

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC
held at All Saints', Chilton on Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 7.30pm

St Matthew's Harwell and All Saints' Chilton PCC were **present together for items 1-6**. For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

Present: Revd Jeremy Parsons (Chairman)
Tony Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Jane Woolley (Churchwarden)
Tim Roberts (Treasurer)
Sid Gale (Deanery Synod Representative)
Becca Lewis
Elizabeth Clarke (Secretary)

1. Opening & Prayer

The Rector, Rev Jeremy Parsons welcomed the PCCs to the joint part of the meeting and read from Psalm 105 and opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Appointment of Revd Sasha Reeves as Curate with particular responsibility for Valley Park

Sasha was attending her first PCC meeting following her licencing and subsequent commissioning to our Benefice at the beginning of this year. She will be sitting in on the All Saints' PCC meeting.

3. Children and Families Work update

Lucy Ryan was commissioned to do some of the Children and Families Work in the Benefice at the service in February when Sasha was commissioned to be Curate. Lucy will be working with the Fledgelings families, and coordinating the volunteers for this work.

Jeremy reported that the post will be re-advertised under the ECHO banner with the hope to recruit a person for the beginning of the new school year in September.

The various Children and Family events that had previously taken place through the year, including the summer Holiday Club, will be looked at by a team, and decisions made after Easter about what will be running.

Update on the committee structure and decision making consultation

- 4.** The consultation project lead by Geoff Maughan is underway. At a recent meeting, he reflected on the structures and, although these were not a problem, work is needed on how workflows and decisions operate, and on clarifying the boundaries between governance and executive responsibilities. Early indications of how to start

structuring things will be available soon and it is hoped this will be reported at the next PCC meeting.

5. Approval of Steven Luney becoming part of the Leaders and Preachers' team

Steve and his wife Carole moved to Didcot from Ireland six months ago and have been involved in various parts of church life in the Benefice, including becoming members of a Home Group and helping at the recent Alpha course. Steve belongs to the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and is currently working on converting his qualifications to be in line with the Church of England regulations so that he can become an accredited LLM.

Jeremy proposed that Steve became part of the leaders and preachers' team. This was **agreed unanimously**.

6. Annual Report – Sections 1-4

Paper A refers. These sections were approved in principle, for formal confirmation later in the meeting by the individual PCCs.

St Matthew's PCC Meeting

Welcome: Revd Jeremy Parsons asked Tony Hughes to act as Chairman for the Meeting. Tony then welcomed Dafydd Charles to the Meeting to present the Interim Church Hall Project Group Report.

7. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Eliza Wheaton, Liz Roberts, Pam Rolls, Jan Radford and Sasha Reeves. Phill Johnston was absent.

8. Decisions requested between Meetings

Date	Whole PCC or Standing Committee?	Subject	Result
12 th December 2023	PCC On line	St Matthew's 2024 Financial Budget Proposed Phill Johnson Seconded Jane Wooley	Passed: unanimously
21 st December 2023	PCC By email	To take out the Trinitas insurance policy despite the risk of an additional £7,500 (other damage caused) cost to us if the South Aisle roof lead was stolen again. To set up a designated "insurance reserve" fund and deposit £3k annually into it, to	Passed: 10 in favour 2 no reply

		be reviewed after 5 years' worth of deposits	
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These were noted and Tony thanked Jane for her work on the Insurance Policy, and, in answer to a query confirmed that it now does not cover loss of metal from the Church roof. The PCC had set up the Insurance Reserve fund to offset this risk.

9. Minutes of the PCC Meeting on 2023-11-07 were agreed and signed.

10. Matters Arising: The Scouts had made the necessary back payment and agreed to pay a reduced hire charge of £7.50 per hour which is being paid termly from January.

- a. All Church users have been briefed on how to zone the heating. Those booking events in the Church will now be charged for electricity use by meter reading.
- b. The Wardens have now completed a Health and Safety walk around the Church with Elaine (H&S Officer) and a few minor items had been identified which were now being addressed.
- c. The Volunteers Event had resulted in two people were interested in Kids' Church; one person volunteered to deliver Christmas/Easter cards/the Broadsheet; three people said they would read; one person said they would help with coffee, two people said they would help with cleaning, and one person that they would help with buildings

11. Minutes of the 2024 Budget Meeting were approved and signed.

12. Church Hall Project Group Interim Report.

Dafydd Charles said that, as PCC were aware, the Church Hall was currently under used and aspects of the building were unsatisfactory. He reminded the meeting of the previous Working Group 's report presented to the PCC in March 2023 which had not favoured the sale of the Hall, but suggested various options to try to increase its use by the Church. The current Project Group has looked again at their findings and undertaken further exploration of these options. In particular the Group has re-examined the option to retain the Hall and make it financially viable, (labelled option **K7**) and consider this could be achieved by a modest investment in improvements, opening bookings to non-church hirers, advertising and working more closely with the Village Hall and The Harwellian. This proposal would involve spending some money, reviewing the terms and conditions of the Hall hire, and changing the booking system to align with the Village Hall. The Group's detailed written report had been submitted to the PCC with this recommendation, seeking permission to proceed with several actions listed in the Executive Summary of the Interim Report.

Tony thanked the Project Group for all their work and Dafydd for his presentation. He then asked for questions and comments. Becca pointed out that the Hall would need clearing as there was a great deal of clutter in the meeting room, the cupboards and the loft space. She also asked about the restrictions on the opening of windows which might deter some users, especially in the summer months. Tony said that there is a ventilation system in the Hall that is currently switched off. He would look at any restrictions contained in the planning permission for the Hall or conditions for use of the Hall. Becca also asked about safety and Tony said there were fire doors into a grass area and the fencing and gate make the area secure.

Tim asked what was the purpose of the Hall? In his opinion, if it was to be made viable, there would need to be money spent (grants needed), and more volunteer effort, both initially and on-going, to manage it. He also wondered to what extent it would then remain a church hall if its use was almost entirely by external groups booking events, and did this matter? If it was not of benefit to the Church, should we not review the disposal option? This would release funds for the Church which it could use to further its Mission. Tony agreed that to follow the Project Group's proposals would need proper management and Jane pointed out that the Village Hall has a management committee and active volunteers to run it. She also pointed out that YF was currently the only Church user (apart from the Beavers, the Scouts being a church affiliated user), and Sarah Barrett had said it was not suitable for Kids Church.

Jeremy commented that in its present condition the Hall cannot fulfil the Church's need and maybe it should be viewed as a potential income stream. We should try and see if licensing it for use by another organisation is a viable option. Another option would be to mothball the Hall but that would lead to a decaying building and no income. Becca pointed out that if we successfully grow Kids Church the Hall might be needed for that, and would it be available if licensed out? It was thought that the licensing option would mean that we could retrieve the church hall again relatively easily if we needed it. The meeting discussed this further and felt also that some of the income from licensing it out could, for example, be used to hire a room in the Village Hall for YF. It was agreed that the option of licensing needed to be explored by the Project Group

After further discussion **PCC agreed unanimously, that the Project Group could go ahead with its proposals and undertake or commission some essential work with a first cut off budget of £2,000.** It also asked the Group to investigate the possibility of licensing or leasing out the Hall.

It was also agreed that the future of the Church Hall should be opened for wider discussion and it should be placed as a special item on the APCM Agenda. Tony will ask Debbie Greenfield, leader of the Project Group, if she would be able to present this.

Action points

1. Tony to review planning permission for and conditions for use of the Church Hall.
2. Project Group to go ahead with its proposals including essential work up to a £ 2,000.00 cut off.

3. Project Group to investigate licensing option.
4. Elizabeth to add Church Hall to APCM Agenda.
5. Tony to report back to Debbie Greenfield.

Finance

- 13.** Paper G: Income and Expenditure against 2023 Budget was noted.
- 14.** Paper H: Income and Expenditure against Budget P1 was noted.
- 15.** Paper I: Fund Balances was noted.
- 16. Buildings.** Paper J Building Committee Report was noted.
- 17. Manpower.** Possible Pastoral Care Lead still under discussion.

18. APCM Papers

- A) Draft Report (Harwell Section 5-end) was approved subject to an additional explanatory note on Appendix 4 to explain the variance on Receipts in the formal Accounts and Income as stated in the Report.
- B) 2023 Annual Financial Report and Accounts was approved and signed.
- C) Draft APCM Agenda was corrected to read that there are two Deanery Synod vacancies, both for a period of three years. Sid will not be seeking re-election. The Church Hall Development update was added to the Agenda.
- D) The Fabric Report, Deanery Synod Report and Safeguarding Report were all accepted.

19. Services

Easter Sunday services at both churches will be Family Communion.

20. Future Meetings

APCM 19th May
Combined PCC Meeting 4th June
Individual PCC Meeting 2nd July
Standing Committee Meeting 14th May

As there was no other Business, the Meeting closed with the Grace at 9.40pm