

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's, New Beckenham, held in the church hall on 17th January 2024.

2023 / 2024 No. 7

Present: Anne Harkness (in the chair), Adelaide Adade, Maria Adu, Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Andrew Griffiths, Sandra Horner, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Ian Johnson, Paul Lashmar, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Tarina Hill and Nomsa Mafohla.

Keith Howick opened the meeting in prayer.

10926 Conflict of Interest

Keith Howick declared a Conflict of Interest as a trustee of St Paul's Pre-School and of The Ugly Duckling Company.

927 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 6th December 2023

In minute 911, 2nd paragraph, Grey Barry was corrected to read Greg Barry. Minute 918(ii) was corrected as it is not possible to change halogen to LED. Anthea Prendergast proposed, seconded Sandra Horner, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 6th December 2023 be received as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to two corrections. **Agreed** with two abstentions as two people had not attended the meeting on 6th December 2023.

928 Matters arising

(i) Minute 915, Christmas gifts. Anne Howick reported that she had received a card thanking the PCC for their generous gift.

(ii) Minute 916(iii), Vouchers. All the vouchers had been distributed to the Pre-School and Worsley Bridge School. Rosemary Dear had reported that the financial donations from the congregation had covered the cost of all the vouchers. They had been much appreciated by the schools.

(iii) Minute 916 (v), Vicarage. Anne Harkness reported that before Christmas two companies had visited the vicarage to quote for the repair work in the kitchen, bathroom and shower. On 16th January the Diocese had said they were requesting for the work to start as soon as possible. It would be important to check regarding the moths when the carpets are taken up.

(iv) Minute 924, Warm space. The first soup lunch had taken place on 12th January and had been very worth while. It was advertised on the St Paul's website and the Beckenham Appreciation Group.

929 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 647, Safeguarding courses. Sandra Horner reminded members that if they had previously done the courses in 2021 they would need to update them.

(ii) Minute 648, Complaints Policy and Procedure. A copy of this policy should be on the noticeboard and on the website for the congregation to view.

(iii) Minute 799, Procurement policy. A copy of the Policy had been circulated to the PCC. Members thought the paper made good progress towards a procurement policy, but a member raised an objection to the church adopting a pro-organic policy due to the effect of lower crop yields leading to global food shortages/high costs and increased agricultural land use

affecting bio-diversity. The Climate and Ecology Team were asked to give some further consideration to this point. In paragraph 4(a) it was suggested that Fairtrade should be replaced with the words “fairly traded”. Anne Howick commented that the flower team do use bio-degradable oasis. It was suggested that, in the introduction, it should state that we recognise that we can only look after our small garden. We should make sure we are striving to be successful. Members agreed the policy should be reviewed on an annual basis. It was noted that the energy contracts expire in June 2024. Liz Spencer was thanked for her work in putting the report together. It was agreed that a revised draft policy should be reviewed by the Climate & Ecology Team and considered at the next PCC meeting.

(iv) Minute 851, Organ report. Andrew Griffiths was liaising with John Blakely and David Storey to find a Sunday when a presentation could be made to the congregation.

(v) Minute 860, Sunday Squad helpers safeguarding training. This was reported to be going well.

(vi) Minute 862(i), List of contact points. A leaflet had been prepared giving details of people to contact during the interregnum.

(vii) Minute 862(iv), External notice boards. It was requested that Simon Couper’s name be covered up.

(viii) Minute 878, Church Repair Fund. Reviewed and completed.

(ix) Minute 911, Pastoral care meeting. Sandra Horner had contacted Greg Barry. It was agreed that, as suggested by Greg Barry in his email to Sandra, he was not best placed to deliver a pastoral care session. Anne Howick was asked to contact Karen Senior regarding a meeting.

(x) Minute 918(i), External lighting. Anne Harkness reported on quotes and designs which had been received. The suggestion to have low level lighting sleepers pointing at the path was not agreed. Members expressed concern about the possibility of having bollards along the church path which might be a trip hazard. Other members did not believe this would be a hazard. Some lighting off the pillars by the church entrance were suggested, and a brighter light by the church door. Following discussions it was agreed to take the PCC thoughts back to the Buildings Team and the lighting companies who had quoted and to ask them for further thoughts.

(xi) Minute 919, Lay Assistants at Holy Communion. Anthea Prendergast suggested there should be training in February on a Sunday, and that the new members of the team should go on the rota in March.

930 Standing Committee

Anne Harkness reported on a recent visit by a tree surgeon from Quality Tree Care Ltd. She would be reporting to the Diocese regarding what work needed to be done, and the Diocese had agreed to pay for some of the work. The Gardening team had also looked at what needed doing and had done some work already. A quote had been requested for work that needed to be done by the tree surgeon and the Standing Committee would be asked to approve work if necessary.

931 Interregnum

It was noted that the closing date for applications was 26th January. Interviews are scheduled to take place on 27th February. Keith Howick and Sarah Butler had asked that there should be a meeting with Archdeacon Allie prior to the interviews.

932 Support for Church Administrator and rota updates

The service rota for February and March would be available this week. Members expressed concern that Stephanie Fox might be working lots more hours during the interregnum. Several members had checked with Stephanie and she had commented that she likes the flexibility. Anthea Prendergast does the pay roll each month and reported on the number of extra hours which had been paid during January – November 2023. She offered to get the hours information for September – December 2022 and compare them with September – December 2023.

933 Safeguarding and inclusion

Sandra Horner reported on safeguarding. She would be meeting to discuss with Sarah Butler and Keith Howick regarding the Prayer Ministry Group and the safeguarding training which would be necessary for the members of the PMG.

934 Christmas Services 2023

The Christingle service had been well attended and it had been good to see lots of people who do not regularly attend services at St Paul's. It might be necessary to prepare some more Christingle bags next year. David Charlesworth agreed that the Band would be willing to play at the community carols in 2024. They had appreciated a time for refreshments. Members commented favourably on the orchestra organised by Marion Blakely. The midnight service led by Keith Howick and Rev Neil Fairlamb had been well attended. The 10.30 am service on Christmas Day had gone well, led by Rev Jane Peters with help from the children.

935 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Keith Howick would be checking with Rosemary Dear whether she had contacted Ernest Kabera.

936 Fee for use of hall as Polling station

Bromley Council had contacted Anne Harkness to ask if they could use the church halls for the GLA election on Thursday 2nd May. The Standing Committee had been consulted and suggested a fee for the use of the hall. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that a fee of £700 should be charged for the use of the hall as a polling station, plus a fee of £120 for cleaning the halls before and after. **Agreed.** It was noted that the Pre-School had previously been paid £60 for cleaning the hall before the polling day, and Ron and Pauline Barrett have been paid £60 to clean the hall afterwards. The PCC agreed that it would be appropriate to put down a marker for an annual increase in line with CPI, and to inform the Council of this decision.

937 Children and Youth Team

Sandra Horner reported on a recent meeting. It was noted that currently the creche was hardly used and the team had wondered if it would be possible to hear or view the services while in the old hall so parents could bring their children in and still feel part of the service in the church. The AV team was asked to check what might be possible. Keith Howick recorded his thanks to Jashar Masih for his work with the Youth group and Alison Charlesworth for looking after the children.

938 Communications Team

The Team had met on 15th January. On Communication Sunday 17 people had asked to be added to the list of those who receive the notice sheet and ten people had applied to be on the Electoral Roll. It had been proposed that St Paul's should have a Communications Sunday once a year. David Charlesworth would be producing the church directory and Mili Tharakan had agreed to take on bringing the lists together. There would be information on the notice board regarding how people can sign up for information, how to get involved, and what jobs need doing. With regard to the Connect magazine, David Charlesworth was willing to continue as the editor, Andrew Griffiths would proof read, and it was planned to advertise for someone to take on the Canva work. With regard to the external noticeboards, there had been a discussion regarding whether to update them. This should not happen until the next vicar was in post but some temporary updating was needed. It would be important to have an updated Giving leaflet.

939 Mission Team

There had been some discussion regarding the end of year accounts and how much available to distribute.

940 Ecclesiastical Insurance

Anne Harkness had had a telephone review with the company recently including answering fifty questions. She had received a report on 17th January.

941 Deanery Synod

The next meeting would be taking place on 20th February. The Synod had been informed that Sandra Horner was willing to be the other representative on behalf of St Paul's.

942 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 21st February 2024.

943 Church laptop

Keith Howick reported that Rosemary Dear had commented that the church laptop was unable to cope with a necessary upgrade of Safe software. It would also be helpful to purchase another laptop as soon as possible so that Rosemary and Stephanie Fox can both work on church matters. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that a budget of £1,500 + vat be agreed for the purchase of a new laptop. **Agreed.**

944 Your PCC matters

David Charlesworth and Keith Howick agreed to discuss on 18th January.

There being no further business Anne Harkness closed the meeting in prayer at 9.40 pm.