

The Parish of St. John the Evangelist Newbury

Parochial Church Council Meeting held in-person and via Zoom on Thursday 28th November 2024,
beginning at 7.30pm

Present:

The Revd. Gary Collins – Chair
Leanne Fowler - Curate
David Oats (DO) – Churchwarden
Simon Brown (SB) – PCC Secretary
Kim Slade (KS) – Hon. Treasurer

Also in attendance:

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

1	Opening Prayer & Welcome		
2	Apologies for Absence & Any Other Business Alison Foulkes (AF) – Churchwarden, Christopher Sears (CS)		
3	Correspondence: Aeron Slade (AOB)		
4	Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 18 th September 2024. The minutes were approved by the PCC with JW proposing & AK seconded, all in favour.		
5	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes. JW – Tree at the west end appears to be dying. Revd Gary noted he thought there was not a great deal of foliage. DO suggested we wait till spring and then review.		
6	Positive feedback since last PCC. Quiz night went well with £200 raised. Forest Church brings in over 50 people. General numbers good (especially given the recent weather) we had 50 people last Sunday. Soup lunch has grown (recently 35 people which is about the maximum!). Ideas for how we can enhance our children provision are being discussed. The benefice celebration went very well. The old boiler still running! Revd Gary updated that we have the boiler on continuously as the church is in constant use. DO updated the boiler is on 17°C.		
7	Appointing new servers– Revd Gary updated we have 3 new servers. Gerry Madden, Judith Kerry, Ann Thomas have all been nominated as new servers. SB nominate and AK seconder. The PCC voted all in favour. All will go through safeguarding and will need to be licenced ministers of the chalice.		
8	Safeguarding - Nothing reported. SK received two letters, one from the Diocese and one from the safeguarding Bishop asking SK to reassure the congregation regarding the current focus on safeguarding. SK communicated this to the 10:00 congregation. Revd Gary asked SK to cover the 08:30 service. SK recommended that we have representation from the 8:30 (in addition to churchwardens) and this was agreed.		
9	H&S – MB asked if the umbrella stand could be moved, otherwise nothing reported.		
10	Greening Group – Revd Gary updated that he is having discussions with SK on how we can re-vitalise the group. SK wondered if we could encourage use of recycle paper and he would be happy to lead this initiative. MB updated that there are bags that can be used. AS suggested using a tree. Revd Gary will put SK in touch with West Berks Climate Action Group who have a tree. Revd Gary said we should consider an event or vigil.		
11	Financials Financials have been sent out. We only have £2.5k in the main account with dividends due tomorrow so should raise to c £5k. So far this year we have drawn down £5k and will draw down some to pay for the		

	<p>boiler which was replaced at Newtown Road. i-CAP we have £11k and funds held by Good Exchange. VAT rebates have been pushed through. KS then covered a proposed update to the reserves policy. At the end of 2023, the KG legacy has approx. £323k which is our reserves. KS reviewed the model with the PCC, and the work she has undertaken on the reserves policy. Based on 2023 with inflation we can see the future forecast and what monies are available to spend on projects. The previous PCC position was reserves for 9 months of both outgoings and loss of income, 9 years for deficit coverage (i.e. in 9 years break even/net zero), and monies for emergency maintenance. Discussions were held as to what should be kept in the reserves. The proposal was to move from 9 months to 6 months. However, discussions in the room indicated some other food for thought: AK stated that the deficit coverage until we are 'net zero' is the key; JW and MB encouraged a review of the model inputs as we should not need to cover income as well as outgoings as this is double counting. It was also acknowledged that as the capital reduces so the dividends reduces. JW believes 9 months is appropriate and look to not including income, and 12 years of deficit coverage to come. SK reminded that we have to see how we would close the deficit gap. KS updated other churches are at 2- 3 months in their reserves. SK suggested we should see where we are going as a church and make sure we are spending on areas we are developing. After debate, it was decided KS will prepare new options and proposals given the PCC discussions tonight, and we will review in January 25. KS thanked the PCC for the input.</p>		
12	<p>Deanery Update – AS updated that the deanery reviewed finances and Newbury South Parish share will increase by 7% so from £140k to £150k. There were only a few churches charged the full amount. We were charged 7% last year, this year and potentially next year also. Revd Gary reminded the PCC that the figures are from a point in June and try and match growth in numbers with growth in cost.</p>		
13	<p>Vicar Update – Revd Gary updated that the PCC new domain name is South Newbury.Org whilst retaining all the legacy names for some time in parallel. LF updated on a recent webinar on assisted dying and that is becoming more of a conversation moving forward. Adoption of shared chalice was re-introduced and would appear that the change has gone well. Moving into the busy season, next ear we are planning pre-Lent lectures as a benefice. Aeron and the Sea Cadets did a great job on the catering, and this was a great success. New Bishop – Canon Mary Gregory is known to Revd Gary and she will be invited to the benefice.</p>		
14	<p>Safeguarding – Revd Gary reflected on recent news. LF updated that she felt the lack of communication between people was a clear standout of the report. SK updated we need to do a wider basic safeguarding. Revd Gary invited the PCC to discuss their thoughts.</p>		
15	<p>i-CAP – AK updated that the ramp is done and the foundation for the new porch is completed. Everything is on order for the porch to be completed in January'25. Revd Gary updated that we would have a dedication service for the new porch when completed. Boiler – DO updated that we have had a draft fundraising report, and we have had feedback from the project manager and hope to go out to tender in January. The system is being designed and a tender process will be against that design. Organ – no update.</p>		
16	<p>School connection – Revd Gary updated that the St Johns school connection is doing well.</p>		
17	<p>Any Other Business:</p>		

Closing prayer (meeting closed at 21:15)

Date & time of next meetings: