

The Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Ross-on-Wye
Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council
Wednesday 10th January 2018 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.

Guests: R Wallace (Treasurer BA), C Cattanach (Intergenerational Missioner), R Knapp (Church Warden, BA), G Chinn (Churchwarden, Walford), R Jones (Parish Giving Scheme)

1. Opening Prayers

The Rev S Tarlton opened with prayer.

2. Apologies

D Glover, Canon F Davies and T Harding

3. Town Council Report

The cold weather has put a delay on the wall repairs and the tarmacking around the Church and Prospect. The Town Council are taking on some additional grass cutting. Lighting to the tower: an electrician has been to assess the situation and the Town Council are awaiting the report.

K Richards asked Cllr.R Mayo if he knew who was responsible for the large street light on the outside of the Hall wall. P Eward responded that it is the responsibility of the PCC.

Cllr.R Mayo left the meeting at 7.40.

4. Parish Giving Scheme

Richard Jones, the Parish Giving Adviser attended the meeting to explain how the scheme works and its implementation, should we decide to adopt it.

Areas discussed were current threats to giving, the benefits of The Parish Giving Scheme, including: Improved levels of planned giving, increased number of planned givers, inflation proof giving, maximize cash flow, minimise administration and free up the parish to focus on other important priorities.

The following resolution was proposed:

We the PCC of St.Mary's, Ross agree to join the Parish Giving Scheme and to agree to receive donations from the scheme in favour of this Parish.

Proposed: P Eward

Seconded: P Reynolds

Unanimous

P Reynolds asked if we can have Direct Debit forms for the Church open weekend 25th

February, P Raddenbury was confident we would.

The Rector stressed the importance of the PCC being committed, and after agreeing the resolution tonight, Direct Debit forms will be handed to the PCC for them to sign up to the scheme.

The representatives from Brampton Abbots and Walford left the meeting at 8.35.

5. Declaration of AOB

None

6. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the November 2017 meeting were read and agreed.

Their acceptance was proposed by B Jones

Seconded: J Cooper

Carried Unanimously

7. Matters Arising

The Rector and K Richards have arranged a meeting with Addaction.

The Rector had not been able to request the Bishop's Marriage Order, but has now done so.

There has been discussion with the contracted firm of commercial cleaners, who have advised the toilets be locked outside of services, this advise has been taken and these facilities will remain locked.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. J Cater Bequest

The PCC reviewed advice received from the Charity Commission relating to the restricted legacy fund arising from the Will of the late Mrs. Jessie Cater ("the Bequest"), which was restricted to the building of a new church hall or for the fabric of the church. The first phase of improvements (remodelling of the interior of the church's providing new seating, toilet and kitchen facilities and ancillary work) is nearly complete, but the Bequest in its original form can only be utilised to cover a small proportion of the cost of work as it is not for the provision of a new hall adjacent to the church but internally, and very little of the current work is for the fabric. Unless its terms are altered, the balance of the Bequest would need to be retained until work on the fabric of the church is required, which may be many years in the future. In the mean time, other funds of the PCC are having to be used for the improvement works, which will restrict the PCC's ability to progress with the remaining phases of the work. Those who knew the late Jessie Cater believe that she would be happy with the Bequest being used for the current improvements and for those to follow in later phases.

The income of the Bequest is below £10,000 a year, which allows the PCC to alter the objects of the gift.

Being eligible under section 275(1) of the Charities Act 2011, and being satisfied that the proposed alteration in the objects attached to the Bequest is for charitable purposes, and that the criteria in section 275(4) of the Charities Act 2011 will be met, the following resolution was proposed:-

“The PCC, as Trustees of registered charity 1163776, hereby resolve pursuant to section 275 of the Charities Act 2011 to amend the purposes of the Bequest of the residue of her estate contained in the Will of the late Mrs Jessie Cater (who died on 2 September 2007) in order to use the funds of the Bequest for improvements to the church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Ross-on-Wye or for the fabric of the Church”

Proposed: P. Eward,
Seconded: B Jones
Carried unanimously

10. Rector's Business

Data protection – There is new legislation regarding collection and deleting of email addresses we hold on our database. The Administrator is reading the guidelines and will report back to ensure we are compliant.

The Rev S Tarlton discussed the Open Weekend, 24th-25th February, which will showcase to the town all that we offer that isn't worship. There will be 20+ stalls, with a concert on the Saturday evening, and the event will be publicised by local radio and newspapers.

The Rector welcomed C Cattanash, the new Intergenerational Missioner who started in January. The job role will grow as time goes on. The Rector asked for email details from parishioners who attended the Christmas services, and 60 contacts were received. C Cattanash introduced herself to the PCC and gave some background on herself and the experience she has which she can bring to the role.

Each year the main fees for funeral services are set by Parliament and The Church of England nationally. However, each parish is allowed to set its own fees for Heating, Verging, Organist, Choir and Bells depending on their local facilities.

In general, most of these fees go up by inflation and so remain roughly stable in real terms.

The Rector has set the following fees for 2018 and asked the PCC to ratify them. They can be changed if needed but none of these should be controversial. The increase in heating brings us in line with St Michael's in Walford.

	2017	2018

Heating	£36	£40
Verger	£40	£41
Organist	Marriage £95	Marriage £97
	Funeral £65	Funeral £67
Choir	£95	£97
Bells	£250	£260

These increases were agreed by the PCC.

11. Finance

Current position

P Raddenbury is awaiting the final statements and information that are needed for the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2017. He hopes to deliver the papers to the Independent Examiner by the end of January and to have the Financial Statements circulated for PCC approval at the meeting on 14th March. Indications are that the deficit will be in the range £5,000 to £6,000.

Donations Button and Text Giving

P Raddenbury was unable to arrange for text giving and a donation button to be in place in time for Christmas. The necessary paperwork required for submission to HMRC included a declaration signed by two persons whose details had been registered with HMRC. Only Paul Eward as our Gift Aid officer is registered at present and we need to correct this in order to enable P Raddenbury to complete the setting up of the account with Justgiving. P Raddenbury asked R Jones if this would be a problem should we proceed with the Parish Giving Scheme. He responded that it would not be an issue as it has been approved by the Church of England.

P Raddenbury proposed the following resolution:

'It is agreed that the Churchwardens for the time being, namely John Setchfield and Janet Cooper, and the Treasurer for the time being, namely Peter Raddenbury, be registered with HM Revenue and Customs, in addition to P Eward, as officers authorised to act on behalf of this PCC.'

Proposed: P Raddenbury

Seconded: P Reynolds

Carried Unanimously

12. Health and Safety

The Rev S Tarlton confirmed current policies are up to date and approved. One new policy needs PCC approval but it can be discussed at the March PCC.

13. Friends of St.Mary's

The Friends are planning a number of events for the spring including a bridge afternoon on 8th March, another concert by Hereford Police Male Voice Choir on 14th April and participation in St Mary's open weekend.

John Taylor has agreed to join the FoSM Committee as Chairman at the AGM on 25th April, but will start taking over the planning of the Summer's events now. P Reynolds will continue as a member of the committee and run the Open Gardens 2019 if that is what John wishes.

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

Gravestone and Memorial Safety

By courtesy of Ross Town Council J Setchfield attended a day training course in gravestone and memorial safety towards the end of November.

Safety was discussed in detail followed by practical application of testing in the closed and open churchyards.

The testing in the open churchyard soon revealed that we have several very unstable and unsafe stones in the open churchyard and bearing in mind that several of these are within close proximity of the path to Ashfield Park School this problem must be urgently addressed.

The main risk is from large vertical stones placed in the nineteenth century. These are heavy and often have no foundation. In order to solve the problem these can either be laid flat or buried 33% into the ground. This latter solution is recommended as it doesn't affect the churchyard landscape and is preservative of the memorial.

J Setchfield estimates that we have approx. 2500 memorials to check. It seems unlikely that less than 1% will need attention and it is very unlikely that relatives of the deceased are available to take financial responsibility for the work.

J Setchfield intends to start the checking of all memorials next month giving priority to those which present the most risk (Large stones close to the path).

At present there is no estimate for the digging and replacement work that is needed.

Redevelopment - A snagging list for Phase 1 has been issued to the builders, which should be done within the planned schedule.

As to Phase 2, the committee are keen to implement this, a faculty needs to be raised, although hopefully it should be more straight forward than Phase 1. The aim is to have Phase 2 completed by the end of the Autumn.

The Rector and J Setchfield have a meeting planned with the PA system company.

P Reynolds stated that some of the new lights are not working, J Setchfield has spoken with the Electrician and it is in hand.

M Sanderson stated that there are still a few dark areas, the committee will decide where the lights need to be and this can be done with the repairs.

Hall

The Hall Committee agreed that a Public Performance licence is necessary. Based on

information received, for an average weekly attendance of 50-99, and at 2017 prices, the annual fee will be £55.11 plus Vat £11.02 total £66.13. The 2018 figure has not yet been set.

P Reynolds asked if we already had a licence for Flicks in the Sticks. J Cooper thought that the Flicks in the Sticks licence would be a separate requirement and that one would be needed. The PCC agreed that as it is a legal requirement there is no need to have a vote and that K Richards should obtain a licence.

The committee would like to start to clear out and assess the section of the basement that has been allocated for the larder. K Richards to organise a working group to start the clearing out.

Addaction would like to use the rooms currently used by the Larder.

A quote for repairs to the ramp and steps and provision of anti-slip wire has been obtained, £380 inc VAT, which will bring it up to current safety standards.

Proposed: K Richards

Seconded: J Cooper

Unanimous

A meeting has been arranged with Addaction for 22nd January to discuss with them their future with us and the alterations that they have in mind.

The fire extinguishers have recently been tested and one has been replaced.

T Davies, Hall Treasurer, wishes to draw the committee's attention to the high cost of the electricity to the hall. The November bill was £147.63 and the December bill was £447.29. He has suggested that it may be that the immersion heater, which on occasion, has accidentally been left on and would ask that all hall users be made aware to remember to switch it off. The outside light is also expensive to run and P Reynolds suggested we replace it with an LED spotlight as it would be considerably cheaper to run.

The PCC authorised K Richards to arrange to get the external hall light changed to an LED one, with a maximum spend of £250.

Proposed: K Richards

Seconded: P Reynolds

Unanimous

K Richards will also obtain a copy of the the electricity bill and investigate.

15. Fundraising

V Allen briefed the PCC on the recent Christmas Tree Festival.

The Range of trees was wide & creative, drawn from businesses clubs & organisations representing much of the town. The church developments provided an opportunity for the innovative placing of trees, fulfilling our publicity claim of 'a forest of trees'.

The Preview was well supported, the canapés delicious & the music provided by the choir created a warm atmosphere for the evening.

The Festival came to life on Sunday as visitors flooded in from the Town Fayre. The

church was full of families throughout the day & we entertained the Action Bus people who had chosen the festival as their Sunday trip. The Town Council's use of St. Mary's Hall for charity stalls provided a link between the festival & the fayre to mutual advantage.

Saturday & Monday were quiet days, proving that a winter festival does need to be allied to the Town Fayre, when the town is full of people & added publicity can be generated by the Fayre's Master of Ceremonies.

The committee is grateful for the support received from the congregation, the town & the many groups who contributed to the £3,029 raised during the festival.

The Rector thanked V Allen and her team for all their hard work on producing a fantastic event.

The Rector reminded the PCC that they need to organise a 2018 Summer event. The Rector asked V Allen who on the current committee might be prepared to assist in a Summer event, V Allen felt that the current committee has done 3 events consecutively and probably wouldn't want to do another. The Rector asked V Allen if she could draft a note for the newsletter asking for a new Fundraising Committee.

M Sanderson asked if there was any worth in auctioning things from the Church that we no longer require e.g..screens, kneelers etc, The Rector asked to bring a plan to the next PCC.

An auction of promises was suggested.

The Rev S Tarlton asked when will the Church be pew free, J Setchfield believes it will be by the end of the year.

M Sanderson suggested we market St.Marys as a total wedding venue, this could also apply to Baptisms and funerals..

16. Deanery Synod

The next meeting is on 28th January.

17. AOB

None

The meeting closed at 9.47 with prayers from The Rev Canon C Blanchard.