

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's, New Beckenham, held in the Church hall on Wednesday 19th April 2023

2022 / 2023 No. 10

Present: Rev Simon Couper (in the chair), Adelaide Adade, Richard Bradley, Sarah Butler, Andrew Griffiths, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Hazel Koungoue.

Apologies for absence had been received from Tarina Hill, Sandra Horner, Ian Johnson, Paul Lashmar, Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast.

The vicar opened the meeting in prayer.

10790 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.

791 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 15th March 2023

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 15th March 2023 had been received. Hazel Koungoue proposed, seconded Richard Bradley, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 15th March 2023 be received as an accurate record of the meeting. **Agreed.**

792 Matters arising

(i) Minute 10771, Church organ. Members felt it had been a really helpful presentation. They encouraged the working team to start thinking about how to take things forward.

(ii) Minute 778, Improvements to the vestry. The vestry had been re-decorated and a new chair ordered for the Church Administrator. One quote had been received for re-carpeting the vestry and Richard Bradley was in touch with another carpet shop. The vicar thought it would be important to update the office laptop.

793 Action Sheet

The list was reviewed.

(i) Safeguarding courses. Members were reminded that they needed to be up to date and complete the Safeguarding Basic Awareness and Safeguarding Foundation courses, which are available on line at the Church of England website, as soon as possible and by the APCM on 14th May 2023 at the latest.

(ii) The vicar and members reported on some members of the congregation who were unwell, had died recently or in need of support. Members reported on other items on the schedule and the list would be updated.

794 Easter Services

Members felt that the events during Holy Week had gone very well and were well attended. There had not been as many people at the Agape meal on Maundy Thursday as had signed up on the list. On Easter Sunday there had been 115 adults and 23 children at the 10.30 am service. The Walk of Witness on Good Friday had been well attended. Members had appreciated the three evenings, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and the music, art and poetry on offer. The vicar hoped it would be possible to have a similar pattern of events in 2024, it would be good to try some new things which was an opportunity to be creative.

795 Cost of living crisis

The vicar was beginning to think about how St Paul's might support Worsley Bridge School and local families as we approach the summer holiday break. Sarah Gray had reported that Living Well was struggling with the increase in need. Members hoped it would be possible to remind the community about the work of Living Well and CAP. The vicar hoped more people could be in a relationship with Worsley Bridge School. He planned to have more assemblies, including a leavers' assembly, and a church and community trip.

796 Safeguarding and Inclusion
(see minute 793(i) above).

797 Preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meetings, 14th May 2023

The PCC Secretary had circulated a report for the PCC meeting on 15th March giving dates of when different items needed to be completed.

(i) Draft Annual reports. The vicar would remind the teams.

(ii) Annual accounts. A report had been received from Rosemary Dear. Keith Howick talked members through this report. At the end of the year the total assets were £6,000 more than 2021. Total incoming resources were nearly £172,000 in 2022 compared with over £160,000 in 2021 and at the end of 2022 the balance carried forward was £5,000 better than in 2021. Gift aided donations were down in 2022 but thanks to a legacy of £10,00 and the 150th anniversary fund raising the total incoming resources were up about £11,000. Income from the use of the church halls was up. Anne Howick queried why the income resources for the Flower Group, shown in Incoming Resources, was nil, as members do make contributions towards the church flowers. Keith Howick explained what is included in the Parish Share. Church running costs had increased, and St Paul's would be coming to the end of a three year gas contract in June 2023. An energy broker had been asked to get tenders and to advise on what St Paul's should do. We currently have a two year electricity contract. A three year contract was hugely beneficial. It had been necessary to replace the floor in the kitchen in the church hall. Total resources expended were up from nearly £140,000 in 2021 to just over £166,000 in 2022. The vicar hoped some funds raised for the 150th could be used to replace the stones in the church path. Some of the AV equipment had been replaced. In conclusion Keith Howick felt that the accounts were stable. We could do more on planned giving and stewardship. We should not rely on legacies. He thanked Rosemary Dear for putting together the Balance sheet and notes to the Financial Statements. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Richard Bradley, that the PCC approve the financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022. **Agreed.** The vicar agreed to provide some pie charts. In answer to a question from Hazel Koungoue regarding how members can give regularly, they were encouraged to speak to Rosemary Dear and Keith Howick. It was agreed that, for two weeks after the APCM, there should be a summary of the financial situation.

(iii) PCC membership. The vicar reported that Hazel Koungoue and Richard Bradley would be stepping down as churchwardens at the APCM. Richard Bradley asked whether it would be possible to have a deputy churchwarden in post. The vicar agreed that this role should be formalised. He agreed to check with other parishes what their policies are. It was noted that the service for the swearing in of churchwardens would be on 6th July at St Paul's. The vicar proposed from the chair that St Paul's should embrace the idea of a deputy churchwarden scheme on a one year timescale. **Agreed.**

It was noted that there would be two vacancies for membership of the Deanery Synod. There would be six vacancies for election to the PCC for three years. The vicar requested that the PCC Secretary should receive all nominations in advance of the APCM and that no nominations be received at the APCM.

(iv) Postal voting. Keith Howick proposed, seconded by the vicar, that postal voting should not be permitted. **Agreed.**

(v) Pre-School. A report had been received from Liz Spencer regarding the St Paul's Beckenham Pre-School. The vicar agreed that this should be included in the Annual report and that there should be a verbal report at the meeting.

798 Church path

Work had not yet started on the church path.

799 Climate & Ecology Team

A report had been received dated 6th March 2023. South East London Community Energy had undertaken an Energy and Environmental audit. CES Lighting had visited St Paul's in February with regard to changing the 147 light bulbs in the church over to LED. They had advised that the control system was not suitable for use with LEDs. The team had joined a local Eco-Church Network which had recently been formed for churches who are working towards Eco Church Awards. Keith Howick proposed, seconded by the vicar, that the PCC consider the development of a Procurement Policy that fully reflects a commitment to work towards removing the use of products that are not environmentally friendly and are damaging God's creation. **Agreed.** Hazel Koungoue hoped that refreshments on Sundays could be Fair Trade, and people could be encouraged to make donations for tea and coffee.

800 Deanery Synod

The vicar reported that Rev Allie Kerr would be installed on 23rd April as the new Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley. She would be visiting St Paul's for the first time on 3rd May for a meeting of the Deanery Synod. It was noted that Rev Leon Carberry would be retiring after 19 years in Beckenham.

801 Electoral Roll

Rev Clive Grinham, Margaret Grinham, Maria Adu and Thomas Adu were welcomed on to the Electoral Roll.

802 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 7th June 2023.

803 Confirmation

The vicar reported that the next Confirmation Service would be on Sunday 25th June at St Mary's Shortlands. He had also recently received a baptism request.

804 London Ambulance Service

Hazel Koungoue commented that we are still going to be accredited. We are waiting to hear from the administration team regarding next steps.

10804 Donations

Anne Howick reported that Gift Aid envelopes in support of St Christopher's Hospice would be available at the Thanksgiving Service for Liz Burt on 25th April.

There being no further business the vicar closed the meeting by reading Psalm 139 and by saying the Grace at 9.25 pm.