

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 6th December 2023.

2023 / 2024 No. 6

Present: Anne Harkness (in the chair), Maria Adu, Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Sandra Horner, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Ian Johnson, Paul Lashmar (for minutes 10910 – 10925), Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Adelaide Adade, Andrew Griffiths and Tarina Hill.

Sandra Horner opened the meeting in prayer.

10906 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.

907 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 1st November 2023

The minutes had been received. Anne Howick reported that minute 888(iii) was incorrect and should be deleted. Sandra Horner proposed, seconded Sarah Butler, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 1st November 2023 be received as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the one deletion. **Agreed** with four abstentions as four people had not attended the meeting on 1st November.

908 Matters arising

(i) Minute 892, Vicarage inspection. Anne Harkness reported that there had been an issue with the stopcock. On 7th December it would be turned off. Two companies had been asked to quote for a new kitchen, bathroom and shower room, which the Diocese will be replacing. Anne had asked the companies to include replacing the lighting in the kitchen, and had asked if an induction hob would be included. Anne was in touch with Mark Trevett and awaiting news of when the work would start. The carpets would remain in place until the work had been carried out, and then taken up before painting. Anne reported that the tree gardener had not turned up on time on 14th November and so it had been suggested that St Paul's should contact "Down to Earth" company.

(ii) Minute 895, London Living Wage. Anne Howick had informed the Church Administrator of the updated hourly rate with effect from 1st November 2023. Stephanie Fox was very grateful to the PCC for this revised rate.

(iii) Minute 897, Mission of the Month. Gareth Hall, the Debt Centre Manager at CAP, Penge, had written to thank St Paul's for the donation of £1,521.61 which had been received on 21st November. The debt centre service was more in demand than ever.

(iv) Minute 903, Ecclesiastical Insurance. Anne Howick had received an email on 6th December regarding the survey. She would be forwarding the information to the churchwardens.

909 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 647(iii), Safeguarding courses. All PCC members were reminded that they needed to complete the Basic awareness, Foundation level, and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse courses by 31st December 2023.

(ii) Minute 851, Organ report. David Charlesworth commented that there had been no serious conversations regarding the organ since the meeting in September and thought it would be important to tell the congregation in January. He offered to speak to Andrew Griffiths and David Storey regarding the presentation and who should be the facilitator.

910 Interregnum

(i) Correspondence with the Diocese. The forms and profile had been sent to Archdeacon Allie. The Diocese would be advertising the post, including a preface and the Parish profile, on Pathways at the beginning of January 2024. Archdeacon Allie would be in touch to arrange interview dates.

(ii) Support for Church Administrator, and rota updates. Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Clive Grinham and Keith Howick had met with Stephanie Fox on 4th December to look at the service rota for January – March 2024. On 11th February, Racial Justice Sunday, Bishop Jonathan would be preaching and presiding at the service of Holy Communion. On 28th January there would be a service of All Age Worship. Rev Paul Wright and Rev Rachel Winn had offered to assist or preside at services in the future. In answer to a question it was reported that visiting clergy are paid. The churchwardens were asked to thank Paul Wright and Rachel Winn for their support and help at this time.

911 Safeguarding and Inclusion

At Safeguarding Sunday on 19th November David Charlesworth and Rev Rachel Winn had taken the service. Sandra Horner had spoken and the theme was “See it, say it, safe it”. Sandra had received positive comments from the congregation. At the 8am service on Sunday 26th November Sandra had spoken with Rev Paul Wright who had commented that he had been very interested in what was on the safeguarding notice board at St Paul’s.

Sandra Horner, Safeguarding Officer, and Anne Howick, Pastoral Assistant, had met to discuss pastoral care and teams and what is going on in the Parish. They both agreed that they felt that some church members were doing work in the Parish that no-one else was aware of. They had concluded that Rev Simon Couper had probably been more aware than some people of who was doing things, but he hadn’t shared this information with either of them. Grey Barry from the Diocese would be willing in future to come and talk through safeguarding. 31:8 had produced a paper looking at models of pastoral care. The concept of Parish nursing had been discussed. It was noted that the Bishop of London was very in favour of Parish nursing. The PCC encouraged Sandra to ask Greg Barry to come and lead a meeting on pastoral care, preferably on a Saturday morning. Following discussion Sandra and Anne were asked to try and identify the gaps, to check with other members of the congregation who needs support, and to find out who is checking on different people.

912 Christmas Services 2023

Sarah Butler would be leading the Christingle service. David Charlesworth had moved the time of the Community Carols to 6.00 pm. He had prepared the leaflet with details of the Christmas services, which would be available on 7th December. He commented that he did not feel he could continue to compile the “Connect” Parish leaflets.

913 Parochial Church fees 2024

Anne Howick had prepared a report giving details of the Church of England Parochial Fees with effect from 1st January 2024. The report also included details of the fees which had been set by St Paul’s Church for 2023, including the fees payable to the organist, the vergers, the utility fee, and fees for a streamed service. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Paul Lashmar, that the fees for the organist, the vergers, the utility fee and the fee for streamed services should not be increased. **Agreed**, with one abstention.

914 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Ernest Kabera had served as Independent Examiner for the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022. He had not charged for his work. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed that St Paul's should continue to ask Ernest Kabera to serve as Independent Examiner, if he was willing to do so. **Agreed.** Keith Howick or Rosemary Dear would be in contact with Ernest.

915 Christmas gifts

(Confidential report, see page 6)

916 Finance Team

A report of a meeting held on 30th November 2023 had been received from the Finance Team.

(i) A report of the Income and Expenditure for 2023 had been received, including comparison with 2022. Members were reminded that "Restricted funds" is money which has been given and has to be used for a specified purpose. General funds are part of the budget and are not restricted. The Children and Youth fund was for the use of the Youth group if necessary. It had been necessary to spend substantially more on church and grounds maintenance, because of the cost of replacing the church path. Planned giving was important. Things were generally stable, including the number of regular givers. The overall deficit for the period to the end of September was £5,272. It was noted that there would probably be some expenditure following the recent Quinquennial Inspection.

(ii) CAF Bank account. Rosemary Dear had recommended that one more person should be authorised to be an online authorised person for the church bank account. Members discussed the possibility of another member of the church being authorised, although concern was expressed as the person was not on the PCC or the Finance Team. Questions were asked regarding the Charity Commission's regulations. Members were reminded that a churchwarden and the budget holder are required to authorise the Request For Payment (RFP) sheet. Security of online banking was questioned. Those doing online authorisations are required to check the receipts and requests in the Church Office before making an online authorisation. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anne Harkness, that John Dore be approved as an online authoriser in relation to the CAF Bank Account. **Agreed.** (one abstention).

(iii) Vouchers for Worsley Bridge School and St Paul's Pre-School families. Keith Howick had spoken to the Pre-School Head and to the Headteacher at Worsley Bridge School who had confirmed that there was a need for vouchers. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Ian Johnson, that the PCC underwrites £2,500 of vouchers to be donated to Worsley Bridge School and Pre-School families before the end of term, and that an appeal to the congregation is made urgently to enable those who wish to donate to this project. **Agreed.**

(iv) Church Repair Fund. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anne Harkness, that the rate of transferring funds to the Diocesan Church Repair Fund should continue at the rate of £552 per month. **Agreed.** It was agreed to review this amount after the QI inspection.

(v) Vicarage. It was noted that the Diocese would be arranging for works in the kitchen and bathroom at its expense. St Paul's would be responsible for decoration, and would make a contribution to carpeting the vicarage.

917 Communications Team

A report of a meeting held on 6th November 2023 had been received.

(i) Communication Sunday. On 26th November there would be a signing up campaign for Notice sheet emails and to encourage members to sign up to be on the Electoral Roll. Those leading the service that day would be asked to promote this campaign.

(ii) 'Connect' deliveries. Anne Howick had agreed to produce updated lists of which areas need to be prioritised and which areas are not delivered to currently.

(iii) External noticeboards. These would be reviewed and recommendations presented to the PCC.

918 Buildings Team

A report of a meeting held on 14th November 2023 had been received.

(i) External lighting. Anne Harkness and Richard Bradley had met with two lighting companies recently. Anne Harkness reported on the meetings and confirmed that she would be getting a third quote for the work on the church path.

(ii) Building Works log. New signs for the old hall door, above the sliding door and the door handle had been obtained. A new light would be needed for the emergency light above the new hall door. The new engraved paving stone on the path to the church from Brackley Road had become slippery when wet. Cones were being put out on wet days.

There was a discussion regarding replacing some of the light bulbs. The Climate & Ecology team had been advised that we cannot change LED bulbs to halogen.

919 Lay Assistants at Holy Communion 2024

The PCC Secretary had consulted with all those who had been approved by the PCC for the year 1st January – 31st December 2023 to see if they were willing to continue for the year 1st January – 31st December 2024. Paul Lashmar proposed, seconded Ian Johnson, that the PCC give its full support to the following lay persons being authorised to assist in the administration of the Holy Communion during the coming year. **Agreed.**

Ann Birkett, Richard Bradley, Cherry Duffield (8.00 am service only), Tarina Hill, Anne Harkness (as churchwarden, in case of a shortage at the 10.30 am service), Sandra Horner, Anne Howick (as an authorised Pastoral Assistant she is also authorised to take the Sacrament to the sick and housebound), Keith Howick, Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast (as churchwarden, in case of a shortage at the 10.30 am service), Ann Vice (8.00 am service only), Roger Wells, Brian Woolmer.

It was noted that Hazel Koungoue is training and part of another church so it would not be appropriate to include her on the list of Lay Assistants. Roz Turner had indicated that she did not wish to continue as a Lay Assistant at Holy Communion.

It was noted that some of the new Lay Assistants had asked if they could have a lesson regarding what is involved in serving.

920 Interment of ashes

A request had been received for the interment of the ashes of Daphne Bryan. This was **agreed.**

921 Deanery Synod

At a recent meeting Nigel Poole had made a presentation about the charity, Hope Into Action. This is a charity enabling churches to house the homeless.

Members were reminded that St Paul's is entitled to have two representatives on the Deanery Synod but currently Keith Howick is the only representative. Sandra Horner expressed interest in serving as a Parish representative. This was **agreed**.

922 Electoral Roll

The PCC welcomed the following on to the Electoral Roll: Marie Bennett, Elizabeth Dore, John Dore, Suzanne Guy, Wesley Guy, Marion McNally, Clarissa Harrington, Tim Harrington, Adaobi Umeh, Youla Yates.

923 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be held on 17th January 2024.

924 Warm space

Anne Harkness reported that the hall would be open on 12th January, 9th February, 8th March and 12th April, 12 noon – 2.30 pm. It would be a warm space where free Wi-fi, children's toys and activities, homemade soup and roll would be on offer. There would be no charge but donations would be welcome. It was agreed that David Charlesworth and Anthea Prendergast would give consideration to the best name to call this event.

10925 Items for *Your PCC Matters*

Keith Howick offered to put together the information.

There being no further business Anne Harkness closed the meeting in prayer at 9.45 pm.

