

Minutes

St Mary's Church, Froyle

Minutes of PCC meeting

At 7.30pm on 11 March 2020 at Park Edge, Upper Froyle

Present:	Yann Dubreuil Robert Bourne Nigel Hughes Jonathan Pickering Nigel Southern	Christopher Ogilvie-Thompson Jane Harrap William Knowles Sarah Roberts Michael Starbuck
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Apologies:	Nigel Bulpitt	Jane MacNabb
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The meeting opened with prayer.

Item	Subject	Action by
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1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Nigel Bulpitt and Jane Macnabb. The meeting was quorate.

2. Minutes of previous meetings – 22 January 2020

The minutes of the PCC meeting of 22 January 2020 had been circulated in advance, and any comments received incorporated into the final version for signature. MS requested one small change, following which YD was given authority to sign, and signed the minutes as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the meeting of 22 January 2020 (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Linda Bulpitt was pursuing the acquisition of more hymn books (Item 4, para 3).

4. Vicar's Benefice Report

1. YD reported that the last meeting of the Rector's Council had not been able to consider the draft parish/benefice Mission Action Plan and so it had not been finalised. However, the actions outlined in the MAP were being pursued within the parish or benefice, as appropriate, and to that extent the lack of documentation was less significant. It was noted that the Parish Annual Report referred to several activities under the heading of the MAP. He agreed however that it would be preferable if the MAP were completed and would try to do so.

2. The last Joint PCC had heard a presentation from Rev Alex Pease, and colleagues, of the Parish of the Itchen Valley, on their Multi-Church, Single Parish concept and experience. NB and JM (both absent) had each

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submitted a paper on the subject: the PCC thanked and commended NB for his thorough discussion of the ideas and their implications, and JM for her enthusiastic response to the concept. In addition to the matters discussed in NB's and JM's papers, a number of points were made in the course of a wide-ranging discussion:

- Did centralising the treasury function imply a loss of power or control over funds for each individual church?
- Could such a loss of power or control result in a reduction in donations to that church? The extent of this concern was hard to perceive: at the very least it would need to be managed, in connection with the next point -
- Could there be a loss of connection between each church and its local community?
- Was the main benefit a reduction in the overall infra-structure requirement, and administrative burden on and time spent in meetings by the Vicar, and a consequent increase in the time available for the more important "strategy, mission, faith and pastoral work" of the church?
- It was important that the structure should support the strategy, rather than dictate it: would the strategy be better served by having one parish, or three? It was, for example, unlikely, if the structure for the benefice were being designed from scratch now, that it would include three separate parishes.
- There could be arguments in favour of a corporate group model, the analogy being the parent company, to which were reserved matters of group strategy and significance, with its subsidiaries, which had responsibility for both implementing the strategy at a local level and conducting their own local affairs within the overall strategy. To be effective this would require real ownership of those activities and empowerment at the local level. In a parish context this could take the form of a PCC and various District Church Councils (as in the Itchen Valley), with clear authority, delegation, governance structure and Terms of Reference for both PCC and DCCs.
- Was a Single Parish *per se* required? Could the same result be achieved by a Joint Council? Were the differences sufficiently understood?
- Indeed, was the Rector's Council already a *de facto* Joint Council, albeit that it had no formal standing. It was acknowledged that it had been very effective as a forum for developing and implementing strategy. Could the position and standing of the Rector's Council be strengthened? Might it be possible to open out its membership to those with relevant qualifications, skills, experience and appetite for it?
- Was the idea a response to, or anticipation of, a plan or idea to incorporate more churches into the benefice (which is relatively small in relation to other neighbouring ones)? It was acknowledged that the Church generally faced a problem with incumbent recruitment and, in

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terms of crude numbers, with a benefice population of c2,800 BenBinFro was overstaffed – and Bishop David had recently commented on the high regard in which he held the benefice.

- Although the idea had not been discussed at PCC meetings in the other benefice parishes, YD thought they were informally positively disposed towards it, but cautioned that recent experience of introducing change (ie reordering) had revealed some differences and difficulties, and it would be important, in relation to this idea, to manage any perception of potential disenfranchisement.
- Similarly, we should be aware of “overloading” the parish with changes, including the reordering project.

The cases for and against the idea had not been made, either at the Joint PCC or subsequently, and no clear view on its attractiveness, or otherwise, had emerged from the discussion. YD agreed that he would produce a summary of the idea, its implications, how it might be implemented in the benefice, and the reasons for and against it, taking as a guide the five questions in the conclusion of NB’s paper, for a later discussion – which would be after the APCM.

YD

However, it was agreed that there should be some reference in the Parish Annual Report to the presentation made at the Joint PCC.

WBK

5. Preparations for APCM

Annual report

WBK was commended for his draft report which he had previously circulated. A few minor drafting comments were made. He expected to change the discussion of pastoral care and the Anna Chaplaincy, in addition to adding comments about the Single Parish idea.

This year’s report was more forward-looking than in earlier years, and picked up some of the activities and plans which would form the backbone of the p/bMAP (thus showing that even in the absence of the document the work was going ahead).

It was hoped that the Report would be distributed mainly electronically. A notice about it should be inserted into the April edition of the Froyle Magazine (deadline 20 March) and a link to it placed on the benefice website.

WBK
SR

Election of Churchwardens

YD has identified a potential candidate with whom he is in discussions. Although it was acknowledged that, despite the excellent job he had done and was doing, it was time for WBK to step down, he was willing to continue;

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and it would help any replacement if the two were able to work in tandem for a year. The PCC welcomed his willingness to stand for re-election.

Election of PCC members

There was one vacancy; in addition, MS was due to retire by rotation, and he was not sure how long he would be able to continue in post. It was also acknowledged that the PCC membership might need refreshing. Potential candidates suggested were: Amanda Maher (whom WBK has already approached); Peter Wonson; Simon Marshall; Charlie Zorab. WBK agreed to sound them out. Membership of one of the functional groups (eg Fabric) could also be offered if they did not want to be PCC members. [Post-meeting note: for election to the PCC, candidates must have been on the electoral roll for at least six months. No more than two people can be co-opted onto the PCC, who do not need to be on the electoral roll at the time of co-option; but they will need to be elected at the next APCM by which time they should have been on the roll for at least six months. They need to be actual communicants at the church.]

WBK

Election to the Deanery Synod

The parish's current representatives are WBK and RB. Their terms expire on 30 June 2020 and replacements should be elected at the APCM, for a three-year term. YD and WBK thought that the Synod could become more important and, under the leadership of Brian Pritchard, it had received an injection of energy. NH showed an interest and would investigate what it entailed.

NH

Practicalities

The APCM was currently scheduled for 2 April, 7.00 for 7.30 and, unless advice was received from the Government, Public Health England or the Church or Diocese, would go ahead. A decision on whether refreshments would be served would be made nearer the time. WBK and SR would liaise on this. (See also the Health & Safety item, 10 below.)

WBK/SR

6. Reordering

NS reported that the Vestry had now been emptied of carpet, wall cladding and the cupboard. MS, WBK, NS and Louise Bainbridge had met to review the site. A small amount of rot had been identified and a plan for dealing it was being formulated which should not be too intrusive or expensive. Plans were also being formulated for addressing the damp-proofing of the walls and any plasterwork which was required, with the involvement of LB as required by the faculty conditions.

NS/WBK

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NS expected that “1st fix” electrics and plumbing should start in April/May. At the same time two options for the “look” of the units were being developed and would be put out for consultation in May. He expected that the work should take six to 12 weeks.

The reordering would be discussed at the APCM with appropriate messaging and reminders that the outline design has been in the public domain since the 2019 APCM.

NS/WBK

7. Group reports

Reports from relevant Groups had been circulated which PCC members had been able to read, and to which reference should be made.

Fabric

Tower: MS had received and circulated the report from GeoEnvironmental, which had surveyed the ground and soil around and under the church. The survey had not included assessment of any other factors which could contribute towards the movement of the tower in relation to the nave (eg, the bells or the organ). The report indicated that the movement could be attributable to a combination of:

- the nature of the soil, in particular the “made ground”;
- its desiccation, in turn attributable to the recent dry summers and the large trees close by;
- the gapping between the bases of the walls and the underlying chalk layer; and
- the location of the walls of the rebuilt nave, next to rather than directly on top of the existing foundations.

It was noteworthy that some of the movement was reversing as a result of the recent extremely wet weather (and likely that in the future, as the weather becomes more extreme, there could be more extreme movements). A further meeting between Martin Kirby, Sean Armitage at GeoE, Louise Bainbridge, WBK and MS was proposed at which a proposal could be developed – which would likely involve obtaining more information before formulating an action plan. If some sort of underpinning were to be required, then ideally a resin injection system could be used, as being less disruptive and less expensive than a more traditional, concrete-based approach.

MS

Vision Survey had produced a 3-D survey of drains and services but the information provided was not particularly useful and MS would be requesting additional work.

MS

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Fundraising

The PCC noted the contents of the report. WBK reported that a letter soliciting increases in regular giving being drafted, which was planned to be sent after the release of the 2019 annual financial statements at the APCM.

NB

The possibility of a concert, facilitated by Max Hadfield, by Jesus College Choir in the summer was still under discussion.

YD reported that the new owner of Bury Court had offered it for fundraising events for the church.

8. Other Church group reports

The PCC noted with thanks Madeleine Black's Vestments and Jane Palmer's Choir reports.

9. Finance

The PCC noted that NB had circulated the draft accounts at the previous meeting. Their independent examination had concluded with no changes required. The PCC approved the accounts and YD signed them on its behalf. The PCC congratulated and thanked NB for his continuing excellent work managing the parish's finances.

10. Health & Safety

YD drew attention to the latest guidance from the Church of England and the Diocese with respect to Covid-19. This advocated that:

- Communion should be administered in one kind, with only the priest taking the wine;
- There should be no handshaking or direct physical contact during the sharing of the Peace;
- There should be no physical contact as part of a blessing or laying on of hands.

In addition, all catering at Church activities should be suspended, which would affect Live@Five; sherry and coffee after services; the Passover Supper, which would therefore be cancelled; Tea at Three; Messy Church; Bentley School Lent Lunch. At Communion, communicants would be asked to stay standing rather than kneeling at the rail. Sidespeople and others dealing with congregation members and eg handing out service cards should especially observe good hygiene practices.

It was noted that the points on the top of the churchyard gates had not yet been dealt with.

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11. Deanery Report

RB reported that the Deanery Synod had met on 24 February in Holybourne. His report is attached.

12. AOB including diary dates

WBK proposed that the date of the Annual Benefice Drinks Party be 1 May at Park Edge, Covid-19 permitting.

JH agreed to investigate the provision of a bin for donations to the Alton Food Bank in the church; and to discuss with Gill Bradley the “entertainment bags” provided for children.

Dates of future meetings

The Annual Meetings are on Thursday 2 April at 7.30pm, doors open at 7.00pm.

All to note

The next PCC is on Thursday 18 June at 7.30pm, at Park Edge. Apologies noted from NS.

Meeting close

The meeting closed with thanks to WBK for his hospitality, and prayer, at 10.05 pm.

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11. Deanery Synod Report

ALTON DEANERY SYNOD MEETING Monday, 24th February, in Holybourne Church

1. We had a presentation by Lynn Power of "Open Book", a scheme whereby a group of 6-8 people take the Bible into Alton primary schools, acting a Bible story. This lasts about 7 minutes, with the children and adults dressing up and following a prescribed text; the example staged was that of the Wise Men visiting the baby Jesus.

2. By the end of December 2019 96.7% of the Common Missionary Fund had been received.

3. Karamoja: it has been decided that Uganda has come of age financially, and it is proposed to withdraw support over 3 years. There is an existing fund of £18,000 available for this period to be passed.

The Bishop has proposed that support should move to a diocese in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a new committee should be created for this purpose.

4. The Kings Arms Project is progressing in Alton, with more work needed on the building, particularly the roof, than was expected. In addition to autistic children, they are reaching out to young people with mental health problems.

The next meeting will be held on 2nd June.