Harwell Helpers Funds

Action: **Allan Macarthur** to initiate a decision by the Standing Committee

Action: **Allan Macarthur** to communicate via Harwell News how funds are being distributed

11. Finance: World Missions Budget

Paper G refers.

Resolution	To adopt the distribution of the budget as proposed by the World Missions Group				
Proposed	Eliza Wheaton	Seconded	Liz Roberts	Passed	Unanimously

12. Finance: Extending the underwriting of the cost of funding the Church Administrator post to 31 December 2023

Paper B refers. St Matthew's two-thirds share of the cost to 31 December 2023 would be £14,245.

The Treasurer pointed out that St Matthew's had already received £2,500 towards its share of the cost in donations, which was very encouraging.

Resolution	To extend the underwriting of St Matthew's share of the cost of funding the Church Administrator post to 31 December 2023				
Proposed	From the Chair	Seconded	-	Passed	Unanimously

13. Finance: Sylvia Rainey legacy of c.£35k

The Treasurer explained that St Matthew's had been left a legacy by Sylvia Rainey of c.£35k and that the General Fund is currently in deficit to the tune of c.£33,500. The Treasurer proposed that we should put this legacy (less the 10% set aside for World Missions) into the General Fund to help clear this deficit.

Resolution	To put the Rainey legacy (less the 10% for World Missions) into the General Fund				
Proposed	Phill Johnston	Seconded	Eliza Wheaton	Passed	Unanimously

14. Finance: Clarification of the delegated authority given to the Finance Committee by the PCC

Tony Hughes explained that the issue of the delegated authority given to the Finance Committee had arisen because of a query over whether it was the PCC or the Treasurer or the Finance Committee that needed to decide whether to put the Rainey legacy into the General Fund.

Tony Hughes said that Jane Woolley had found some old Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee in the Church Office but that they did not answer this question.

Allan Macarthur suggested that large and exceptional matters such as what Fund a legacy is put into should be a PCC decision. Tony Hughes commented that it is a matter of judgement what is large and exceptional, but that this decision about the Rainey legacy probably does come into that category.

15. Finance Reports

Papers F and H refer.

Action from September 2022 meeting: Phill Johnston to contact Ecclesiastical to find out if the insurance premium assessment of £5,200 that they gave to Allan Macarthur is for 2022 or 2023.

The Treasurer clarified via Paper F that if the premium for 2022 is £5,200 it will be 6.3% higher than expected but still less than the budget figure of £5,350.

Action from June 2022 meeting: Phill Johnston to obtain the breakdown of the money raised and check whether the bookkeeper has followed up on any giving pledges

The Treasurer clarified via Paper F that the appeal last year resulted in one-off donations of £9,917 and our monthly giving increased by £265 per month. All the donations and increases were for giving to the General Fund.

The Treasurer highlighted the following points from the Income & Expenditure figures:

- Income is ahead of budget at this point in the year by c.£4,600 and most of this is from planned giving which is very encouraging
- Income currently exceeds expenditure. However, there is still c.£12,500 of expenses to come via some large single payment expenses such as insurance premiums

Tony Hughes asked whether the bookkeeper knows that we should only be paying salary costs to the Youthwork Trust for one Children & Families worker (C&FW) for the time being. The Treasurer said that he had spoken to the bookkeeper, Nick Clarke, about this and that Nick's expectation is that our payments to the Youthwork Trust will reduce. Jane Woolley asked how payments to the Youthwork Trust were triggered. Does the Trust invoice St Matthew's? What's the mechanism for ensuring that any agreed overtime is understood and paid?

Action: **Phill Johnston** to ask the bookkeeper to make the PCC aware of the mechanics of payments to the Youthwork Trust from the Benefice.

16. Draft Budget for 2023

Tony Hughes noted that no draft budget (Paper I) has been provided. Tony said that the PCC will therefore need to refer examination of the draft budget to the Standing Committee for decision in due course.

The Treasurer said that there is a draft budget but the Finance Committee has not yet examined it line by line. At this stage, the draft budget would suggest that we are facing a possible budget deficit of c.£17,500 for 2023. This includes assumptions about energy costs once our fixed rate deal expires in October 2023. It also assumes a 10% increase in staff salaries. It does not include the additional £1k requested by the CAP Debt Centre. The underwriting of the Administrator's salary until 31 December 2023 would come out of one of our unrestricted funds and so would not affect the budget for 2023.

The Treasurer wondered whether a staff salary increase of 10% was affordable given the projected level of budget deficit for 2023.

Jane Woolley suggested that the proposed £1k donation to the CAP Debt Centre from the Harwell Helpers Fund (see item 10) could be used for the additional £1k requested by the CAP Debt Centre from the Benefice for 2023. Allan Macarthur raised the alternative suggestion that we could treat the Debt Centre's request for an additional £1k as a one-off donation and use one of our unrestricted funds to pay it.

Allan Macarthur commented that although our energy costs are fixed until October 2023, they are still nearly double what they were this time last year. We are taking steps to decrease energy consumption – see item 20 and Paper K.

17. Co-option of Tim Roberts onto the PCC

In preparation for Tim Roberts taking over as Treasurer from 1 January 2023, he was co-opted as a member of the PCC.

Resolution	To co-opt Tim Roberts as a PCC member				
Proposed	From the Chair	Seconded		Passed	Unanimously

18. Buildings: Cleaning the chandelier in the chancel

Action from September 2022 meeting: Liz Roberts to consult Harwell Scouts about assisting with this.

Liz Roberts reported that she had spoken to Brian Zimmerman from Harwell Scouts and that the operation would involve the cost of plant hire (a scaffold tower). In mid-September Liz asked for a quote for that and the likelihood of Scouts being able to help at all in either the short-term - i.e. for Christmas - or the mid-term - i.e. within the next year. She had chased for a response but heard nothing since.

Action: **Liz Roberts** to confer with Tony Hughes and follow up an offer of help subsequently received from a member of the community

19. Buildings Committee report

Paper J was noted.

20. Saving energy

Paper K was noted. Hazel Connelly commented that she thought this was a well written paper and that she agreed with its conclusions i.e. that one way forward in the first instance is to have cavity wall insulation put into the church extension, as subsequently agreed by the Standing Committee.

21. Use of church building by Harwell Helps Ukrainians – update

Jane Woolley relayed that Harwell Helps Ukrainians would not need to use the church building during the winter and therefore would not incur any additional heating expenses.

22. Possible sale of Church Hall – action from September PCC meeting

Action from September 2022 meeting: Liz Roberts to ask Hazel Connelly to put the option of selling to a Community Land Trust into the mix of possibilities for Hazel's small group to explore.

Liz Roberts confirmed that she had done this.

23. Possible sale of Church Hall – update

Hazel Connelly reported that the Working Group has met twice so far and has two more meetings planned before Christmas. The meeting agendas are as follows:

Meeting 1: The groups the church is currently supporting and the space they require

Meeting 2: The opportunities if the church keeps the Church Hall

Meeting 3: The opportunities if the church releases funds by selling the Church Hall

Meeting 4: Review a paper to be drafted by Hazel Connelly summarising the Group's work and its recommendations

Hazel will then bring the Group's paper to the PCC in 2023.

Hazel said that she is also obtaining updated ballpark costs for previous plans from the 1990s to improve the church building.

24. Health & Safety

There was nothing to report.

Action: **Hazel Connelly** to arrange a regular Health & Safety review meeting with the churchwardens and church Administrator.

25. Services & Seasonal

The churchwardens reported that the Senior Leadership Team has begun planning for Christmas e.g. arrangements for getting the Christmas trees up, etc.

26. Future dates to note

Friday 4 November – interview day for post of Rector

Sunday 13 November – Remembrance Sunday

Sunday 11 December – carol service at St Matthew's

Sunday 18 December – carol service at All Saints'

Friday 23 December 3.30pm – crib service at All Saints'

Saturday 24 December 3.30pm – crib service at St Matthew's

27. AOB

There was a vote of thanks to Phill Johnston as outgoing Treasurer. This was proposed by Liz Roberts, seconded by Hazel Connelly and agreed unanimously.

Tony Hughes closed the meeting with The Grace at 10.10pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

_____ **DATE**

_____ **DATE**