

Minutes

St Mary's Church, Froyle

Minutes of PCC meeting

At 6.00 pm on 25 November 2020 by Zoom

Present:	Yann Dubreuil	Christopher Ogilvie-Thompson
	Nigel Bulpitt	Nigel Hughes
	William Knowles	Jane MacNabb
	Amanda Maher	Simon Marshall
	Jonathan Pickering	Vanessa Remington
	Sarah Roberts	Michael Starbuck
	Nigel Southern	Charlie Zorab

The meeting opened with prayer.

Item	Subject	Action by
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1	Apologies for absence	
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No apologies for absence had been received. The meeting was quorate.

2	Minutes of previous meetings PCC 30 September 2020 & Annual Meetings 22 October 2020	
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The minutes of the PCC meeting on 30 September 2020 and the annual meetings on 22 October 2020 had been circulated in advance, and any comments received incorporated into the final version for signature. YD was given authority to sign the PCC minutes and send a scanned signed page to the secretary for the minute book.

YD

3	Matters arising from the meeting of 30 September 2020	
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There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere.

Matters arising from the annual meetings of 22 October 2020

YD invited NH to discuss his suggestion that the parish set up a hardship fund. NH suggested that it would be consistent with the Christian principle of giving to the poor and needy for the church to set up a fund which could make grants to residents of the parish who were in real need. He suggested decisions on grants could be made by a single individual to whom applications would be made. In discussion it emerged that there had been a village hardship fund in the past but it had fallen into disuse; and that this was a matter which had been considered by the Parish Council in the past but not progressed. YD commented that there was such a fund in Bentley, funded by tithing of parish income, which was run by a small committee (which he preferred) which met infrequently to consider requests.

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He suggested that some sort of trust might be required to ensure proper governance. He invited reactions from the PCC.

JCP was opposed to such a fund. He noted that there are other resources available locally (the Alton and District Community Resilience Fund, which had been advertised in the Froyle Magazine and on the village noticeboards), which had the advantages of “depersonalising” the application process, preserving the dignity and anonymity within the village of any applicants and reducing the risk of diverting scarce and limited funds from the church’s general fund. NB considered that setting up a trust, with the attendant administrative and governance burden, might be taking a sledgehammer to crack a non-existent nut. SM suggested that some sort of signposting function (similar to that carried on by SSAFA) might be more useful for parish residents, noting the issue that Froyle’s relative affluence might make it harder for those in need to know where they might turn. AM agreed to investigate the ADCRF and report back to the next meeting.

AM

4 Vicar’s Benefice Report

1. Reopening church, and Christmas arrangements

The regulations relating to church opening which would be in force following the end of the current lockdown were not yet known; and even if announcements were made the exact position could only be established once the national church of England had created and promulgated its own interpretation of the regulations themselves. YD’s assumption was that the position after the lockdown would be the same as had prevailed before it, and he was therefore planning to continue with the same service pattern as before, ie one live service per week as well as the on-line service.

For Christmas the plan was that there would be one service in each church on Christmas morning (holy communion in Froyle and Binsted, morning worship in Bentley). Owing to restrictions on numbers services would be ticketed, with a telephone booking service which would start on 14 December. It was hard to know how many people could attend as the numbers in each bubble affect overall capacity, but there were likely to be between 40 and 80 in Froyle. (This compares with a total of 120-130 at the two normal Christmas services (midnight and 11.00am), and c80 at each of the Carol and Crib services.) Some management of individuals attending might be required if demand for spaces looked as if it would exceed supply. It would be important however to ensure that the plan for Christmas opening was well-publicised throughout the village at an appropriate time.

WBK was working on ensuring there would be an organist for the Froyle service.

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WBK and SM were therefore giving some thought to other activities, in particular an outdoor service, perhaps with carol singing, on the Recreation Ground, or in the churchyard, perhaps involving the choir, all appropriately socially-distanced, but any planning or risk assessment was difficult in the absence of any clear guidance on what was permitted. It was hoped that plans could be outlined in the December village magazine. NS encouraged the importance of being able to do something, in order to create a little joy in what was otherwise a joyless world, adopting more of a “can-do” and common-sense attitude rather than looking at what could not be done. AM suggested community carol singing by people on their doorsteps (similar to the “Clap for Carers”), which was warmly welcomed by the PCC and seemed likely to be fairly easy to organise, using the village magazine and newly-revamped village website – which SM, NS and AM agreed to do.

**AM, SM,
NS**

SR joined the meeting.

2. Pastoral arrangements

During the current lockdown there was no pastoral visiting. After the lockdown, YD expected that visiting of known individuals could be done by a single person; but “newcomers” would need to have two visitors (on account of safe-guarding concerns) which would make it more difficult.

3. YD’s sabbatical

YD had postponed his sabbatical because of lockdown and similar restrictions in France and the UK.

4. Other matters

YD reported that Tony Pears, vicar of the Northanger benefice, had announced that he would be retiring in October 2021; and Ed Pruen, in Four Marks, in January 2021. The Diocese was seeking cost savings of c£2m, which raised the question of whether either or both of them would be replaced; there was Diocesan Synod on 26 November which YD would attend, at which he hoped to hear what the plans for the future were.

5 Compliance matters

NB was elected Vice-Chairman.

YD and JCP reminded all members that they needed to obtain a DBS check, if they did not already have one, with which Gemma Ball, in the benefice office, could help.

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JCP reminded those who had not done it to complete the on-line safeguarding course whose details he had circulated; and to complete and return to him the Fit & Proper Person declaration.

JCP clarified that the sidespeople had been appointed at the APCM and no further action was required in relation to them.

6 Group and other reports

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

Fabric

MS additionally noted that Vision had submitted its first monitoring report, but he needed Martin Kirby to interpret it. Vision needed access to the church for its next visit, which it was agreed could be on 2 December.

The new clockspring has been made and will be fitted following the end of the current lockdown and when the church is open.

NS reported that the installation of the kitchen would now be in mid/late February, George the fitter having been delayed owing to the death of his father. YD offered condolences to him for his loss.

Vestments

The PCC noted Madeleine Black's report, and expressed a strong preference for the banners which had been in the gallery to remain downstairs in the body of the church. JCP would pass this on to MB.

JCP

7 Finance (including Fundraising)

NB noted additionally that a sponsored bike ride by Linda Bulpitt and CZ had raised £230 of which he had so far received half.

The PCC approved the addition of Simon Marshall to the National Westminster bank mandate as both a cheque signatory and with access to on-line banking as soon as possible. NB commented that from now the arrangements for on-line payments would be that WBK and SM would approve the payments before he made them, with JCP being copied in on the approval requests.

NB noted that owing to parishioners' continuing generosity he expected the out-turn for the year to be better than he had feared at the APCM.

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Thanks to much hard work by the Fundraising Group the Christmas Fair seemed likely to raise £1,200-£1,500, an excellent result given that there would be no income from sales of refreshments or lunches. There was some, inconclusive discussion about whether the catalogue sales model might have attracted more people to the “Fair”, and might have contributed to a higher level of sales, than holding it in the church. The PCC expressed its gratitude to all those who had contributed to this.

The PCC encouraged NB to investigate further the installation of a smart meter, which it considered should be feasible.

8 Deanery Synod

WBK reported that the Deanery Synod had not met recently: the next meeting was scheduled for 30 November. (Brian Pritchard, the Area Dean, had conducted the Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial.) YD commented that although the Area Deanery was currently quite small this could change in the future, depending on any diocesan reorganisation – perhaps following the pattern of the Archdeaconries in the Diocese.

9 AOB including diary dates

SR reported that she was the “Anna Friend” in the parish, though she had not yet been formally commissioned as such. She was working with Madeleine Black, the Village Agent, as well as the church pastoral team, and Nicky Smallwood (the benefice’s second Anna Chaplain) to provide help and support to the older residents of the village and the Old People’s Homes in Bentley. She outlined the idea of Anna Chaplaincy, which had been developed by Debbie Thrower in Alton and was now a successful national institution, to provide spiritual support and care for the elderly, whether of faith or not.

COT joined the meeting.

YD has formed a Working Group, comprising one member from each parish and Steve Fice, to consider the Single Parish and Joint Council ideas, as ways of addressing the “administrative conundrum”, and multiplicity of meetings, posed by a multi-parish benefice, to allow more focus on strategic and governance matters. There are documents discussing these matters on the benefice website (link to relevant web page attached [here](#)).

Next meetings

The next PCC meeting would be on 14 January 2021, at 6.00pm on zoom. There will be a Joint PCC meeting at 7.30pm on 15 February 2021, probably by zoom.

All to note

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Meeting close

COT closed the meeting with prayer at 7.33 pm.