

WONERSH + BLACKHEATH

PARISH CHURCHES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL HELD IN THE SELWYN ROOM ON THE 20th MAY 2024

In Attendance

Rev David Peters (DP) Chair

Clive Couzens (CC) Secretary

Martin Keech (MK)

Jonty Shepard (JS)

Patricia Allen (PA)

Anne Heine-Carmichael (AHC)

Nick Gray (NG)

Patricia Allen (PA)

Darren Alford (DA)

Carmina Harlow (CHa)

Clare Hepworth (CHe)

Liz Lister (EL)

Alice Bounsall-Hughes (ABH)

1. Introduction and prayer

DP introduced the meeting with a reflection from Acts 2, and a prayer, and welcomed ABH, CHe and DA to the PCC.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Rosie Twist, Alex Vinall, Steve Vinall, Mark Puttick, Pam Cheesman and Nicholas Bamber.

3. Minutes of the last meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 18th March and 13th April had been previously circulated and were agreed as a true record.

4. Matters arising and action points

The revised worship at St Martin's had been favourably received, and would be subject to continuing review.

I-sing was being introduced and the possibility of recording directly in to the organ at St Martin's was progressing too.

5. Appointment of Secretary

CC was re-appointed as Secretary, but advised that he hoped to step down within the course of the next year.

6. Appointment of Standing Committee

It was agreed that the Standing Committee would consist of DP, MK, AV, CHa (all *ex officio*), CC, The Treasurer and Nicholas Bamber.

7. APCM

There were no matters arising from the APCM. AHC had a very positive view of the various reports and the conduct of the meeting.

8. Safeguarding

DP reminded the meeting of the importance of safeguarding within the church, highlighting the requirement of the church and the PCC that all PCC members should undertake the relevant training and undergo DBS checks as necessary.

The Statement of Safeguarding Policy was adopted. Jan Durrant would continue as Parish Safeguarding Officer, and Alex Vinall would continue as PCC Safeguarding lead.

The Pastoral Care policy had been circulated previously and was approved. DP advised that records of visits should be kept when undertaken on behalf of the church, and a badge should be worn to identify the visitor and visit as such. There were concerns about GDPR requirements, which would be investigated. Some minor alteration to the presented policy may be necessary and the Pastoral Group informed accordingly. **Action DP**

No safeguarding incidents had been reported.

9. Health and Safety

No incidents had been reported.

10. Various other policies

CC introduced this item, advising that there were a large number of possible policies that might be adopted by the church. Some had already been adopted but were due for review. These had been circulated previously.

The Anti-Bribery policy, the Conflict of Interest policy and the Ex-Offenders policy were all adopted. The Investment policy, the Conflict of Interest policy and the Hardship policy would be reviewed by the Finance Committee. **Action NG/CW**

CC would ask members for their input as to which other policies (eg lone working) should be introduced or reintroduced. **Action CC**

11. Buildings

MK had circulated a report and various supporting documents.

A bat survey would be required before installation of PV panels could proceed. MK was having some difficulty in finding anyone able to carry this out before the relevant season came to an end.

MK ran through the results of the Quinquennial inspection, which had raised a number of matters of varying importance and urgency. The most significant item was the dilapidated churchyard wall, which is the responsibility of the Parish Council. The Diocesan Registrar had written to the Parish Council, reminding them of their legal obligations and requiring a plan of action. The Parish Council continued to plead poverty, and so far had refused to even contribute to the cost of initial investigations and costings, on the grounds that they would not be able to fund any work once this had been carried out. Their assumption of the total cost was felt to be speculative and possibly highly exaggerated. It was agreed that the church would pay up to £5,000 for an initial investigation and ask for a 50% contribution from the Parish Council, all on a 'without prejudice' basis.

Much of the other work required in the inspection report would more easily be carried out when scaffolding was in place for the PV panels, and would be deferred until then.

Discussion turned to the future of Lawnsmead. MK had circulated documents from two architects who were being considered for the project, one of whom was the church architect who had recently carried out the Quinquennial inspection, and the other was Mark Alford, brother of PCC member DA. The potential conflict of interest was noted. The need for a pre-planning application, and for the potential replacement of a community facility, were noted.

MK was asked if John Bailey (the church architect, with more experience in ecclesiastical buildings) was the right person to be designing outline plans for a redeveloped Lawnsmead. MK felt that he was, provided it was a relatively simple plan.

Certain members expressed reservations at the possible sale of the site, but MK explained that a refurbishment had all but been ruled out at a previous meeting in view of the large amount of work required and its high cost. There did remain the possibility of the church retaining some interest in the redeveloped site. It was agreed that this option should continue to be explored, and that there should be a consultation with the congregation at an early stage.

It was agreed that the next PCC meeting would be held at Lawnsmead. **Action CC**

Nicky Cooke had requested that the PCC should approve the repair of the roof of the shed at Lawnsmead, where the ingress of water was causing damage to equipment used by Open the Book, which could not be stored elsewhere. This was agreed.

12. Children and Families

A report had been circulated and was taken as read.

It was agreed that the tents purchased a few years ago could be sold.

13. Finance

NG advised that the Independent Examiner had charged an additional £300 in fees in view of extra work carried out. This was ratified.

NG wished to step down from the position of Co-Treasurer. He advised that Charlie Wakefield was prepared to take his place. This was agreed, and it was also agreed that Charlie would be co-opted to the PCC. It was agreed that NG would be appointed as Chair of the Finance Committee, and would continue to manage Gift Aid. Sarah Jo Gray would continue as Co-Treasurer.

14. Church support work

DP advised that Jan Durrant wished to embark on a 'Caleb' course, a fast track course for ordination. This would entail a fee of £1250, which the PCC agreed should be paid by the church.

Charlotte Richardson's initial one year arrangement had come to an end at the APCM, but DP wished to extend funding to the end of this calendar year at which point it would stop and a review would take place. This was agreed.

15. Any other business

CC noted that the Quinquennial report had contained several references to ‘important’ (not necessarily the same as ‘valuable’) works of art or items of furniture. He requested that the churchwardens and the Finance Committee should satisfy themselves that all such items were adequately valued for insurance purposes, as inflationary indexing might not always be sufficient.

Signed: