

## Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 7.30 pm

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### Present

Jonathan Mobey (Chair for items 1-3, 6-8, 10-12, 21- 23 and present for item 9)	Phill Johnston (Treasurer)	Jane Woolley (Secretary)
	Eliza Wheaton	Sid Gale
		Rebecca Lewis
Tony Hughes (Chair for items 4, 5, 9, 13-20)	Pam Rolls (items 1-3)	

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for Items 1-3. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

The items are shown in agenda order but in fact were taken in the following order:  
1-3, 4, 5, 13-20, 9, 6-8, 10-12, 21-23

### 1. Opening & Prayer

Jonathan Mobey read from Acts 13 v44 – Acts 14 v7. Jonathan made some remarks about how this relates to the PCCs. Jonathan noted that the Holy Spirit is empowering everything that the apostles are doing, and we too should pray that we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jonathan Mobey invited PCC members to pray.

### 2. Harvest celebration arrangements

Jonathan Mobey relayed that our churches would be marking Harvest at services on Sunday 26 September. Jonathan said that there would be the usual collection of donated food items, the churches would have seasonal decorations and an invitation would be issued to the wider community. Jonathan confirmed that our mission partners, the Sharlands, would be visiting that day.

Jonathan Mobey and Yvonne Sanderson said that they would inform the St Matthew's and All Saints' flower arrangers respectively of the date. Jonathan confirmed that various suitable media would be used to publicise the Harvest services.

Jonathan Mobey invited comments and any further suggestions for marking Harvest this year.

Yvonne Sanderson suggested a Benefice-wide bring and share lunch on 26 September. This idea was agreed in principle by members of the PCCs. Decisions about the detail were delegated to the Senior Leadership Team.

### 3. PCC meetings pattern for 2022

Paper A refers. Jonathan Mobey asked PCC members to send any further comments to him or one of the PCC Secretaries for consideration prior to the preparation of a specific proposal for the October Combined PCC meeting.

### 4. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jan Radford, Gordon Gill and Allan Macarthur.

Michelle Walker was absent.

## 5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 1 June 2021 were approved as a correct record with the removal of an errant full stop.

### ITEMS FOR DECISION

## 6. Church Hall – should we pursue the possibility of selling it?

Paper C refers. This is about whether we should pursue the possibility of selling the Church Hall and using the money raised to improve the space and facilities at the main Church building. This has been prompted by a recent approach from the Plymouth Brethren. Expenditure on the Church Hall currently exceeds income by c.£2k per year.

Other papers also relevant here:

- Paper D – Harwell Church Hall Deed of Gift
- Paper E – Church Hall – emails between Jonathan Mobey and lawyers
- Paper F – Church Hall – thoughts from Allan Macarthur
- Paper F2 – Church Hall – thoughts from Tony Hughes
- Paper F3 – Church Hall – Scheme
- Paper F4 – Church Hall – Ecclesiastical Trusts (a Diocesan document from 2008)
- Paper F5 – Church Hall – thoughts from Gordon Gill

Tony Hughes pointed out that it is not as simple as saying that PCC finances would be c£2k pa better off if we sold the Church Hall. If activities currently located in the Church Hall moved to the main Church building then the running costs of the latter would increase e.g. for heating. Jonathan Mobey suggested that heating costs might not be affected so much if there were a different heating system for the church. Rebecca Lewis pointed out that expenditure on external venues might increase if Youth Fellowship could no longer meet in the Church Hall; this could not relocate to the Church unless a clash with the Sunday evening service could be avoided.

Jane Woolley wondered if we needed to consider the development value of the land for housing. It might be wise to have an uplift clause if we were to sell the Hall as is. Tony Hughes pointed out that a condition of the original planning permission for the Hall was that there was to be no change of use. So the Local Authority might not grant planning permission for housing. Rebecca Lewis pointed out that Government policy is now much more favourable to housing development than it used to be.

PCC members agreed that we need to consider the strategic issue of the Church community's space requirements and how best to meet them, irrespective of the approach from the Plymouth Brethren.

PCC members agreed that the key questions we need answered initially are:

- If we sold the Church Hall would the proceeds be at the PCC's disposal or would it go to the Diocese instead?
- Would the Charity Commission allow us to sell the Church Hall?

<b>Resolution</b>	To investigate whether we could sell the Church Hall and for the proceeds to be used by the PCC at a cost of c.£2.5k				
<b>Proposed</b>	Chair	<b>Seconded</b>	-	<b>Passed</b>	Unanimously

**Action: Jane Woolley** to check Church Representation Rules about whether assets of one PCC belong to the Joint PCC

**7. Church Hall – should we proceed with servicing the ventilation system?**

Tony Hughes said that he had obtained a quote for £375 + VAT to service the Hall ventilation system. Whether we should proceed depends primarily on Hall usage. There was then a discussion about how much use the Hall is likely to get in the next few months. The biggest users previously were the Scouts. Jonathan Mobey commented that it is not yet clear when Scouts will resume using the Hall and for how many sessions. Sid Gale relayed that the Scouts' latest risk assessment says that the external doors to the Hall must be left open for ventilation. In that case, a mechanical ventilation system would be irrelevant.

It was agreed that we should wait until usage levels are clearer before making a decision about whether to service the ventilation system.

**8. St Matthew's – should we install a roof alarm?**

Paper G refers.

Having reviewed the pros and cons, PCC members agreed unanimously with the Buildings Committee recommendation that we should **not** install a roof alarm. It was noted that the Buildings Committee would be looking into different security options.

**9. Finance – should we send a letter to donors?**

Paper H (a draft letter to donors) refers.

Jonathan Mobey explained that this letter was drafted based on one sent out by All Saints' PCC. However, St Matthew's financial position then improved considerably when we received grants from the District Council totalling c.£6k to compensate for loss of Church Hall income during the Covid-19 pandemic. So Jonathan put the letter on hold.

PCC members then discussed whether the state of St Matthew's finances warranted sending such a letter. Phill Johnston pointed out that it's not just a matter of Income vs. Expenditure for this year; we have been drawing on our unrestricted reserves quite heavily in recent years.

It was agreed that the Finance Committee should consider the matter and advise Jonathan Mobey whether to send such a letter to donors and, if so, what it should say. This action is recorded under item 18.

**10. Finance – preparing a draft budget for 2022**

Jane Woolley reminded the Treasurer that the Finance Committee needed to draft the budget for 2022 in time for consideration by PCC members at the November meeting. This action is recorded under item 18.

## 11. Health & Safety policy

The Chair reminded PCC members that we review the Policy annually and also whether it is being implemented.

Rebecca Lewis remarked that there have been numerous risk assessments during the pandemic. However there have not been any H&S meetings. Sid Gale queried whether it was sensible to keep the first aid box in a room that is locked.

PCC members wanted more assurance that the Policy is still suitable and is being implemented.

**Action: Eliza Wheaton** to confer with the PCC's Health & Safety Adviser, Hazel Connelly, about the Policy and its implementation and then to bring the Policy to the November meeting for approval

## 12. Manpower - general

Jane Woolley raised the fact that several key positions have remained unfilled for more than a year (Safeguarding Officer; Pastoral Care Lead; Hall manager plus the Treasurer would like to stand down.) Jane asked how can we move forward more effectively on these long-standing manpower issues?

Jonathan Mobey remarked that a few new people have joined the congregation over the course of the pandemic. He hoped that some of these might step forward in due course.

### ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

## 13. Church Hall report

Paper J was noted. There were no queries.

## 14. Church Hall – decision by Standing Committee about the Hall door

The Standing Committee approved a request to replace rather than repair the Church Hall door at a cost of £290 including labour.

## 15. Church Hall – status of outstanding actions from previous meetings

Tony Hughes reported that the Church Hall door has now been replaced but that it is not quite finished. It will probably end up costing more than £290 because the work required was more complex than anticipated.

Tony Hughes reported that repair of the Church Hall guttering is outstanding but arrangements are in hand and it should happen soon.

## 16. St Matthew's Buildings Committee report

Paper K was noted. This details various repairs that have been carried out, and the status of the Porch Glass Doors project. There were no queries.

Tony Hughes further relayed that he has asked David Pyke to chase afresh the expected quote from Beards for the Porch Glass Doors project. If there is no response, Tony plans to consult the Working Group to discuss what to do next.

## 17. St Matthew's Quinquennial Inspection

Paper L (a copy of the Quinquennial Inspection report) and Paper M (a list of works requiring attention arising from the Inspection) were noted. There were no queries.

Rebecca Lewis highlighted that the Church Architect, Philip Waddy, who had carried out the Inspection, had commended St Matthew's for the care and pride with which the fabric of the Church is looked after. Rebecca extended her thanks on behalf of the rest of the PCC to Tony Hughes for leading this effort.

## 18. Finance – meeting to explore expenditure savings

Phill Jonston reported that Allan Macarthur has now prompted a meeting of the Finance Committee to explore the potential for further expenditure savings but that a meeting date has not yet been set.

**Action: Phill Johnston** to arrange a meeting of the Finance Committee to discuss possible expenditure savings. This meeting to also discuss a draft budget for 2022 (ref item 10) and whether to send a letter to donors (ref item 9)

## 19. Finance – second grant for Church Hall

Phill Johnston reported that our application for the second Additional Restrictions Grant for the Church Hall during the Covid-19 lockdown in winter 2021 had been successful and the money received. Tony Hughes thanked Jane Woolley for dealing with the application.

## 20. Finance Reports

Paper N (Income & Expenditure) and Paper O (Fund Balances) were noted.

Phill Jonston summarised the situation as being that there is currently a surplus of income over expenditure of c.£7,400. However there are various annual items of expenditure to come e.g. insurance premiums.

Tony Hughes asked what the projection for the end of year would be taking those annual expenditure items into account since this would help to inform whether we should send a letter to donors (see item 9). Phill Johnston said that he would prepare such a projection for the Finance Committee meeting.

## 21. Manpower – event managers

**Action: Jonathan Mobey** to put a request for further volunteers into one of his Church emails

## 22. Future dates to note

Sunday 26 September – Harvest Festival

Tuesday 5 October – Combined PCC meeting

**23. AOB**

There was none.

**Jonathan Mobey closed the meeting with The Grace at 9.47pm.**

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**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**

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**SECRETARY**

\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**