

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's, New Beckenham, held in the church hall on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

**2023 / 2024 No. 8**

Present: Anne Harkness (in the chair), Sarah Butler, Tarina Hill, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Adelaide Adade, Maria Adu, David Charlesworth, Andrew Griffiths, Sandra Horner, Ian Johnson, Paul Lashmar.

Sarah Butler opened the meeting in prayer.

**10945 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.

**946 Leader for Your PCC Matters**

Keith Howick agreed to prepare a report on the meeting for the notice sheet.

**947 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

Anne Harkness reported that she had received an email from David Charlesworth with some comments on the minutes.

Minute 929 (iii), Procurement policy. Following discussion it was agreed as follows: Delete "Members thought the policy should say "we are going organic". 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to read: 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 on this point. In paragraph 4(a) it was suggested that fairtrade should be replaced with the words "fairly traded". The final sentence was amended to read: It was agreed that a revised draft policy should be reviewed by the Climate & Ecology Team and considered at the next PCC meeting.

Minute 929(x), Minute 918(i), External lighting, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, was amended to read: The suggestion to have low level lighting sleepers pointing at the path was not agreed. 4<sup>th</sup> sentence amended to read: Other members did not believe this would be a hazard.

Subject to these amendments, Sarah Butler proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be received as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the amendments above. **Agreed**, with two abstentions as two people had not attended the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**948 Matters arising**

(i) Minute 928(iii), Vicarage. Anne Harkness reported that work had started in the vicarage. Anthea Prendergast reported that the builders had been asked to remove the carpets in the front two bedrooms and St Paul's would be removing the other carpets. The dining room and back two rooms might be ok. The sitting room has parquet flooring under the carpet. If the carpet is removed the Diocese will arrange for the parquet flooring to be polished. The churchwardens were getting quotes from four painters for work at the vicarage. One of the back bedroom carpets had also been removed. It had to be lifted to install downlights in the kitchen and it was badly stained.

(ii) Minute 928, (iv), Warm space. The second soup lunch had taken place earlier in February. There had been twelve people plus helpers and a Quiz had been held.

(iii) Minute 929(iv), Organ report. The presentation to the congregation would be taking place on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February.

(iv) Minute 929(xi), Lay Assistants at Holy Communion. The training session had taken place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February. Anthea Prendergast would be circulating a note of the bullet points.

(v) Minute 936, Fee for use of hall as Polling station. Anne Harkness had completed the form and returned it to the Council.

(vi) Minute 943, Church laptop. There had been discussions regarding which laptop to purchase. Rosemary Dear would be purchasing a P16SGen2 with Windows 11 Pro at a cost of £1,564.20.

#### 949 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 647, Safeguarding. Sandra Horner commented that a list of people and the dates when they had completed the courses should be available.

(ii) Minute 648, Complaints Policy. The report had been received.

(iii) Minute 799, Procurement policy. The report had been received (see minute 947 above). It was agreed we would not ask for donations for tea and coffee. It was important that there should be no harmful chemicals. Tea and coffee should be fairly traded. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Sarah Butler, that the Procurement policy should be approved. **Agreed.**

(iv) Minute 862, Notice boards. The Sunday Squad notice board in the South aisle was out of date.

(v) Minute 911, Pastoral care meeting. Anne Howick had contact Karen Senior. Karen did not have much availability for a meeting on Saturday until the end of April and May was also busy. She would be considering who else might be an appropriate member to lead the meeting. Karen also asked for more details of what sort of meeting we would like.

(v) Minute 912, New compiler of Parish Connect leaflets. Patty Lien had offered to help compile the leaflets.

(vi) Minute 914, Independent Examiner. Rosemary Dear had sent information to Ernest Kabera. Keith Howick to check with Rosemary regarding progress.

(vii) Minute 918, External lighting. The Buildings Team would be meeting in April.

(viii) Minute 930, Tree work. The Standing Committee would need to review the quote.

(ix) Minute 932, Administrator's working hours. Anthea Prendergast would be getting information on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. It would be useful to compare the hours in October – December 2022 with October – December 2023. Anthea would send the information to the PCC Secretary.

(x) Minute 933, Safeguarding for PMG. Sarah Butler and Keith Howick had spoken to Sandra Horner and revised the guidelines. All PMG members should have done Basic Awareness and Foundation level safeguarding courses.

(xi) Minute 936, Viewing and hearing services in church hall. The TV could be set up and the church iPad available. One would need to be able to connect a device to the TV and live stream, or watch on UTube.

(xii) Minute 938, Giving leaflet. Updating of this leaflet was in progress.

#### 950 Interregnum

Interviews for the new vicar would be taking place on 27<sup>th</sup> February. Sarah Butler and Keith Howick would be having a Zoom meeting with Archdeacon Allie on 26<sup>th</sup> February to agree the relevant questions to ask. Fiona Porter would be writing to the three candidates to ask if they would like an informal visit to look round the church and vicarage.

#### 951 Support for Church Administrator

Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Clive Grinham and Keith Howick regularly have meetings with Stephanie Fox to discuss the service rota. These were going well and were encouraging and positive. Paul Wright, Archdeacon Emeritus and Rachel Winn had both been very supportive regarding helping at services.

#### 952 Safeguarding

Sandra Horner had asked that all those who know their training is up for renewal this year should be reminded that they should be making plans to do the relevant courses. Their previous certificates would indicate when they needed to renew their training.

#### 953 Financial matters

Rosemary Dear had circulated the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, and a note of the Income and Expenditure Account for 2023. Members were reminded that St Paul's has a policy that the General account should be equivalent to between three and nine months of expenses. In 2023 these expenses had amounted to £166,396 so the range would be between £41,599 and £124,797. Currently the General Account had £25,552 so at least £16,047 would need to be moved. Reserves from Designated funds would need to be moved. A restricted legacy is where the donor states what particular area of church life they would like their legacy to be used for. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Tarina Hill, that the amounts that Rosemary Dear had proposed should be transferred from the Designated Fund to the General Account. **Agreed.**

Looking at the draft Profit and Loss report, it looked highly likely that there would be a shortfall of income over expenditure of £12,360. In 2022 there had been a legacy of £10,000 but there had been no legacies in 2023. Total income had been slightly up but total expenditure had increased by £20,000, hence the shortfall. There had been less regular givers and it was hoped the congregation could re-consider their planned giving. Members should be encouraged at the APCM to review their planned giving.

The Finance Team, and Rosemary Dear, were thanked for putting everything together. It was noted that there was over £63,000 sitting in Restricted funds. Due to higher inflation this money was devaluing. There was £20,000 for development, e.g. organ work. The Finance Team was asked to look at how restricted funds could be used. It was recommended that 3 Ashford House should have a valuation to see what its market value might be. Anthea Prendergast was asked to get a valuation and to advise Vanessa Short of the reasons for the valuation.

**954** Statistics for Mission

Anne Howick had recently completed the Statistics for Mission: January to December 2023 form for submission to the Diocese. Questions had included information about the Electoral Roll, attendance at services, at Easter, Advent and Christmas 2023, how many people had attended church in person in October 2023, Church at Home services, how many in the worshipping community at the end of 2023, how many fresh expressions, baptisms, marriages, and funeral services had taken place. Anne was asked to share details of the charts and graphs with the PCC.

**955** Buildings Team

A report of a meeting of the Buildings Team on 6<sup>th</sup> February had been received. Quality Tree Care had been asked by the Diocese to inspect the trees in the vicarage garden, and in the church gardens. A quote of £1,140 inc vat had been received. The Gardening Team had been able to do some of the work and a revised quote of £960 inc vat had been received. Anne Harkness proposed, seconded Nomsa Mafohla, that the quote of £960 inc vat be accepted. **Agreed.**

Richard Bradley had arranged for the emergency light above the new hall door to be replaced. There had been a leak in the vestry wash basin and this had been fixed by 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and a leak in the disabled toilet. A donor who had given money for lighting to the church path and the path through the gardens had asked to be involved in the decision making process. Anne Harkness would be speaking to the donor, following the next Buildings Team meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March. The halogen lightbulbs in the church had been replaced during the church deep cleaning event. Some of the urgent work required by the QI had been done, but other work to the gutters, roof, font, South porch were being looked at.

**956** Connect Outreachers

The group had met on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 to review the Connect Saturday cafe initiative and to plan a programme for 2024. Details of proposed monthly and social events had been circulated. The Connect café would continue to meet once a month, and the monthly super soup lunch would meet monthly until April. It was suggested that most events should be free with the opportunity for people to make donations. With regard to the Connect magazine, a budget of £2,000 for printing and £3,000 to cover the risks of events had been suggested. Anne Harkness proposed, seconded Keith Howick, that a budget of £5,000 be agreed to cover the cost of Connect events and the cost of printing. **Agreed.**

**957** Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod had met on 20<sup>th</sup> February. Anna Khan from Welcare had given a presentation. Christ Church Beckenham would be putting on a Bereavement journey course at the end of April, on Wednesday afternoons, which would include seven sessions and discussions for anyone. It was agreed to include details in the weekly notice sheet.

**958** Interment of ashes request

Anne Howick reported that St Paul's had received a request for the interment of the ashes of Audrey Anderson. Her husband had been interred previously at St Paul's. The request had originally been approved by Julian Frost and Vince Short, but as St Paul's was currently in an interregnum it was necessary to bring the request to the PCC. The PCC confirmed that it approved the request for the ashes of Audrey Anderson to be interred in the Garden of Remembrance at St Paul's.

**959** It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**960** Review of Opening hours for St Paul's Pre-School

A report had been received from the trustees of St Paul's Pre-School. Following discussions with families the Pre-School felt there was a strong indication that four days of service would be a more attractive offer for a wider group of parents rather than three days per week. Staff were keen to work additional hours and the trustees had suggested that they would extend the hours from the beginning of June to test out and adjust any initial issues. Keith Howick reported that there is a new funding arrangement for two year olds. Sandra Horner had expressed concern that the church would lose the one flexible day per week when events such as the soup lunch could be on offer. Anthea Prendergast commented that if the Pre-School want to have the hall on a Friday the soup lunch could be in the church. Currently the Pre-School contribute about £10,000 p.a. to hall bookings and an extra day might increase their fees by about £3,000. Concern was expressed about the effect on the timing of the cleaning work done by Ron and Pauline Barrett. Members were concerned about how an extra day for Pre-School would affect what St Paul's does for the community. It would be possible to use the church more for community events. Anthea Prendergast was asked to check with Stephanie Fox regarding the use of the hall on a Friday. It was agreed that further information was needed and this should be discussed at the next PCC meeting.

**10961** Items for Your PCC matters

Members agreed that the following items should be included: Accounts, interregnum, Procurement policy, exterior lighting, tree work, Deanery Synod, Bereavement course at Christ Church.

There being no further business Anne Harkness closed the meeting in prayer at 10.00 pm.