

Minutes

St Mary's Church, Froyle

Minutes of PCC meeting

At 6.00 pm on 18 June 2020 by Zoom

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

The meeting opened with prayer.

Item	Subject	Action by
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1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Robert Bourne. The meeting was quorate.

2. Minutes of previous meetings – 11 March 2020 & 28 May 2020

The minutes of the PCC meeting on 11 March 2020 had been circulated in advance, and any comments received incorporated into the final version for signature. YD was given authority to sign the minutes and send a scanned signed page to the secretary for the minute book.

Notes of the informal meeting on 28 May had also been circulated and it was agreed that they were complete and accurate.

3. Matters arising from the meeting of 11 March 2020 (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

i) The question of restructuring the benefice and parishes into a single parish had not formally been addressed further. It appeared from informal discussions that all three PCCs in the benefice were in favour of exploring the idea further. The next steps were to discuss the matter further in the Rector's Council and then form a formal Working Group to review the current and possible future structures and make recommendations. Anyone interested in joining the working group should contact YD within the next week or so. YD would discuss the matter with the other PCCs, and would see what information and documentation he could obtain from Alex Pease.

ii) Membership of the PCC: JCP reported that Amanda Maher, Peter Wonson and Charles Zorab had been on the Electoral Roll since March, and would therefore be eligible for election to the PCC after 30 September, but

All
YD
YD

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Simon Marshall was not. It would however be possible to co-opt him if he was willing. [Post meeting note: it is possible to enrol someone on the Electoral Roll at any time rather than only when the Roll is revised or renewed.]

4. Vicar's Benefice Report

1. YD reported that given current circumstances and the considerable prevailing uncertainty there had been no progress on the p/bMAP: the current priority was to continue to engage as many people, young and old, as possible.

2. YD had attended a meeting of ordained clergy in the diocese convened by Bishop Tim on 15 June. Few conclusions or decisions had emerged from that meeting, but there had been considerable discussion about the likely future and direction of the church, principally driven by the implications for its funding at all levels. It was clear from this and from other discussions YD had had within the Diocese that the current structure of the church, nationally and locally, was not considered to be sustainable, and some significant changes would be needed in staffing and use of resources. The emphasis of the church was on discipleship rather than churchmanship, and it needed to move away from being focused on and centred around the physical buildings and develop the concept of growing by expanding discipleship, with disciples making new disciples etc. It appeared that most of the diocesan clergy favoured closing buildings. There were also rumours of significant redundancies and closure or merging of parishes and benefices. YD's vision was that rural churches would become collections of small eucharistic, lay-led communities – one of the good things about rural churches, he thought, was their emphasis on holy communion, which was lacking in other church communities. There were however structural as well as theological problems with this, in that as a matter of law holy communion can only be celebrated by an ordained priest, and the general view of bishops is that communion should be available to all.

PCC members had some difficulty with much of YD's discussion, challenging what appeared to be the basic design of any reorganisation as it would apply to Froyle. While it might be recognised that parishes generally could have weaker links with an ordained minister and be more led by lay workers with more community involvement, Froyle did not yet have a vision for its future and would need tools, training and resources to achieve this – assuming it wanted to. The nature and extent of any changes, and the source of the drive for them, had not yet been clearly identified, and it was questionable whether sustainable solutions would be developed and implemented in an appropriate time frame, although financial pressures could accelerate that process. Another area in which there appeared to be little information was the scope for flexibility and individual interpretation of any centrally-imposed

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reorganisation. An additional factor was the success of using the internet forced by the lockdown, which it would be important to retain and include in the model for the future, a point of which the higher church leadership appeared to be aware, but so far not to be developing, or at least communicating, ideas of how best to take advantage. Internet-based participation in church activities had increased beyond all expectations, including in particular Alpha courses, and thought should be given to developing relationships with the “newcomers” – without losing contact with current churchgoers – involving the development and adoption of a “hybrid” approach to worship.

3. Churches were now open for private prayer in line with central C of E guidelines, following a comprehensive risk assessment, with a rota of volunteer “minders”. It was hoped that small weddings might be permitted in July; and it was noted that the benefice’s self-imposed limit of 12 weddings per church annually has already been reached for 2021 as some 2020 weddings were being postponed by a year. The possibility of opening and the central guidance did not, however, appear to take account of the question of whether, and when, churches might have to close.

5. Reordering

YD drew attention to the C of E guidance on the conduct of works in church buildings during the pandemic, which he was keen should be followed. The Reordering Group would review the guidelines and ensure they were followed.

NS/WBK

However, the preceding discussion raised the question of whether the reordering projects should proceed at all, and whether it was sensible to incur significant expenditure on a building which was apparently at risk of closure. It was agreed that probably the only way forward was to develop the church so it became a building for community use, in addition to, rather than in competition with, Froyle Village Hall, which would necessitate some spending. If the church had kitchen facilities then the offering at a service could be broadened to include catering; and consideration could be given to developing a hybrid service offering of an actual service, live-streamed on the internet with screens in the church showing internet participants. This would at least require the installation of broadband and potentially other hardware.

It was agreed that the kitchen works should proceed; but the lighting should be shelved and broadband and related matters, to facilitate live-streaming, should be considered next – which could in fact include improved lighting.

NS/WBK/
JM/JH

6. Group reports

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

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Fabric

Tower: MS was still awaiting some useful drawings from Vision's survey of the drains and underground services, and was withholding payment of its invoice until he received them. The current pandemic and his health combined to prevent him from being involved or even visiting the church as he would like to.

Fundraising

NB presented an oral report addressing four items:

1. Teas on Tuesdays would be offered in August in line with social distancing guidelines, and therefore outside.
2. The normal Spring Jumble Sale was being rescheduled until the autumn.
3. JM and Linda Bulpitt were in contact with organisations which had made grants to manage the consequences of delays in spending them, and no problems were expected. However, the VAT of £417 on the lighting proposal would not be retained as the work had not been completed within a year of receipt of the invoice.
4. WBK was reviewing NB's draft of a letter seeking donations from regular givers and after on-line services. The PCC agreed it was content for WBK and NB to finalise and issue the letter. The PCC also asked for on-line requests for donations be included after on-line services.

**NB/
benefice**

7. Finance

NB drew attention to the proposal to merge the Vestments Group bank account with the main PCC account, which had been circulated before the meeting on 28 May. SR proposed, and WBK seconded the proposal, to which all present agreed.

8. Health and Safety

The PCC noted the extensive risk assessments being performed, with MS apologising for his inability to be involved.

9. AOB including diary dates

It was agreed that the next PCC meeting should be held as scheduled on Wednesday 30 September at 6.00pm on zoom, unless guidelines permitted otherwise, and unless YD convened another informal meeting beforehand.

All to note

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Meeting close

The meeting closed with prayer at 7.35 pm.