

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 15th March 2023.

2022 / 2023 No. 9

Present: Rev Simon Couper (in the chair), Richard Bradley, Sarah Butler, Tarina Hill, Sandra Horner, Anne Howick (not present for part of minute 780), Keith Howick (not present for part of minute 780), Hazel Koungoue, Ian Johnson, Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Adelaide Adade, Andrew Griffiths, and Paul Lashmar.

John Blakely and David Storey were in attendance for minute 10771.

Rev Simon Couper welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for their thoughts at the PCC meeting on 15th February 2023 regarding Living in Love and Faith.

10771 Church organ

David Storey reminded members that the organ was installed in 1891 and advised that it now requires more regular maintenance, and much refurbishment to bring it to fully working and playable condition. Earlier in March the electric blower had been fixed at a cost of £680.40 and in 2019 maintenance of the power socket and servicing had cost £685. David showed the PCC photographs of various parts of the organ, and commented on the areas which were not up to standard. He reported on problems with the console, the pedal board, the pedal pipes, the combination pistons, and the Clarion stop and the Choir tenor G. Tuning costs in 2019 had been £1,248, in 2021 £420 and in 2022 £852. Due to the Covid pandemic there had been no tuning in 2020. Currently David Storey and John Blakely do not receive any remuneration when they play at regular Sunday services, although they do receive a fee when they play at weddings and funerals. Other churches pay their organists £50 or £60 per service. In the St Paul's Church accounts there are designated funds for organ repairs of £9,205, and restricted funds for organ maintenance and repairs of £2,160.

David wondered whether St Paul's needed an organ and mentioned several options. (1) In 2012 Harrison & Harrison had quoted £92,000 for a total refurbishment and now it was likely that this would cost £150,000 - £250,000. (2) The problems as mentioned above would probably cost in the region of £50,000 - £70,000 to repair. (3) If St Paul's were to sell the present organ and replace it with an electric church organ the cost would be £35,000. There would be no tuning or maintenance costs. This would also allow for the creation of a new church office where the present organ stands. In answer to questions from PCC members, David commented that most people would not notice the difference between the present organ and an electric one. The organ at St George's Church is a pipe organ. To change the pedal board would cost £4,000 - £5,000. The vicar felt that the organ was an integral part of St Paul's and something needed to be done, probably either option (2) or (3). There was a lot of interest in the congregation. John Blakely commented that not many are training as organists these days so it might be difficult to find an organist in ten or twenty year's time. Keith Howick felt that there would be quite a lot of interest from people who would be willing to donate to the organ repair fund. Following discussion John Blakely and David Storey left the meeting. The vicar proposed that there should be a working team to consider the future of the organ at St Paul's. It was agreed that the vicar, Andrew Griffiths, Anne Howick and Ian Johnson should be members of the working team.

772 Conflict of Interest

Anne Howick declared a Conflict of Interest with regard to the discussions in minute 780. Keith Howick declared a Conflict of Interest with regard to the discussions in minute 780, and as a trustee of St Paul's Pre-School and of The Ugly Duckling Company.

773 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 18th January 2023.

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 18th January 2023 had been received. Anthea Prendergast proposed, seconded Richard Bradley, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 18th January 2023 be received as an accurate report of the meeting. **Agreed.**

774 Precis of the PCC's discussion, 15th February 2023.

The vicar had prepared a precis of the discussions held on 15th February 2023. These were received.

775 Matters arising

It was noted that the service of licensing of Rev Allie Kerr as Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley would take place on 23rd April in Welling. There would be a meeting of the Diocesan Synod in July when the Bishop would be attending and outlining his position on Living in Love and Faith. Some pastoral guidance would be tabled.

776 Decisions made by the Standing Committee by email

Stewart Fothergill Engineering, Service Engineer to the Pipe Organ trade, had submitted a quote to supply and fit four new brushes to the organ blower motor at a cost of £577.00 + vat, which included parts, labour and travel. All members of the Standing Committee had authorised the worked to be carried out.

777 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 647, Safeguarding courses. Sandra Horner reported that there were still some people who had not completed the relevant courses. The vicar commented that it was important that everyone had done the courses by the APCM and asked Sandra to contact people to remind them to complete the courses by the APCM.

(ii) Minute 648, Complaints Policy and Procedure. More work needed to be done.

(iii) Minute 666, People who need a visit. The vicar encouraged everyone to continue to advise him.

(iv) Minute 683, 3 Ashford House. Richard Bradley commented regarding repairs to the flat.

(v) Minute 698, Missions of the Month or Contingencies. The vicar had spoken to the Mission Team.

(vi) Minute 724, Quinquennial Inspection. Simon Ablett had been appointed.

(vii) Minute 731, Church notice in porch. Corrected.

(viii) Fees for musicians, verger, utility fee, streamed service. The vicar had spoken to Andrew Griffiths regarding fees for organists who play for occasional offices. The vicar proposed, seconded Hazel Koungoue, that the fee for an organist playing at a wedding or funeral should be £140 with effect from 1st March 2023. **Agreed.** The fees for the verger, utility fee and for a streamed service would remain unchanged. The vicar commented that if families are unable to pay some of the fees for a funeral there is a Discretionary fund which can be used.

(ix) Minute 745, Independent Examiner. The vicar confirmed that Ernest Kabera had agreed to be appointed as the Independent Examiner.

(x) Minute 747, Retirement thank you gift for David Bryan. The vicar confirmed that he had spoken to Sue Waters.

(xi) Minute 764, Church path. On-going.

(xii) Minute 769, Donation to CTiB. The cheque had been prepared.

778 Improvements to the vestry

The vicar reported that the Church Administrator had requested, now that the roof above the church office had been fixed, if it would be possible to re-carpet the vestry. The vicar had agreed to this request and Richard Bradley would be contacting possible carpet shops. Following a suggestion from Anthea Prendergast, the vicar proposed, seconded Richard Bradley, that quotes should be obtained for re-decoration of the vestry. **Agreed.**

779 Community Outreach Programme

David Charlesworth had prepared a document, "Connect 2023", which included a year plan for 2023. This had been circulated to the PCC. It included a timeline of events spread through the year, plus more frequent groups to tackle isolation and loneliness within the community.

(i) Headline events. 7th May - Coronation Street party. 24/25 June or 1st week in September - Community weekend. 23/24 September - Autumn Fayre or 1st week in October - Harvest. October - Gospel type concert as part of Black History Month. Early December - Concert / event. December - Christingle and Community Carols. It was hoped that there could be a Champion for each event. St Paul's had received a £350 grant from Bromley Council for the Coronation Street party.

(ii) Regular Groups. It was planned that the Babies and Toddler group, and Friendship Group should continue as present. It was hoped the Community Choir could continue on a termly basis, subject to discussions with David Storey. It was proposed that there should be a weekly Friday Drop In group, a monthly Saturday Hub, and a termly Easy Access Faith Group.

(iii) Spiritual Encounter. During the year it was hoped there could be a Theology course in Lent, Encounter Easter during Easter week, an Alpha course in September, a Theology course in October. The possibility of "Awkward Questions" sessions had been suggested in June 2023 and January 2024. There should also be greater promotion of Home Groups, an Easy Access Faith Group, a candle/prayer/giving station, and more stories of St Paul's.

(iv) Communications. Ways of improving communications in the church and outside the church had been suggested.

(v) A timeline of events during the year had been prepared, together with a draft cost budget of £9,140. The budget did not take into account revenue from donations and ticket sales.

Members discussed the various aspects of the report. In answer to a question regarding an Away Weekend, it was agreed it should be every other year and the vicar felt that St Paul's was due to have one. It would be important to discuss the budget with the Finance Team. It would be helpful to have some precise dates for some events, preferably in time for the APCM. With regard to warm spaces it was noted that some people preferred to be warm at home rather

than coming to a church hall. It was noted that the first soup lunch had only had a few attendees, but more had attended the second one which was encouraging. Members agreed there should be a community soup lunch. The vicar felt it was good that St Paul's was willing to try different things, accepting that not everything would work. It would be important to have a notice outside the church detailing when the lunch was taking place and that anyone was welcome. With regard to an Alpha course, it was hoped this could take place each year in June. Members agreed that the vicar should check the dates for events and then share with the PCC.

780 LLM application

Keith Howick reported that he was currently attending the Bishop's Certificate course which had started in Autumn 2023. He had had discussions with the vicar regarding whether he should apply to continue studying once he had completed the Bishop's Certificate course and attend the LLM course. The application, which needs to be in by the end of March, would need the support of the vicar and the PCC. Keith Howick and Anne Howick left the meeting.

Following discussions the vicar invited Keith and Anne to return to the meeting. He reported that the PCC had approved the proposal that Keith Howick should apply to attend the LLM course.

781 Cost of living crisis

The vicar commented that St Paul's had tried new things. He didn't often get requests for financial help. He felt the community drop in lunch would be a good thing to do. It would be important to support the school and food banks.

782 Safeguarding and Inclusion

Sandra Horner reported that she would be on a Safeguarding Leadership course in June. The vicar thanked Anne Howick for her work as the Safeguarding Officer and Sandra for taking on the role.

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

A paper had been circulated by the PCC Secretary giving details of when reports would need to be sent to the PCC Secretary. It was noted that there would be six vacancies available for election to the PCC for three years.

784 Financial matters

(i) CAF Account. It was noted that the CAF Bank account was now up and running and a credit card had been obtained. A new Request For Payment sheet had been prepared. The vicar recorded his thanks to Rosemary Dear for all her work sorting out the new CAF account.

(ii) Annual report and accounts. The report was with the Independent Examiner and Rosemary Dear and Ernest Kabera were in touch.

(iii) 150th Giving Day. Rosemary Dear would be sending thank you letters to regular donors and to those who had given at the Giving Day.

785 Mission Team

The minutes of a meeting held on 28th February 2023 had been received.

(i) Farewell gift to Nick and Harriet Algeo. It was noted that the Away-Giving Mission account for July and August 2022 amounted to £1,314.94 so it would not be possible to send a farewell gift of £1,500 as had been previously approved. The PCC agreed that the reduced amount of £1,315 be sent to Nick and Harriet Algeo as a personal farewell gift as they were no longer working with Crosslinks.

(ii) Christmas collections. Members agreed that there should be a discussion well in advance of Christmas 2023 to discuss which charities should be supported by the collections at the Christingle service and services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was noted that in the past St Paul's has supported the Children's Society at Christingle.

(iii) Away-Giving. It was noted that Elaine Storey had indicated that she wishes to retire from running the Away-giving Mission of the Month and Contingencies account. It was agreed that the vicar and Marie Read should send a letter of thanks and some flowers to Elaine Storey. Following discussion Anthea Prendergast proposed, seconded Tarina Hill, that after the APCM on 14th May 2023 the Finance Committee should allocate a fixed budget for away giving and that the Mission Team should allocate this budget for the Mission of the Month and Contingencies with effect from 1st April 2023. **Agreed.**

(iv) Christians Against Poverty (CAP). It was noted that Rachel Williams would be leaving CAP in April 2023 and that Gareth Hall and Lin Skinner would be leading CAP (Penge). It was agreed that a card and a gift of flowers should be sent to Rachel as a gift of appreciation from St Paul's for her leadership of CAP (Penge).

(v) Contingencies. The vicar proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that £1,045 should be sent to Tear Fund for the needs in Syria. **Agreed.**

786 Eco Church

Sarah Butler reported that St Paul's Church, Beckenham had won a Bronze Eco Church Award from A Rocha UK in recognition of its efforts to care for God's earth in each of the following areas: Worship and Teaching, Management of Buildings and Land, Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. In due course St Paul's would receive an Eco Church plaque and it would be possible to include the logo on the church website. The vicar thanked the Climate and Ecology Team, and especially Sarah Butler, for all their hard work.

787 Deanery Synod

Hazel Koungoue reported on the CTiB Lent course which was taking place on Tuesday evenings. Two of the courses are being organised by members of St Paul's. Rev Jessica Smith had spoken at Deanery Synod regarding the pandemic and recovery. There had been group discussions regarding what churches should do less of and what they had gained from the experience. It was noted that some people had moved to other churches, and others no longer attended services for health reasons.

788 Church path

The vicar had tried to get a quote from the stonemason for the 150th anniversary scripture but had not heard back yet. It would be important to get three quotes for the church path work. Richard Bradley expressed concern regarding the Yew tree roots.

10789 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 19th April 2023.

There being no further business the vicar closed the meeting with the Grace at 9.55 pm.