

The Parish of St. John the Evangelist Newbury

Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Zoom on Thursday 3rd February 2022 beginning at 7.00pm

Present:

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

Also in attendance:

Margaret Baker (MB), Melanie Brown (MAB), Ann Dixon, Stephen Kerry, Andrew Kingston, Jennie Marwick-Evans, Aeron Slade, Jennifer Wright (JW), Jeremy Wright (JPW)

1	Opening Prayer & Welcome	
2	Apologies for Absence, Heather Holloway	
3	Correspondence & AOB Parish Share and Outside Space (roundabout planting)	
4	Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 18 th November 2021. The minutes were approved by the PCC with AS proposing and AF seconding.	
5	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes. Actions from the previous minutes were reviewed.	
6	Safeguarding Update. SK asked if any issues have been reported, confirmed that no issues have been reported. SK indicated there is an issue with who needs to be DBS checked. Fr Gary indicated anyone involved in children facing activities need to be DBS checked and SK indicated that this is related to Domestic Abuse training which needs to be covered by all on the PCC Revd Julie confirmed she has done this.	
	Action – Revd Gary to forward the link for distribution	
7	H&S Update. JW advised no issues reported.	
8	Deanery Update – Not been a Synod since last PCC. Deanery Parish Share information to review and AS indicated he is happy to feedback information. Revd Gary updated that the Parish Share response will be joint with St George's. Revd Gary outlined how the Parish Share operates. Most churches are reporting up to a 30% drop in numbers during Covid-19. Historically the contribution has been based on October attendance. The new approach is to look at the total Sunday attendance during June (where there are no festivals). There are 10 proposals requesting responses. Revd Gary suggested that he and the Churchwardens will complete the form but is keen to invite views. MB suggested that this is still open to error. KS suggested you could tax on the income that the church has received. Rev Julie reminded us that this should be based on our ability to pay. DO suggested this should be based on income. Revd Gary asked the PCC to respond back with any thoughts. AS agreed to co-ordinate responses.	
8	Financial Report. KS asked if there were any questions on the account information sent. KS stated the growth in the Kath Gibbs legacy has been over £50k. KS reminded us that we must account for inflation. MAB asked about the impact of the gas price rises in April (fixed price ends 4 th June 2022). KS indicated she is working through the 2021 auditing. KS wants to get the audited accounts ready for the next PCC. KS is awaiting letters from the diocese.	
9	Vicar's Report Revd Gary updated the PCC that we are springing out of the Christmas celebrations. Thanks to JME for the light's sponsorship and JW for the Christmas Tree festival raising £1400 for the Soup Kitchen. It was lovely to see people coming into church. On Christmas Eve midnight Mass, approx. 40 people were in the congregation of which around 30 were new to the church. Really great coverage from the Newbury Weekly News Father Christmas alert!	

	<p>Tuesday Eucharist is doing well and is proving to be a special time. Challenges continue as to how we can make it an open and welcoming church. Trying to build up a sense of goodwill in the community. Hoping to do more with climate action groups in Newbury. This may cover more than just climate issues. Working with City Arts with the possibility of a Holy Week art project. We will be hosting Newbury Spring Festival Service in May (Vaughan Williams). Working through options for Forest Church. Revd Gary is considering opening Café Church after the school run. Possibly on Fridays. The plan is that recorded services will cease in March to be replaced by live streaming. St George's have a new camera system and we will try for an alternating streaming service each week. JPW suggested if St George's has the kit why not do more there, Revd Gary responded that our congregation would like to still see St Johns. JW asked about what we may be doing for the Jubilee. Revd Gary indicated that we should have a planning group for the Jubilee, for those interested drop Revd Gary a line. Revd Gary indicated that it may be a good idea to plan on a Benefice basis (JPW suggested that may be a good idea to do something jointly). Revd Gary indicated he would put a mention in the newsletter. Starting first Sunday activity for young families (trying to encourage key stakeholders for ideas). Fr Gary illustrated parents' apprehension about church, citing two parents at toddler group not wanting to bring their children into church because they would not behave. Fr Gary and Debbie (Toddler leader) encouraged them to come in – and they were reassured; this is an indication of what people feel about church. JME updated that there seems to be a feeling, among some parents, that suggests the church is seen to be scary and there are barriers preventing them coming through the door. AK indicated that there are vibes given by some people which is a shame. Revd Gary appreciated the support in making the church more open and inclusive. Revd Gary hopes we can take a more positive feel into this year and look for ways we can further the openness and welcome of the church.</p>
10	<p>Progress Update at St. John's. Maintenance and use of church</p> <p>iCap – AK updated that we have reached the stage that we have the approvals for costs and plans and AS is approaching organisations for fundraising. AS indicated, we have had a figure from the Good Exchange ready to go on the platform. Completing a two-page document to hand out to those who cannot access the platform. We can claim £148k from the Good Exchange (approx. total for the project is £160k). AS indicated that organisations are prepared to help given this is to support being open to the community. Revd Julie suggested having an open day to get people onboard. SB encouraged the thinking of the church being 'inside out'. Revd Gary sent prayers of blessing to AS for taking on the fundraising and everyone on the iCap project.</p> <p>Hand-rails – Completed</p> <p>Chairs - & Funding – Enough funds to order 20 chairs – order will be going through soon</p> <p>Footpath widening (designated protected footpath) – completed</p> <p>Electrical work on stairs - completed.</p> <p>Floor repairs – tiles under the children's area – in the process of getting quotes.</p> <p>Lady Chapel, carpet, and ramp - Sourcing a quote for the carpet in the Lady Chapel, with a carpet it would be a warmer, and more welcoming place to be, subject to DAC approval. A temporary ramp has been put in place, but a proper, temporary removable ramp is being sourced. JW appreciated it was nice to be able to access the Lady Chapel.</p>
11	<p>Greening St John's Revd Julie updated that we are having our Green Audit on 17th February. An external assessor looking at heating and lighting options. Reviewing what different heating options are available, Mindful of carbon footprint options with a lot of prep work been undertaken. Hope to have the report ready for next PCC. SK updated that they have been looking at the outside space and focus is on the roundabout which is a nice size space with a idea (a green activity) each year this could be educational and visual, promoting recycling. The most straightforward start is to turn into a wildflower patch with beautiful colours and insects. The growing season ends end of October so need a plan over winter. The proposal is can we start that idea for sowing in late March Early April Wildflower seeds to see us through the summer. DO updated that the roundabout is covered by an armoured mesh. In 2012 we paid to have it armoured because the edges were turning to mud. The armour was put on and seeded and grass growing through it. MB suggested the triangle as an alternative location, SK suggested several ideas. KS suggested the changing installation on the roundabout and the wildflowers on the alternative areas. KS updated that Green Initiatives have £1k for this year. SK indicated if we created the new area, we could proceed this year and think of options for the roundabout next year. DO supported the view of raising the bed on top (also suggested by KS). Revd Gary asked if the PCC would allow SK and collaborators to</p>

	approve. SK requested we proceed with wildflowers on the triangle for this year. SK indicated he would lay out the suggested area with a view to plant before the end of the month. JW to discuss with SK and agree. PCC approved unanimously. Revd Gary thanked SK for his work.
12	Living in Love and Faith – Revd Gary is determined that St Johns is recognised as an inclusive and progressive church. Keep to mind that we could become part of the inclusive church movements.
13	St John’s School Connection. Revd Gary updated that the assemblies are thriving. Spirituality is nurtured and for example last Sunday service with the involvement of the school. Interesting to note that some of the children and parents have never been in a church environment due to the pandemic.
14	Any other relevant business – No AOB reported, Revd Gary thanked the PCC for all their efforts
15	Benefice Expansion update – SK and JME updated the PCC that there is group of 10 people with next meeting is 19 th February and will be a PCC meeting with some attendance from this group. A terms of reference and a milestone plan with a final report back to the PCCs in October this year.

Closing Benediction (meeting closed at 20:45)

Date and time of next meetings: SFC 22nd March 2022, PCC 29th March 2022, APCM 5th May 2022.