

The Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Ross-on-Wye
Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council
Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 7.30pm in St. Mary's Hall

Present: The Rector, J Setchfield and J Cooper (Churchwardens), P Eward (vice-Chairman), K Vitale (Secretary), P Raddenbury (Treasurer), the Rev Canon M Bamforth, the Rev Canon C Blanchard, the Rev S Tarlton, V Allen, M Sanderson, B Jones, A Morris, P Reynolds, T Harding and K Richards. Cllr R Mayo for items 1-3.

1. Opening Prayers

The Rev S Tarlton opened with prayer.

2. Apologies

D Glover and Canon F Davies

3. Town Council Report

The repair to the railings at the top of the steps from Church Street has started, with completion imminent.

The replacement for the slab for the steps by Okells has gone out to tender. Cllr R Mayo is getting advice on repairing the pathways. The Memorial testing course has been booked and J Setchfield will be attending. Five 'Dogs on Leads' signs have been ordered. The Lights Committee are arranging a meeting date. The Rector thanked Cllr R Mayo for all his work.

4. Declaration of AOB

None

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the September meeting were read and agreed.

Their acceptance was proposed by J Cooper

Seconded: The Rev Canon M Bamforth

Abstentions 2, not at the meeting

Carried Unanimously

6. Matters Arising

The Rector has not been able to contact Addaction, but will continue trying.

P Eward has written to the Charity Commission again, but has had no response; he will pursue this.

The Rector has not heard from the Bishop's Office concerning the Bishop's Marriage Order.

J Cooper informed the meeting that J Cater's Memorial Stone is ready to be installed.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. Finance

Current position

The Budget Report as at 31 October 2017 together with a copy of the latest Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) and Balance Sheet had been circulated. These include the known costs for the reordering Phase 1 and the likely amount of VAT that we will seek to reclaim next year once the works are complete.

P Raddenbury had no further comments to report from the Finance Group Meeting earlier in the day but advised that, in summary, the estimated position at the end of October shows a deficit of £116,822. If the reordering costs are removed, which were not in the Budget for this year then the deficit is currently £9,381 which is 41.4% more than the Budget figure.

The income from giving and fund raising is considerably down but we still have the Christmas Tree Festival coming up. Our income figure is £8,121 below the Budget figure but this has benefitted from a sum of £3,213.38 that has been established is a float that this PCC has made to the Ross Team Fees bank account. That is a wind-fall figure and, strictly, we are £11,300 down on income per the Budget.

Reordering work

As reported earlier in the meeting, a reply from the Charity Commission has still not been received, so we do not know how much of the work can be funded from our restricted Fabric Fund and the Jessie Cater Bequest. With their approval we can transfer the cost of £107,442 across to the restricted funds.

As the donations that have been generously made for chairs and other items as part of the reordering project were made for restricted purposes they have been included in the restricted funds column on the SOFA.

Charitable giving

At this meeting the PCC consider the payments that we will make for this year. This is on the basis of 5% of voluntary income less legacies and forwarded collections. The budget figure was £4,406 but with the lower income receipts the estimate for the year is £3,915.

P Raddenbury has been asked by the Co-Op if we have made any payments overseas, if so they want to know how the money has been spent in the form of invoices etc. we need to consider this if we continue to support Kagati or any other overseas charity.

T Harding thanked the PCC for their support of Under the Same Sun, but felt it was time to support another Charity. P Reynolds also felt the same about Sea Beyond Borders.

Other suggestions were:

Hope – V Allen

Mission to Seafarers – the Rev Canon M Bamforth

Winston's Wish – K Vitale

Kinkizi Diocese Scholarship programme, Anglican project to provide secondary education mainly for orphaned girls – the Rev Canon M Bamforth

The Bible Society was also suggested, however J Cooper informed the meeting money is collected for them at the current Bible Group.

Addaction and SHYPP, project for supporting homeless young people, there is a house in Ross.

It was decided to divide £3915 between 5 charities, £783 each.

Local charities were Hope, Addaction and SHYPP

Overseas, Kinkizi and Mission to Seafarers.

Proposed: M Sanderson

Seconded: P Eward

Unanimous

Budget 2018

The report had been distributed and was discussed and approved at the meeting. Matters considered before the budget was approved were:

a. Intergenerational Missioner

P Raddenbury will move the total funds of £43,750 for our share of the costs for the five years into a designated fund. The funds remain part of the unrestricted funds of the PCC and any surplus not expended can be transferred out of the designated fund and used for any unrestricted purpose.

b. Salary review

Salary increases for the Administrator, Organist and Director of Music were discussed. M. Sanderson (Director of Music) withdrew temporarily for part of the discussion. The current living wage is £8.75 per hour; a 3% increase would make the Administrator's salary £8.80 per hour.

An increase of 3% was proposed for the Administrator.

Proposed: P Raddenbury

Seconded: P Reynolds

Unanimous

An increase of 3% was proposed for the Organist.

Proposed: J Setchfield

Seconded: the Rev Canon C Blanchard

Unanimous

An increase of 3% was proposed for the Director of Music.

Proposed: J Setchfield

Seconded: K Vitale

Unanimous, 1 abstention (M Sanderson, absent from this part of the meeting)..

c. Cleaning

J Cooper has managed to get a team to do the cleaning so there has been no cost. Additional toilet and catering facilities may force a need to pay for cleaning. Cleaning after the re-ordering work may require contract cleaners. The Rector suggested we have a 'fun clean', J Cooper felt this would be a good solution if it was organized well. The suggested date for this was 13th January between 9-12. J Cooper will put details in the newsletter and devise a plan so people can put their names down for which area they want to clean.

d. Building repairs

We need to rely on restricted funds, but it may be that we should be making a contribution to the building fund. However, due to the deficit it was decided to continue to use restricted funds for any repairs.

e. Professional Fees

The budget has no provision for professional fees for phase 2 of the re-ordering.

The current budgeted deficit is £11390, excluding any professional cleaning fees which may be incurred.

P Raddenbury proposed that the PCC adopts the budget.

Seconded: B Jones

Unanimous

The Rector thanked the finance group and P Raddenbury for co-ordinating the budget document.

Planned Giving Scheme

The Rector, Paul Eward and P Raddenbury had an exploratory meeting with Richard Jones who is a Planned Giving Adviser at the Diocese. He outlined the scheme that is administered out of Gloucester on behalf of the C of E. The Diocese has paid to join this and there is no cost to Parishes.

Rather than collect by standing order or envelopes, donors would be asked to complete a direct debit on which they can opt to increase monthly payments by the inflation increase measured by the RPI. Even if they opt out of this, thank you letters can be generated by the Scheme administrators which can also encourage an increase in giving. These letters can be personalized onto our letterhead paper.

Tax is reclaimed monthly and paid across to us and overall it has been found that levels of giving can be increased under the Scheme.

Richard Jones has been invited to attend our meeting in January 2018 to give a presentation and answer any questions. If we then decide to go ahead we can pass a Resolution at that meeting and the Treasurer can complete the necessary paperwork.

The Rev Canon C Blanchard informed the meeting of the Direct Debit scheme the Church of Wales used, which works well and can have huge benefits.

Donations Button and Text Giving

It would be helpful to have a donations button on our website and the problem has always been with the ongoing cost of this. It is understood that this facility may be available through the Planned Giving Scheme next year but there does appear to be another alternative. This is linked to the facility to offer giving by text and Richard Jones has kindly provided details of this. It is administered through Just Giving and there is currently a special offer through the National Churches Trust that would enable us to save the £15 per month charge and just mean that a charge of 5% would be deducted from amounts received.

Just Giving would reclaim the income tax and we would have access to their donation button facility.

If approved it was hoped to have the facility in place in time for our Christmas services and we could offer the facility on a poster by our safe by the Main Door.

It was proposed we implement Text Giving.

Proposed: P Reynolds

Seconded: M Sanderson

Unanimous

The Rector and P Raddenbury will discuss implementing it.

9. Rector's Business

The Rector to email via the Secretary the Mission Action Plan for the PCC to make suggestions to the Rector to revise the current map.

PA system The Rector, J Setchfield and the PA company are to meet to make final decisions.

Intergenerational Missioner. Interviews will start at the end of November. The candidate is coming to Church on 26th November to get a feel for St.Mary's.

Toilets in Church. The Rector felt that the toilets should be kept unlocked but understands it could cause an issue. The PCC felt we should have them unlocked and if it becomes an issue we will lock them.

The date for the APCM has been set for 18th April 2018.

Diocesan Synod. The Rector had raised same sex partnership and married couples being allowed to ask their Priest for a blessing as it currently is for divorced couples, with each Priest being able to make their own decision. This had been passed unanimously, and will now move to the Church of England General Synod.

The Rector asked that we pray for the Rev Canon M Bamforth on his forthcoming trip to Uganda, a country which is not at all supportive of the LGBT community, and where representatives of the Church of England can be at risk of persecution.

10. Safeguarding

The Rev. S Tarlton now has now received all the information from D.Glover, which is all up to date and in good order.

11. Health and Safety

J Setchfield had closed the Church on Saturday 4th November, as it was unattended and not safe because of the ongoing building work.

The heating and flooring should be done in time for the Choral Society concert.

12. Friends of St.Mary's

There have been no fund raisers this period, but the Friends are hoping to sell the remaining Christmas cards at the Christmas tree Festival, which will generate some £500.

£5,777 has been granted to the PCC to pay for the move of the windows in Phase 1 of the redevelopment, and a further £20,000 will be given for the new sound system. After that £36,000 will be remaining to help with future projects. £10,000 of that is from the All Churches trust, and needs its approval to be spent, The Friends will need to be involved in the discussions on funding phase 2 & 3 (and potentially work in the Hall to move the Community Larder) to ensure any project is worthy of that Trust's support.

They are continuing to look, so far unsuccessfully, for a new chairman. P Reynolds suggested that it probably wouldn't be a 'Church' person, but a 'Town' person – male or female with an affection for the church – to lead them through the next 3 years as P Reynolds would like to hand over by Christmas.

13. St.Mary's Hall and St.Mary's Church developments

Church

The plaque has now been re-mounted on the wall.

Re-ordering is progressing to plan and no weekday funerals or other events will take place after the Christmas Tree Festival so the building team can work undisturbed. M Sanderson said he thought that the builders were doing an excellent job and that J Setchfield has managed the project very well.

The new chairs will be used for the first time for the Remembrance Service.

The walls in both the toilet and Children's area have been installed and the servery units have been delivered.

The CCTV electronics have been done but J Setchfield is still awaiting the Faculty.

The floor in the South aisle has been re-oriented E-W from the previous N-S alignment.

The Faculty has been granted for the new Altar, which may be ready for mid-January.

A decision needs to be made on the colour of the walls and the stain of the units for the kitchen area and the tables. M Sanderson suggested it would be worth keeping the tables

out at the back all of the time apart from when services which have a large attendance. The Rector suggested we could also have a display area.

M Sanderson showed the PCC 3 examples of tables. The Rector suggested we consider how often we will be using the tables and therefore how many we would need to buy. The PCC agreed to use the Hall tables temporarily to gauge how many would be needed.

Hall

The new heater to the hall has now been purchased and will be fixed on this Friday 10th November. The cost of the heater is £723.29 and the fixing will be £120.00, which costs are being covered by the Trust Hall Account. The old heater will need to be removed by PCC as previously agreed. The Hall Committee will monitor the heating of the hall in the next couple of months to ascertain whether any of the other three heaters need replacing.

Addaction have asked K Richards to carry out the following work:

Provide a wash-hand basin in the toilet at the foot of the larder staircase, and on the first floor form a door opening between their office and the Sunday school room.

It has been agreed to increase the rental charge of the hall to £10.00 per hour with effect from 1st January 2018. The cleaner's wages will also be increased to £10.00 per hour with effect from the 1st January 2018. She is now cleaning the larder toilet and the staircase.

The windows of the hall have been cleaned.

14. Fundraising

Christmas Tree Festival – 40 trees to date, with £320 in donations. The committee are using Social Media to advertise further, in the hope that the number of trees will be increased. Publicity has included posters and flyers covering every business and organisation in the town. The Ross Gazette has featured an editorial piece and an advert which will also appear in the Gloucester Citizen. The Voice carried details of the festival in the September edition. A multi-purpose banner, able to be used for future events, will be on the railings opposite Morrisons. Draw tickets will be on sale throughout the festival. Catering will be provided in the Hall. Ashfield Primary and Nursery School will bring 2 classes of children along to decorate their trees. A digital Christmas Tree school project has been set up by M Sanderson with the printed versions being displayed on a tree included in the festival. V Allen has met with the Site Manager to discuss the timetable of the festival. It has been agreed that work will stop on the Friday and Monday.

15. Deanery Synod

No meeting since the last PCC.

16. AOB

None

The meeting closed at 9.55 with prayers from The Rev Canon M Bamforth. The PCC prayed for him on his forthcoming trip to Uganda.