

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 5th October 2022.

2022 / 2023 No. 5

Present: Rev Simon Couper (in the chair), Richard Bradley, Sarah Butler, Andrew Griffiths, Sandra Horner (for minutes 10708 - 10721), Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Hazel Koungoue, Paul Lashmar, Nomsa Mafohla (for minutes 10708 - 10721), Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Adelaide Adade.

Keith Howick opened the meeting in prayer.

10704 Conflict of Interest

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

705 Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The vicar reported that on 8th September 2022 he had received an email advising churches to initiate the "London Bridge" plans. Later that evening it was reported that Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II had died. The vicar was pleased at the speed and sensitivity of the Parish's response. The book of condolence which had been available at St Paul's for people to sign would be stored locally and it had been possible to livestream the funeral service.

706 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 7th September 2022

The minutes of the meeting had been received. Richard Bradley proposed, seconded Andrew Griffiths, subject to the correction of one or two spelling mistakes, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 7th September 2022 be received as an accurate record of the meeting. **Agreed.**

707 Matters arising

(i) Minute 699(v), Staffing. The vicar reported that St John's Penge and Holy Trinity Lennard Road would be getting a curate. He hoped to have further conversations with the Diocese.

708 Energy Audit

At the PCC meeting on 13th July 2022 (minute 10680 refers), further information had been requested from the Climate and Ecology Team regarding the cost of an energy audit. Further information had been received from Paul Kunert and forwarded to the Standing Committee for consideration. All members of the Standing Committee had approved the recommendation that SELCE be instructed to proceed with an energy audit for a fee of £750 + vat.

709 Repairs to the church building

Richard Bradley reported on repairs which had been undertaken recently. There had been water in the North wall and a loose downpipe which had been put right and the stonework patched up. The roof over the vestry had been leaking and this had been repaired. There had been a blockage in a hopper as a result of leaves and pigeons nesting, so mesh had been installed over the hopper and netting put over the window behind the organ. The vicar thanked Richard for his update and for responding quickly to the problems. In answer to a question it was hoped that the scaffolding would be taken down in the next week or two.

710 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 647(iii), Safeguarding courses. Some PCC members had not undertaken the Basic Awareness module or the Foundation Level module. Anne Howick was asked to remind the relevant members.

(ii) Minute 648, Complaints Policy and Procedure. The vicar agreed to research other possible Policy documents and to check the Diocesan website.

(iii) Minute 668(i), List of cleaning requirements on kitchen door. The vicar confirmed he had spoken to Stephanie Fox. Hazel Koungoue commented that it would be important to remind the Pre-School team following the recent inspection.

(iv) Minute 683(ii), 3 Ashford House. The Finance Team would be meeting on 3rd November.

(v) Minute 692(i), Energy audit. See minute 708 above.

(vi) Minute 699(v), Appointment of a curate. The vicar reported that all the current curates had been appointed. The next ordinations would be taking place in September 2023.

711 Cost of living crisis

The vicar had met with Rev Jessica Smith, Rev Maggie Wilkinson and Rev Leon Carberry to discuss what churches can offer in terms of warm spaces in the Deanery. They had drawn up a rota of which churches can offer space during the week and most days were covered. It was hoped funds would be available to purchase blankets and hot water bottles. There was concern that some homes would still cost more than the £2,500 limit which had been introduced. The group would be meeting again shortly and hoped to have things available by the end of October. Once a month a hot meal, e.g. hot soup, would be on offer. The vicar had spoken to Chloe Ross, the area Councillor. Hazel Koungoue suggested it might be appropriate to inform the local Harris Academy that there was information on the St Paul's website regarding help for people in the light of the cost of living crisis. With regard to the soup lunch the vicar hoped a team of volunteers could be set up to provide a soup lunch on a Saturday in November. Anthea Prendergast commented that many members of the catering team were no longer available and that setting up and clearing away was more of an issue. The vicar hoped Anthea could have a conversation with others and get information in the diary.

712 Christmas Children's Project

The vicar reminded members that in 2021 there had been a Diocesan fund for financial support and St Paul's had been successful in receiving a fund of £1,500. This year St Paul's had been awarded £2,500. The plan was to purchase fifty Sainsbury's vouchers at £50 each and to distribute 45 vouchers to Worsley Bridge School via their senior leadership team and five vouchers to St Paul's Pre-School. In 2021 there had been a budget of £500 so that every child could receive a Christmas card and booklet. Worsley Bridge School had indicated that they would love to receive cards this year. As part of the Experience Christmas project every child would get a bag with items they have collected during their visit to the different stations around the church. There would be about four hundred children from Worsley Bridge and the Pre-School. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Paul Lashmar, that the PCC agree in principle a budget of £500 which could be flexible if there was a need. **Agreed.** The vicar would be the budget holder. The vicar commented that more volunteers to help with Experience Christmas would be good.

There would be carols in the community in the church garden on 18th December followed by a 45 minute Carol Service.

713 Safeguarding and Inclusion

The vicar reported that the Past Cases Review 2 would be published on 5th October. Details of the Conclusion and recommendations are available on the Church of England website safeguarding section. Bishop Jonathan Gibbs is currently the Lead Safeguarding Bishop and Chair of the National Safeguarding Steering Group.

714 Visit of the Bishop of Rochester

Bishop Jonathan would be visiting St Paul's on Sunday 23rd October when he would be dedicating the new pew bibles and the new Lectern bible. The present bibles were not in a good condition and there was a discussion regarding how to look after the new ones better. The vicar suggested that bibles could be given out to people as they came in for a service, or a stack of five could be put flat on the seats in each pew. There would be an insert for the Bishop to sign in the new Lectern bible. It was suggested that the old bibles could be donated to a Bible College, to the Bible Society, or to Nick Algeo for distribution in Gambia. Keith Howick offered to check with the Ugly Duckling Company for guidance. The spines of the bibles would need to be stuck together with sticky tape. In 2000 in celebration of the millennium each child had received a bible with a personalised sticker inside. Members were reminded that at a baptism each child receives a bible. The budget for the purchase of the new bibles had been set at £1,500 of which £1,400 had been spent to date. Donations had been received from members of the congregation to help with the purchase of the new bibles. Consideration needed to be given regarding what to do with the present Lectern bible.

715 Living Wage

The Diocese of Rochester had written to remind parishes that the Diocese is committed to being a Living Wage employer. With effect from 22nd September 2022 the London Living Wage had been increased to £11.95 per hour. Members agreed that with effect from 1st October 2022 Stephanie Fox, the Parish Administrator, should be paid at the new London Living Wage of £11.95 per hour. Anne Howick was asked to write to Stephanie to inform her of the new London Living Wage rate. Anthea Prendergast confirmed that the new rate was in place.

716 Bank account

Members were reminded that David Charlesworth had been paying for some items with regard to the website and his claim had been paid by cheque. He would be handing over responsibility for the website to Andrew Griffiths at the end of October. Rosemary Dear had been researching how flexible the Nat West account is, as they charge some fees. Rosemary had recommended setting up an account with CAF Bank, which would eliminate the reliance on cheques. The Standing Committee would be asked to consider this recommendation. Various questions were raised by members and the Finance Team would be asked to consider these at their next meeting. The Diocese leaves it up to each Parish to decide what bank accounts to have. St Paul's also has a Reserves account.

717 St Paul's 150th Anniversary

The new bibles had been delivered. It was reported that the Neema Craft gifts were on their way and hopefully would be received by the end of October. The second round of purchases would be taking place in November. On Advent Sunday the new altar fabrics would be commissioned. Chloe Koungoue was putting together the Christmas publicity, including information on posters, fliers and social media.

718 Gospel concert, 10th September 2022

Paul Lashmar reported that 170 people had attended the concert and thanked everyone for their support. There had been very positive feedback, including people commenting that the minute silence and singing of the National anthem had felt the right thing to do following the death of Her Majesty the Queen. The vicar thanked Paul Lashmar and Pete Glenister for their

work, and David Charlesworth and Mili for their help organising the publicity. Paul asked everyone to let the vicar know who had been involved.

719 Deanery Synod

At a recent Chapter meeting there had been discussion regarding the cost of living crisis.

720 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 2nd November 2022.

10721 Any Other Business

(i) Occasional offices. The vicar reported that there were lots of weddings taking place at St Paul's in the coming months. There would also be several baptisms.

(ii) Shoebox Appeal. Anthea Prendergast reported that one of the parents at Babies & Toddlers had suggested St Paul's might like to get involved with the Link to Hope Family & Elderly Shoebox Appeal. Jill Brook was preparing the shoeboxes. There are fliers giving details of what should be in the shoeboxes which Link to Hope will arrange to transport to Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Bulgaria. Boxes need to be delivered to Link to Hope in West Sussex by 3rd November. From the chair the vicar proposed that the PCC should approve that St Paul's should get involved with the Link to Hope Family & Elderly Shoebox Appeal. **Agreed**. The vicar thanked Anthea and Jill for doing this initiative.

There being no further business the vicar closed the meeting with the Grace at 9.00 pm.