

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's, New Beckenham, held in the church hall on 24th April 2024

2023 / 2024 No. 10

Present: Anne Harkness (in the chair), Maria Adu, Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Andrew Griffiths, Tarina Hill, Sandra Horner, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Ian Johnson, Nomsa Mafohla, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Paul Lashmar.

Keith Howick opened the meeting in prayer,

10981 Resignation

Anne Howick reported that she had received an email on 17th April 2024 from Adelaide Adade informing her that Adelaide would be resigning from the PCC with immediate effect. The PCC recorded their thanks to Adelaide for her time on the PCC.

982 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.

983 Leader for *Your PCC Matters*

Maria Adu offered to prepare a report on the meeting for the notice sheet.

984 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 20th March 2024

Anthea Prendergast proposed, seconded Maria Adu, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 20th March 2024 be received as an accurate record of the meeting. **Agreed** with three abstentions as three people had not attended the meeting on 20th March 2024.

985 Matters arising

(i) Minute 965(i), Church laptop. This had not yet been purchased.

(ii) Minute 965(ii), Procurement policy. This policy was not yet on the church website. Andrew Griffiths requested that a copy be sent to him so he could add it to the website.

(iii) Minute 965(iv), St Paul's Pre-School. Keith Howick reported that a notice had been sent to Mini Athletics, and that they would continue to operate in the church garden or at the back of church for the summer term. Pre-School would start to use the church hall on a Friday after the summer half term.

(iv) Minute 966(vii), Independent Examiner. Rosemary Dear had been in touch with Ernest Kabera who had signed off on the accounts on 24th April.

(v) Minute 966(xi), View / hear services in hall. Thanks to the AV team a screen had been set up so the service could be viewed in the church hall. The parents' reaction had been very good. Members agreed this should continue.

986 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 862(vi), Internal notice boards. The Comms Team had reviewed these. The children's board had been updated. The Getting Involved board has a notice about getting involved on the PCC.

(ii) Minute 914, Independent Examiner. See minute 985(iv) above.

(iii) Minute 918(i), External lighting. Rev Rachel Winn had been at the vicarage recently and had shown interest in the tree situation and lighting. She would be looking at how other churches do lighting. It would be important to have Rachel's thoughts before the PCC meeting in June.

(iv) Minute 938, Updated Giving leaflet. The Comms and Finance teams were reviewing the leaflet, and hoped to have it ready for the APCM.

(v) Minute 975, QI work. David Charlesworth and Keith Howick had provided contact details of roofers. Richard Bradley was in touch with the roofers. The churchwardens were speaking to a tree surgeon. One had failed to turn up for a meeting, so they would be contacting another one as well.

987 Installation of new vicar

Keith Howick had replied to the Diocese regarding the installation on 11th July at 7 pm and expressed disappointment that the date was later than planned. The Bishop's assistant had shared this disappointment and commented that they had hoped for a date in June. The date had been confirmed and the Bishop's Chaplain, Rev Canon June Lawson, would be attending.

988 Work at the vicarage

Anne Harkness reported that the builders had been very slow and work was still not finished. Things were looking really good, and a radiator was being replaced in the kitchen. The ceiling problems had been fixed and the carpets removed. A fence would be put up in the front garden. It had been agreed that the parquet flooring would be sanded and treated. It might be necessary to remove a big oak tree in the back garden.

989 Service rota updates

The group would be meeting on 25th April to discuss the next rota. Members commented that often there are people who call in to see the church administrator for a chat. It was important that her time was not disrupted too much, and members wondered if a "Do not disturb" notice should be put on the door to the church office some times.

990 Safeguarding and Inclusion

Sandra Horner had sent a link to a documentary exploring the pattern of abuse experienced over a period of four decades under the leadership of Mike Pilavachi, the former leader of Soul Survivor, Watford. *Let there be Light* explores the story, through testimonies of victims and survivors, of what happened and the lessons the Church must learn for the future. Members discussed the problems which had been highlighted and how important it would be for young people to be listened to and encouraged to ask for help. Emotional abuse and neglect is often hidden and is difficult to see, whether it is a child or an older member of the church family. All Clergy, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officers, and PCC Secretaries in the Diocese had been written to recently about the new National Safeguarding Standards. The Standards, and the accompanying Quality Assurance Framework, are about enabling Church bodies, such as dioceses, to identify both their strengths and areas for development with regard to safeguarding, and to help them understand the quality and, most importantly, the impact of their safeguarding activity. Parishes were being encouraged to adopt them to help them on their own journey of good and well-integrated safeguarding practice.

991 Preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meetings, 12th May 2024

(i) Draft Annual reports. Copies of reports had been circulated. Members were asked to pass any comments to the PCC Secretary. Some extra words and amendments were suggested.

(ii) Annual accounts. Reports including the Balance sheet as at 31 December 2023, Income and Expenditure, Incoming resources, Resources expended, Notes to the Financial statements had been circulated. Expenditure had risen by 12% in 2023 compared to 2022 and had exceeded income by £12,000 in 2023. The number of regular givers remained stable. Rental income from 3 Ashford House had increased slightly.

(iii) Independent Examiner's report. It was understood that Ernest Kabera had prepared his report.

(iv) Report of fabric goods and ornaments. The report had been received.

(v) Deanery Synod report. A copy of the report had been distributed at the meeting.

(vi) Vicar's report. In the absence of a vicar it was agreed that this was not applicable. It was suggested that Clive Grinham should be asked if he would be willing to prepare a report on the spiritual position of the Parish during the interregnum.

(vii) PCC membership. There would be six vacancies on the PCC. Adelaide Adade had resigned with immediate effect, Maria Adu would be required to stand down as she had been co-opted but would be eligible to stand for election, Tarina Hill indicated that she did not wish to stand for election, Ian Johnson and Paul Lashmar were required to stand down but were eligible to stand for election, and Anthea Prendergast would be eligible to stand for election if she does not stand as a churchwarden.

The churchwardens and PCC Secretary had received an email from Suzanne Rogers at the Diocese regarding how to handle uncontested seats in APCM elections.

(viii) Appointment of Presiding Officer. It was agreed that the chair of the meeting would be the presiding officer.

(ix) Postal voting. It was agreed that this paragraph on the notice of the upcoming APCM should be deleted. Postal voting would not be permitted.

(x) Electoral Roll. Rufus Ballaster is the Electoral Roll officer.

992 Finance Team

The minutes of a meeting of the Finance Team held on 8th April 2024 had been received.

(i) 3 Ashford House. A local estate agent had given an informal valuation. Members agreed that, for the 2024 annual accounts, 3 Ashford House should be valued at £385,000.

(ii) Hall hire charge. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that with effect from 1st June 2024 the hourly rate for a single hall booking should be raised to £30 per hour. **Agreed with one abstention.** It was agreed to discuss the rates for the hire of the church for concerts and other events at a later date.

(iii) School vouchers. It was agreed that it would be important that materials to create awareness of the school voucher offer and to invite donations should be prepared urgently. An item should be included in the Giving leaflet.

(iv) Restricted funds. Members discussed whether there should be a Fund raising day. The Finance Team had suggested that the following projects should make use of restricted funds, where the restriction is worded broadly enough: the organ, new external notice boards, hall improvements, more hall chairs. Members thought it would be important to ask Rev Rachel Winn for her thoughts. Funds are available and would lose value if not used soon. It was suggested there should be a meeting about restricted funds after the APCM with up to ten proposals for consideration.

(v) Development fund. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Ian Johnson, that all residual restricted funds which have £600 or less remaining should be transferred to the restricted Development fund. **Agreed.**

(vi) 3 Ashford House rent. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Tarina Hill, that with effect from 1st June 2024 the rent should be increased to £1,000 per month.

(vii) Heating charge. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that a heating charge of £40 be made if, and only if, heating is used during a wedding rehearsal or a marriage service. **Agreed.**

(viii) Wedding fees. The Finance team had recommended that the Church of England fees for a marriage service, publication of Banns and issuing of a Banns certificate should be displayed on the St Paul's website. Details of the fees for services which St Paul's provides, i.e. organist £140 (doubled if a video is made), verger £60, heating £40 if used, streaming £100 and available for one month only, with a charge (licence fee) for playing recorded music being dependent on the licence fee for what is being played, should also be displayed on the website. It was agreed that we would not display all the fees on the website, but include a link to the CofE cost of church weddings web page, and say that we could offer optional extras such as organist and livestreaming.

993 Buildings Team

A report of a meeting held on 9th April 2024 had been received. The team had reviewed the draft Energy & Environmental Audit report produced by South East London Community energy (SELCE) for the Climate & Ecology team and the last QI report for content regarding solar panels. Keith Howick had spoken to Sarah Anderson regarding solar panels. They would not be allowed on the building if they are visible to the public. It was agreed that this was a much larger project and not one for the Buildings Team to explore now. Now requirements had become clearer for the church lighting Anne Harkness would be creating a spec and obtaining quotes from three suppliers.

Anne Harkness had contacted two tree surgeons to ask for quotes for reducing the height and width of the yew trees at the church entrance. Work to the roofing had been discussed and the team would be getting quotes for the work as set out in the QI report. On 18th April tree work had taken place in the church gardens.

994 Climate and Ecology Team

The team had agreed that they would do “No mow May”, leaving areas of the grass uncut to benefit insects and biodiversity. Some areas would still be cut. During Great Big Green Week in June the team would be organising some activities on 8th June. Concerns had been expressed regarding the church boiler which, although it is still working well is ageing and will need to be replaced. The team hoped to visit a local church where alternative heating systems have been installed.

Keith Howick asked who was making sure that the cleaning products which Ron and Pauline Barrett use are compliant. It was agreed that the church wardens would speak with people who purchase products for church to ensure that they are aware of the policy and aim to be compliant.

995 Communication Team

The team had discussed the wording on the three exterior notice boards. They would need updating when Rev Rachel Winn was in post. It was noted they are also beginning to rot. The team had suggested that the notice boards should be able to last for ten years or more and should reflect a forward-looking and welcoming church. It would be important to have a board format that would allow for key information to be changed at times. On the boards by the church entrance in Brackley Road and in Lawn Road there should be rear-opening panels where upcoming events or seasonal services could be featured. Consideration was also given as to how many email address there should be. Following discussion David Charlesworth proposed, seconded Anne Harkness, that the Communications Team progress the sourcing of signs, subject to agreement of final content and proposal with the new vicar and the PCC. **Agreed.**

996 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be held on 5th June 2024.

997 Organ

Andrew Griffiths reported there had been no particular feedback following the presentation. The PCC agreed that David Storey should be asked to research options and prices. It was hoped a report could be considered at the PCC meeting in June.

10998 Your PCC Matters

Maria Adu offered to prepare the report which she would discuss with Anne Harkness before forwarding it to the Church Administrator.

There being no further business Anne Harkness closed the meeting in prayer and with the Grace at 10.10 pm.