

**ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, NEWBURY
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 7.00pm (online)**

Present:

**The Revd. Gary Collins – Chair
The Revd. Julie Howell - Curate
David Oats and Alison Foulkes – Churchwardens
Kim Slade – Hon. Treasurer
Sam Brown – Secretary**

Also in attendance:

Melanie Brown, Aeron Slade, Jeremy Wright, Margaret Baker, Olive Maines, Andrew Kingston, Jennie Marwick-Evans, Stephen Kerry, Roger O’Callaghan, Jennifer Wright

1. Opening Prayer

2. Apologies for absence

Clive Loveless, Heather Holloway and Ann Dixon

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd September 2020

Amended and circulated. Approval of minutes was proposed by David Oats and seconded by Roger O’Callaghan. Olive abstaining and Jennifer also abstaining as she was not at the September meeting. (passed on a majority vote).

4. Matters arising from Previous Minutes

No matters arising, the Chairman requested any updates for the PCC 5th March meeting minutes. David Oats advised that the March meeting minutes were not provided before the meeting. Olive Maines updated that’s she thought they had and advised that we should not spend time reviewing the minutes now, she advised she was uncomfortable changing minutes that were approved as an accurate record at the last PCC meeting. The learning point is for the PCC to be more careful in accepting the minutes, but it was noted that some present at this meeting were not present at the 5th March PCC meeting. Jeremy Wright also advised the minutes were not sent out in advance, and his recommendation was that all amendments to be sent to the Secretary and revised minutes issued for review. Roger O’Callaghan advised that the minutes should stand as they are, any further comments should be reviewed before they are amended. This was agreed and the Chair advised the objective is to get clarity. No matters arising from the 5th March meeting was tabled.

5. Introductions. What being a PCC means?

Fr Gary outlined this means keeping our feet on the ground, being realistic, represent the interest of the church and community and keep ears open to God. It is easy to lose 'the God bit' in the humdrum of the PCC. Where we start from counts and is important. What it is to generate a sense of vision for what being a church in the 21st Century means, how to be welcoming and loving and curious, how to offer something different. We have talented people, a gift to share out, how do we become compassionate and how do we take ourselves and church forward and how to take our community forward. What kind of church do we want St Johns to be? A living tradition. We also have challenges as well. Adopt an approach that we have practical challenges to solve whilst having a big vision of a church for the future, and accessible and green church. How does having a bigger vision resource the church? How can we find resources as ourselves and the PCC, to be a reverential and enjoyable place to be? how do we have children running up and down the aisles, a place of kindness and of comfort? To throw these questions out. St Georges in 2018 came out with several practical ideas, a place of listening and learning and sharing together and capturing a vision with different nuances as we are different people. Lots of question but recognise the task, to dream big dreams but have feet on the ground, our friendship can be a strength to the church and to our community. Break out into 3 breakout areas

6. Ratifying Principles, Policy and Working Practice, Safeguarding & GDPR

St. George's looked at what the PCC means and a sense of whether we should adopt this and be communicative and collaborative, can this become our values as well? Aeron Slade asked whether we could have a separate session to review and give some time to see if there is something unique from St Johns. Jeremy Wright advised that the document titles *St Johns Church Policy and Working Practices* has not yet been ratified by the PCC and Aeron Slade recommended a separate session (Jeremy Wright agreed). Olive Maines suggested providing more time to read it through it. It was agreed that the PCC should feedback via e-mail initially to avoid extra meetings, Olive Maines proposed, Aeron Slade seconded. The Treasurer requested that a deadline for comments should allow for being issued 2 weeks in advance of the next PCC meeting (feedback to the PCC Secretary before 14th January). Note Gary!

GDPR officer not appointed, Jennie Marwick-Evans questioned the scope and how much data would need to be managed. The Chair advised that the role is broadly focussed on auditing and following the guidelines. Jennie Marwick-Evans agreed to take on that role. Proposed by David Oats and seconded by Jeremy Wright. All voted in favour. Jeremy

Wright asked if the procedures were standard guidelines as opposed to local guidelines, the Chairman advised there are also best practice guidelines that we need follow.

7. Vicar's Report

Fr Gary reminded us that we are back in lock down 'off' temporary situation, this experience has driven to a sharing of resources across the Benefice clergy team, fostering relations in community and church. Christmas is approaching quickly with a combination of online services. The biggest challenge is the crib services (carol services not going ahead). 27th December is our Patronal Day and Chair introduced a recommendation that we do not neglect the 27th but recognise its place in the calendar means it is poorly represented. If it were moved to the Summer, as a community event, it will be celebrated by more people.

8. Financial Report

The Treasurer provided a summary of Nov-Dec 2020 and what the 2021 budget looks like. Documentation has been provided, prior to the meeting for the PCC to review (including November actuals which is why it was issued close to the PCC meeting date).

HODA is a charity which supports the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Ho in Ghana, Africa, with money accruing in the PCC Main account, the donation has now been made and further payments redirected into a separate account for transparency. There has been no weekly collection in November so no income, however we expect in December for some services to go ahead. The Eaton Matthew Bequest is closed.

Castle Water advises no money forthcoming. David Oats believes we are being overcharged. The Treasurer and Churchwarden agreed to identify where the meter is located and how the payment is calculated. The Treasurer and David Oats will contact Castle Water to resolve.

The £3.5k quarterly investment has been received

The Director of Music contract has been signed.

The 'In's and Outs' of 2019,2020 and 2021 budget was reviewed.

The 2020 forecast is for a £18k deficit shortfall covered by legacy.

The 2021 forecast deficit is expected to be £15.5k due to Covid impact and projects (handrails, chairs etc).

By end of 2021 all our easy access savings will be gone.

Aeron Slade recommended that we would use the Good Exchange for this.

The Treasurer updated that a The Good Exchange project will be set up, where donations will (subject to their acceptance of the project as a worthy cause) be matched-funded by The Greenham Common Trust, be paying for the chairs, David Oats confirmed.

Key financial assumptions are that from May '21 we would be back to normal however room rent would be slower. Property to rent out (new tenant by March '21) 2x Good Exchange projects to unlock funding Target of £25k we will need help via the projects. Quarterly dividends of £3.5k per quarter.

By drawing down £12k from easy access savings to cover the deficit leaving £2k in the pot by the end of the year. Music on all year, maintenance spend, Boiler service only, Organ service/tune only but perhaps an Organ project in 2022. By 2021 all our easy access savings will be gone. The Treasurer outlined a plan to use growth in reserves to cover the shortfall and minor projects. At the end of 2020 to review how much the Kath Gibbs investments has grown. Medium to long term the Treasurer advised that we need increased income and giving. Increased fundraising and room rent. The Treasurer invited all PCC members to Email her with any questions.

Future Giving Solution – Aeron Slade presented to the PCC the contactless solution to receiving donations. The PAYAZ Passbox. Aeron Slade is seeking PCC authority to approach PAYAZ to get further information.

Why? contactless, Covid regulations, show us to be a modern church. Future visitors, when people walk around is an opportunity to give. Provides a financial platform for gift aid. Less cash handling from a security perspective and can be used for other events.

Why not? Unlikely to be used initially by existing parishioners.

Purchase cost and per transaction cost. Cost is £230 for the kit (one of the cheapest per transaction cost). 1.1% per debit and 1.3% per credit more if wi-fi fails. Free monthly subscription to Sign Up.

How long will the technology last? Aeron Slade advised approx. 4 years with the solution lasting if the relationship remains in place with the Parish Buying Scheme. When does the money arrive with the church? (Aeron Slade advised 2-3days into the bank account). Jennie Marwick-Evans asked whether we could integrate with the web site. Aeron Slade recommended that we would use the Parish Giving Scheme for this. The smartphone is in case the WIFI fails, but also provides the display enabling the giver to decide how much to give. Olive Maines asked, given we won't have people in church for some months, would this be useful for the next few months. Aeron Slade suggested that we need to start changing the culture before the need for the device comes in. Best to spend on infrastructure whilst we have the funds. Jeremy Wright advised and confirmed no recurring costs, so there is not a disadvantage in buying it now. Roger O'Callaghan asked how many we should purchase. Aeron Slade recommended one for now. It was asked if any neighbouring parishes are using this system, The Chair advised he believed that St Marys have a similar system. Alison Foulkes proposed, and David Oats seconded, the PCC voted all in favour.

9. Progress reports at St. John's

iCap (Improving Community Access project)– Heritage assessment final draft expected soon to enable a planning application to be put forward. Olive Maines asked if the plans were available for review. Andrew Kingston advised the detailed plans will be produced once the Planning Application is successful. Olive Maines advised that she was not able to support this project as she did not feel that current access was a problem and a porch, she felt, was not worth the amount of money required. The Chair affirmed that Olive’s opinions were heard, and well known and that this is not a point of discussion at this time. David Oats advises that reason for the porch is to enable motors for the doors to be fitted, and not specifically to support providing increased accessibility.

Hand-rails – David Oats updated that the work may well start within a month (ie starting in February). Decision around whether to have 6 or 7 rails is required following a walk around by the Standing Committee.

Chairs – The Chair opened the chairs update and Fr Gary produced recommendations. The DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) have provided useful feedback and guidance, but the cost has increased from £3.5k to £5.4k if the Bethel chair (armchair) is selected (for 30 chairs). Jennie Marwick-Evans asked can they be cleaned (the wood should be OK and David Oats advised the fabric would be checked). These chairs are used in several churches. There was a question as to whether padded backs would be available, and the response was that the DAC not onboard with padded backs. Jennie Marwick-Evans asked what we would do if we were donated with 30 chairs which were not DAC approved? Could we sponsor a chair? (possible) and we will be able to try before we buy? (yes) The Treasurer updated that we have budget for 30 chairs. David Oats advises we can be flexible but usually the chair with the arms are on the end of the row. Margaret Baker advised if the chairs were in the middle, the arms could be used by the people on either side. Olive Maines asked for clarity from the Treasurer on where the funding is being allocated from. The Treasurer updated that The Good Exchange project will be paying for the chairs, David Oats confirmed. The Chair–advises we will get a sample chair after Christmas and review cleanability, comfort etc and clarification over what the DAC will approve.

Director of Music – Christopher Sears appointed as director of music. He will play every Sunday apart from 1 week a month, but he will cover all the festivals.

10. ‘Think Tank’

The Chair updated that as an output from Tuesday Night discussions, he is seeking individuals to be involved in the think tank to discuss and formulate ideas on a more ‘thinking globally basis’ for inspiration and ideas. The make-up of participants should be from both inside and outside the church.

11. A Green Future

The Chair updated that he is setting up a steering group to look at ecological matters (for example we have an ageing boiler and how we become a greener church which is a vital part of the vision and an investment in the future). The Chair advised this would include people from St Georges who have been through this experience. The first step will be a Green Audit. Jennifer Wright suggested using 'Go Green' for the audit by going through the Diocese scheme.

12. Any other relevant business

Roger O' Callaghan updated on the developments regarding the Organ, carried out the reinstallation of the Dulciana.

Clive Loveless (through David Oats) advises he has been in touch with the Argyles Nursing home and they confirmed they have had no Covid cases thankfully and are looking forward to seeing the Fr Gary and Clive when it becomes possible.

Jennie Marwick-Evans introduced that her husband is involved in Greenham Common Tower, which they have 'lit up'. The company involved have been approached for lighting up the church, they have recommended some trigger words for nurturing and understanding, and Jennie Marwick-Evans advised that she is looking to sponsor for Christmas eve. She indicated that this is a very special building and there is an opportunity to promote inclusiveness, diversity and promoting the church.

13. Date and time of next meetings

21/1/21 Standing Committee Meeting

4/2/21 Parochial Church Council Meeting

Full year diary will be issued as soon as possible

Closing Prayer & Blessing

There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer and blessing.

Chair: _____

Date: _____