

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, LINTON
MINUTES OF PCC MEETING HELD BY ZOOM
ON THURSDAY 11TH MARCH 2021

PRESENT

The Revd. Canon Dr Maggie Guite (Chair), Mrs J Burge, Miss C Ellis, Mrs S Ellis (Treasurer), Mrs H Evans (Churchwarden), Mrs J George, Mr A Gore, Dr J Hall, Mrs S Mudge (Secretary), Mrs J Nightingale, Dr D Parry-Smith, Mrs G Powell, Mrs P Schofield, Mrs S Thorne (LLM), Mr R Tonry, Mrs C Watts (LLM and Safeguarding Officer), Mr D Watts (Churchwarden), Revd. M Wilcockson and Mr M Younger.

1. OPENING PRAYER

After prayer, Maggie Guite invited each person to state briefly one area or aspect which they hoped to facilitate during the meeting - with the aim of creating a cooperative, empathetic and focused atmosphere for discussion.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies as everyone was present.

3. MINUTES OF 14TH JANUARY 2021

Maggie Guite pointed out one error. Item 15 MAP objective 3 - Morning Prayer is created as a Podcast, not Facebook Live as stated. The minutes were approved subject to that amendment.

4. IMPACT OF COVID-19

4.1. REVIEW OF PROVISION OF LIVE SERVICES

Services had been suspended since 10th January on a voluntary basis, following a letter from the Bishop. The Standing Committee on 8th February proposed that services might start on Easter Sunday, 4th April. Maggie Guite outlined the following for consideration:

Pros - physical chance to make Easter communion (although still in one kind only), can take joy from a beautifully decorated church, many people will have had at least one vaccination.

Cons - still have perceived threat from being in a building, restrictions persist (2m spread of seating, no singing or conversation), Easter Day predates the Government moving to a lower level of restrictions by a week, some people will still prefer to be at home and worshipping virtually, there may be difficulty in fulfilling rotas for live and virtual services.

Maggie then invited everyone to give their views - which ranged across a spectrum of maintain online worship only to offer maximum safety, to the fact that Easter is important spiritually and was it right to deny people the opportunity to worship in church. An outdoor service was suggested even though April weather is not very settled. People can still assess their own level of risk and make their decision accordingly. Maggie said that there could be an 8am service in church and a 10am by Zoom or there could be a live service and also a Zoom one at 10am. If Linton had a live service, the other benefice churches would probably do so. A vote was taken on the proposal to have at least one service in St Mary's on April 4th.

Five people voted no, nine people voted yes, five abstained. The ministerial team will work out a plan.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1. UNLOCKING / LOCKING THE CHURCH

Maggie Guite suggested that the church could remain open for private prayer until 5 or 5.30pm now that dusk was later. The five PCC members who open and close the church on weekdays were in agreement. Sue Mudge was asked to let Anne Parry-Smith know so that she can speak to Nanette who locks up at weekends and alter the notices to say 5pm.

6. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Cathy Watts said that she had attended a meeting for Parish Safeguarding Officers and some requirements are being amended; e.g. DBS checks will be needed every 3 years instead of 5 years.

- Cathy said that 13 DBS checks had been processed since her report in January.
- The training log for PCC members is almost up to the required level.
- Cathy attended the Pastoral Visitors group meeting (Zoom) to explain the safeguarding and GDPR rules. Some people were unhappy about the need to comply as they felt that it changed the nature of their role.
- Cathy had circulated the Safeguarding Dashboard Action Plan - now at level 2. Some actions were still needed e.g. a statement about ex-offenders, a list of church activities. Sue Mudge pointed out that a safeguarding statement was included in the report to the APCM in October 2020. Members approved the action plan subject to the required amendments.
- Digital working group - a named person is required to be data controller. Terms of reference for the group were circulated.
- Cathy and Anne Parry-Smith are identifying and scanning church documents to put onto Google Drive. Maggie has paper documents relating to safeguarding which she will pass on to Cathy. Jackie Hall raised a question about general data / paper preservation of records. David Watts said that some parish registers were in the County Records Office. *N.B. Jackie Hall circulated a document relating to record storage after the meeting - entitled Keep or Bin The Care of your Parish Records.*

7. RECTOR'S REPORT

7.1. RETIREMENT

Maggie Guite read a letter, which would be circulated to pewsheet recipients the next day, in which she announced her retirement and move to Norfolk. The last Sunday in the parish will be 4th July which will also mark 6 years since her Institution. Hopefully all lockdown restrictions will be lifted by then and the occasion can be marked in a suitable manner.

7.2. LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

The Ash Wednesday service, Lent sermons and discussion groups are preparatory to discussing the Church of England report on Living in Love and Faith. Church groups are invited to discuss the report during the year. Maggie felt that this would work best if done face to face which would mean waiting until the end of June. However with that timescale, Maggie could barely be involved but wishes to be so. She proposes using the rule of 6, allowed from 17th May, and setting up small groups which could meet over 5 weeks. Michael Wilcockson said that he agreed with Maggie's suggestion and timeframe, as did Michael Younger and Gill Powell. It was suggested that this could be advertised widely in the community, although Sarah Thorne thought that the issues raised were not perceived to be problems by younger people i.e. the Millennials and Generation Z. Members were in agreement with setting up groups of 6 from mid-May, together with a Zoom option.

8. FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP REPORT

8.1. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2020

Sue Ellis said that the final accounts for 2020 with explanatory text, as circulated, were with the Independent Examiner. David Watts proposed that the accounts be accepted, subject to being signed by the Independent Examiner. This was seconded by Richard Tonry and all were in favour.

8.2. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the Finance & Stewardship committee meeting had also been circulated with the following recommendations.

- Charitable Giving - donations of £500 to Haverhill foodbank and £500 to USPG were proposed by David Watts, seconded Jacqui Burge and agreed. Helene Evans had investigated USPG projects and recommended that we support the Church of Bangladesh which is working to improve primary health care - agreed.
- Administrator's pay review - Sue Ellis proposed that the pay be increased by £5.40 per month - just less than 1% and already included in the 2021 budget. This was seconded by Jackie Hall and agreed, with one abstention. It will take effect from June when the administrator will have been in post for 2 years.
- Sue Ellis was pleased to report that the funds from the Sterling Bond (of approx. £52,000) had finally been released and a cheque had been paid into St Mary's current account. It was agreed that investment into ethical funds should be researched.
- Heating for funerals - David Watts proposed that the heating fee for funerals should be increased from £20, set in 2016, to £30 - seconded by Richard Tonry and agreed. Sue Mudge to write to inform H J Paintin Ltd.

9. REPORTS TO PCC

9.1. MINISTRY TEAM

No recent meeting but David Watts reported that the group would consider how to manage services and the return to live worship.

9.2. FABRIC REPORT

The committee had not met since the last PCC meeting. Current issues had been discussed via email and Richard Tonry had circulated a report to provide updates.

- Application of Smartwater to the roof and a repair to the inner door to the tower has been quoted at £743.40 and a formal application for funding will be made to The Friends of St Mary's.
- Church Lane notice board - the cost of restoring the wooden framed board was higher than expected. A quote of £469 plus extra for the logo was received for a blue-framed metal replacement with white background. The proposal is for a single glazed panel with the tree logo at the top and St Mary's Linton plus strapline alongside. Andrew Gore offered to check the planning permission regulations and hoped that permission would not be needed for a replacement of a similar size to the original. Andrew suggested that an appeal could be made through the pewsheet to see whether someone would like to donate £500 for a new board; otherwise it would be funded from the general church maintenance budget. Richard Tonry proposed that we proceed on this basis; to finalise artwork and get a full quote - seconded by David Parry-Smith and agreed.
- Installation of swift boxes in the tower at no cost to the PCC and no faculty is required - classed as category B. Project was proposed by Richard Tonry, seconded by David Watts and agreed.

- The installation of the cable for the telephone line was still outstanding. BT Openreach had failed to turn up on several occasions, causing great inconvenience to David Watts. At one point a single workman came when the surveyor had specified a 2 person job for 2 days. There appears to be poor communication between Plusnet and BT Openreach. The resurfacing of the churchyard paths is subsequently delayed and also the re-positioning of the main notice board.

9.3. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TEAM REPORT

Sarah Thorne had circulated a report as follows.

- Make Lunch Club plans have been curtailed due to COVID restrictions. Boxes of Hope were packed and delivered to 10 families for half term. Plans are being developed for the 2 week Easter holiday.
- Mothering Sunday activity bags will be available as well as the traditional posies.
- Two Easter trails are being created, working as Churches Together with friends from Linton Free Church. The trail for under 7's will be in St Mary's churchyard and a trail for children age 7-11 will be in the Free Church grounds. Families will be able to move from one to the other and booking will be necessary.
- Sarah also reported from the group specifically working on funding. TLG had donated £195. An application is being prepared for the County Council Cultivate fund which can award grants up to £15,000.
- Michael Younger wished for the work of Sarah and the team to be acknowledged and for the PCC to demonstrate strong support. He asked whether the summer holiday club could go ahead this year. Sarah replied that Boxes of Hope were planned for the May half term and then, if the COVID restrictions were lifted as suggested, the Make Lunch Club could operate. A return of the holiday club with a morning of activities and lunch, as in 2018 and 2019, would be planned for 2022.
- A copy of the revised terms of reference for the team had been circulated and was approved.

9.4. INFANT SCHOOL REPORT

The PCC appreciated the detailed report which Nicola Collard, Chair of Governors, had provided. Nicola explained that since early January, teachers had adopted remote learning while still teaching their 'bubbles' of vulnerable children and those of key workers. The wellbeing of all staff remains high priority and Nicola listed some of the ways in which this has been addressed; ranging from more formal initiatives to a week where random acts of kindness were encouraged and another time gifts were received from the PTFA. Staff delivered a half term activity bag to each child, funded by the PTFA.

Cathy Watts said that Kelly Harries, headteacher, had commented that she felt very privileged to have such good support from the Governing Body. Not all schools were so fortunate.

Following the proposal from the January PCC meeting, Cathy and David Watts had delivered 10 plants to the staff - one for each classroom and one for the headteacher, office staff, caretaker and kitchen area.

9.5. EVENTS REPORT

Charlotte Ellis had circulated a brief report describing the recent virtual bingo afternoon and an evening with Malcolm Guite (by Zoom) in April. A family village trail/quiz in May is being planned.

9.6. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

David Parry-Smith had circulated an update of Deanery news and drew attention to the next date of 22nd April, when he and a colleague will speak on mental health during the open part of the meeting. Andrew Gore added that the Institution of Revd Kathryn Joy

Waite to the Sawston and Babraham benefice is planned for June 22nd. The Hinkledux House for Duty appointment is dependent upon references being acceptable.

Three of the Linton Team parishes may not be able to pay their full parish share, which could impact on clergy staffing at in the future. Sarah Thorne said that she recently had a meeting with other Deanery children's workers.

9.7. PASTORAL VISITORS GROUP REPORT

Judy Nightingale had circulated a draft Terms of Reference. Judy explained that the items in yellow were additions to the first draft and those in green required further action. Judy was grateful to Cathy Watts for attending the group Zoom meeting and leading people through the requirements. As noted in item 6 above, there was some uneasiness over the formality of the safeguarding changes and one person has since resigned. Judy was concerned that others may also feel that they do not wish to continue. It is sad that the requirements of DBS checks and training are off-putting and that the Diocese does not tailor the Safeguarding training to suit the context for older people rather than young people. There are 8 members and a further 3 or 4 people who deliver Home Communion. Maggie Guite said that the APCM now has to authorise those delivering Home Communion. Maggie is grateful to Judy for taking over leadership of the group from Lesley Gore.

Judy Nightingale proposed that the terms of reference be approved, seconded by David Parry-Smith and agreed. Cathy Watts and David P-S both offered to join the Pastoral Visitors group.

10. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT - ALM PASTORAL MINISTRY COURSE

Maggie Guite said that Sue Filby had approached her about this course which begins on 29th April. Sue had previously done an ALM course in youth ministry. Her talents were now moving towards pastoral ministry, particularly in Nichols Court. The PCC was happy to support Sue for this training.

11. REVISION OF MISSION ACTION PLAN

David Parry-Smith previously said that the MAP should be revised as it was approaching 4 years since being approved and the validity of some objectives may be questioned. It also may be appropriate as the parish moves into an Interregnum. However, it could be deferred to another meeting in view of the lengthy agenda.

12. DATE FOR APCM (ANNUAL MEETING)

The APCM has to take place before the end of May. The last Annual meeting was delayed due to the lockdown and COVID restrictions and was in October. It was agreed that the APCM for 2021 would follow the service on Sunday 23rd May, at about 11.30am.

13. AOB

13.1. PEACE GARDEN BENCH

An email had been received from Glynis Younger regarding the poor condition of the bench and arbour in the Peace Garden. Glynis was due to find out whether the arbour could be repaired. Glynis had written to Scotsdales and received a reply offering 20% charity discount. There had been £300 in a restricted Peace Garden fund last year, of which £285 remained. The PCC agreed that Glynis could spend up to £400 or send details to the Standing Committee if more funds were required.

13.2. LHJS BOOKLETS

Maggie Guite had received an email from Scripture Union offering a reduction if the booklets given to junior school leavers were ordered soon. It was agreed that Maggie could

order 6 packs (60 booklets) and it was hoped that the Free Church would contribute as usual.

13.3. TEAM FACEBOOK PAGE

Maggie reported that Katherine Fisher intended to set up a Team Facebook page and an editor is required for Linton posts. Charlotte Ellis agreed to do this. It would be helpful if Charlotte were an editor for the St Mary's site too. Sarah Thorne agreed to ask John if Charlotte could be added.

The meeting closed in prayer at 22.15

Dates of future meetings: Monday 10th May, Thursday 8th July, Thursday 9th September, Monday 8th November, Thursday 13th January 2022, Monday 14th March