

# The Parish of St. John the Evangelist Newbury

Meeting of the PCC held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 beginning at 7.30pm at St John's Church

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## Present:

**The Revd. Gary Collins – Chair**  
**David Oats– Churchwarden**  
**Alison Foulkes – Churchwarden**  
**Kim Slade - Treasurer**  
**Sam Brown – Hon. Secretary**

## Also in attendance:

**Margaret Baker (MB), Jennifer Wright (JW) Andrew Kingston (AK) Stephen Kerry (SK), Jeremy Wright (JPW) , Melanie Brown (MAB) Christopher Sears (CS) - Part**

1	<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Welcome</b>		
2	<b>Apologies for absence:</b> Jennie Marwick-Evans (JME), Andy Grace (AG), Aeron Slade (AS)		
3	<b>Correspondence</b> Organ Funding Proposals, Art Project – With Passion, Boiler – Options, Financials.		
4	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> The previous PCC meeting held 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2022. Acceptance was proposed by AF and seconded by AK, unanimous approval from the PCC.		
	<b>Matters Arising from previous minutes.</b> No actions to carry over		
6	<b>Safeguarding Update</b> No issues reported and no concerns raised. SK asked how we can remind everyone of the importance of safeguarding. MB updated the PCC of a recent visitor to the church, this was not a safeguarding issue, but could have become one. Revd Gary asked MB and SK to contact Alex in the office, as St Georges are formulating a policy which would be a good starting point. KS suggested we role play scenarios every few months as a PCC. SK reminded us that we must prioritise own safety first. SK advised he wanted to ensure the congregation were reminded of safeguarding on a regular basis. Rev Gary confirmed that there are notices in the WCs. Rev Gary updated we should run this through our whole community. SK asked to lead a discussion on Safeguarding at the PCC meeting after next. <b>SK – Action to lead awareness session on Safeguarding at future PCC Meeting</b>		
7	<b>H&amp;S Update</b> MB was asked by JPW to put some lights in the coffee area to avoid scolding spills. MB has brought in two magnetic lights. JPW updated that we still have a dripping tap, the mains tap downstairs, Revd Gary will investigate. <b>Revd Gary – Action investigates mains tap</b>		

8	<p><b>Standing Finance Committee</b></p> <p>Revd Gary updated that he has asked SK to join the Standing Finance Committee (SFC). JPW asked why MB was not invited and queried the protocol given the last position on the PCC was from H&amp;S. DO advise that it was within protocol for SK to be asked but requested that if JPW has a document that supported her view could she forward. MB indicated that she had no objection to SK being asked to join the SFC. The PCC voted unanimously in favour of SK joining the SFC.</p>	
9	<p><b>Deanery Update</b></p> <p>SK updated that there had been no Deanery meeting since the last PCC meeting. SK did update the PCC that there had been a Green Party pamphlet issued which mentions warm churches and St Johns is referenced.</p>	
10	<p><b>Vicar's Report</b></p> <p>Revd Gary referred to his report issued in advance of the PCC meeting</p>	
11	<p><b>Financials</b></p> <p>KS updated the PCC that the operating deficit in 2022 was £6k, however we expect energy bills to come in 2023. The key point of concern is that the size of the Legacy which has gone down by £52k from 2021-2022 because of the market volatility. Despite this we still had 4 good sized dividends during the year. KS has updated the reserves figures which were issued to the PCC prior to the meeting. KS has updated the model with actuals and PCC feedback (e.g. increase the number of months in buffer – now at 9 months). KS also advised that she had reduced the investment growth assumptions. The target date for zero deficit is now 2033. Running through the numbers the total number we could withdraw would be less than we discussed last time.</p> <p>A discussion progressed regarding the house, and it was confirmed that if the house was not occupied by a curate, then the revenue from the house revert to the PCC.</p> <p>MB wondered if we were being too prescriptive with the model. KS responded that the model reflects a suggested approach to how the money was spent. Revd Gary suggested that the framework is what we work off, and then how do we make it work in practice. KS reminded that the maximum funds available should be £85k this year and the number revisited at least once a year. Revd Gary thanked Kim for her efforts in managing the finances.</p>	
12	<p><b>Funding art works – with passion</b> – Revd Gary updated the PCC and requested funding. JPW asked who would own the artwork, Revd Gary confirmed St Johns would own the works. SB updated that we should get some added publicity and may encourage more of the community into the church. AF confirmed that this is linked to the festival. The PCC voted unanimously to fund the project, based on the proposals issued to the PCC prior to the meeting.</p>	
13	<p><b>Spending considerations – Boiler, Organ upgrades, i-CAP.</b></p> <p>Revd Gary opened the conversation on the three big issues in-front of us.</p> <p><b>Boiler</b></p> <p>DO updated that the boiler is leaking, and we have an additional leak in the underfloor heating. We need to fix the underfloor heating leak and then see if we can connect a new heating system to the underfloor heating pipes. DO updated the PCC on the sequence of activity being undertaken and confirmed that now it is likely that during the week it is unlikely that we will have heating. DO updated the PCC based on the boiler quotes received. The quotes cover either replacing the boiler with new gas (which is hydrogen ready) or for an air source heat pump. DO is waiting for the DAC to respond. SB updated that he was not sure whether an air source heat pump is suitable (he could not find any examples of implementations in churches and advice seems to be that air source heat pumps worked best in well insulated domestic environments).</p>	

He also wondered whether we should approach specialist companies who just work with churches, who also are aware of the funding options. JPW agreed but suggested that air circulators may also be considered (he has direct experience and knowledge). AK clarified the suggested gas boilers are indeed hydrogen ready. DO agreed with everything said, we have got to follow the trail. JPW supported SBs view that we should contact people who specialise in church heating installations. SK suggested we may be restricted as we have underground pipes and DO states that if we cannot use the pipes then we have a big problem. SK suggested electric heating, JPW suggested and DO confirmed that electric is very expensive. JPW suggested that we should proceed with investigations as quickly as we can. Revd Gary reminded that the investigations may require funding. AK reminded that we should be able to reclaim the VAT.

**DO Action – Proceeding with underfloor pipe work activity.**

### **Organ**

CS went through the organ quote and stated we could cut the quote down further with logical sections. The Swell is the top of the list, and then once in the Swell box you should undertake the relevant work also. The costs are between £15-£20k ex VAT. CS updated that the further work we can leave out till another date. He updated the PCC that the Swell box is an intermittent fault which could occur when we have external people using the organ, therefore it is recommended that this resolved. MB asked whether we could get funding from Greenham, the view was no because we already had two projects live. JPW clarified that the £20k figure covers essential and the work within the Swell box. The view at present is that organs permanently attached to the structure can claim the VAT back.

SB updated the PCC on the SFC proposals (issued to the PCC in advance of the meeting) which was based on the position known that we will have unknown costs for the boiler and potentially for i-Cap and was also based on previous advice at the last PCC meeting that the Organ work was necessary and had been broken down as far as it could in phases. On that basis the SFC proposed funding over 4 years and based on available funds, KS proposed £10k per year. JPW suggested spending £20k now and nothing next year. Revd Gary reminded us that we need to be aware that we will have significant expenditure coming through shortly. SK reminded us that the organ is regularly serviced and has had work undertaken recently. JPW recommended we should afford the immediate requirement of the top 3 items from the quotation. The PCC agree the authorisation of up to £20k (2023) on the basis of £10k this year and £10k advanced from next year (2024). With a budget forecast item for £10k in year 3 (2025) and £10k in year 4 (2026). A request for further funds could be made to the PCC, however £40k total, phased, is what is being proposed and if accepted would be forecasted in the accounts. The PCC voted on the proposal which was passed by majority. Revd Gary thanked CS for his work as organist and director of music for St Johns.

### **I-Cap Funding**

Revd Gary updated that there will be a point in time that we may have to come back to the PCC for funding support, the project is important. SK suggested we may need to look at funding I-Cap or funding a proportion. KS suggested we could do lighting and porch from funding. SK suggested we try and break down the i-Cap proposals into phases. JW supported and suggested people may give more if the funding is broken down. AK expressed concern that if broken down then we may have to go back to the beginning of the approvals process. MB states we should update people on where we are with funding.

14	<p><b>Bike racks</b></p> <p>There has been delay due to requests for a diagram showing elevation for the bike rack. SK updated that the total cost would be around £500. Revd Gary thanks SK for all his efforts.</p>		
15	<p><b>Living with Love and Faith.</b> General Synod is meeting 6-9<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Fr Gary reported that it looked like progress on inclusion and blessings for same sex couples will not be forthcoming. Fr Gary said this remains a pastoral concern as many 'outside the church' look upon it with despair and concern. Fr Gary reiterated his desire for St John's to be seen as a progressive and inclusive Anglo-Catholic presence in south Newbury and the wider area.</p>		
16	<p><b>St Johns School</b></p> <p>Revd Gary illustrated the good school connection by reporting on a very noisy and enjoyable dinner he was invited to in school today. Also, St John's recently hosted 180 school children in church a couple of weeks ago for a 'church exploration day' which went very well.</p>		
17	<p><b>Any Other Business.</b></p> <p>There was no AOB.</p>		

**Closing Benediction, the meeting closed at 21:30**

**Dates of next meetings:**

21/03/23 (tues) Standing Committee Meeting - Zoom

30/03/23 (thurs) Parochial Church Council Meeting - Church, Upper Room

19/04/23 (weds) Zoom PCC meeting to approve Financial Report prior to APCM