

PARISH OF ST OLAVE WITH ST GILES, YORK

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council –

Wednesday 23rd March 2022

7.30pm, via Zoom

MINUTES

In attendance: Rev Liz Hassall (Chair), Jacqui Edwards, Nicky Gladstone, Doreen Gurrey, Helen Jones, Jane Lockley, Buff Reid, Helen Robb, Ruth Sillar, Christine Stanton, John Stanton, Paul Towers

Apologies for Absence: Chris Acton, Frances Brock, Helen Button, Roger Button, Margret Eyre, Janet Fox, Ben Pugh

The meeting opened in prayer

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12th January 2022 were approved.

2. Matters arising:

2.1. Admin Support

It was noted that all churches in the group have now approved the necessary financial contribution, with the exception of St Denys to whom Liz has not yet had the opportunity to speak to explain the need. Whilst that takes place, it was proposed that we press ahead with recruitment, noting that Liz has secured the assistance of an HR professional to ensure legal compliance.

It was agreed that the process should start, and Liz, Christine and the HR contact should meet to this end.

Action: Liz Hassall, Christine Stanton

2.2. Ash tree felling/replacement

It was noted that the faculty to approve removal of the tree had now been received. The archdeacon would now be consulted about proposals for disposal of the stump and possible replacement. However, it was noted that the removal of the tree has had benefits for light and visibility and there is a general feeling that replacing it with another tree may not be appropriate. Other ideas such as replacing it with a stone trough are being kept open, and it was noted that we need to ensure the stump is treated to prevent offshoots sprouting; and that we need to avoid disturbance to the surrounding soil as ashes have previously been scattered there.

It was proposed that we donate a tree to Museum Gardens instead of planting a new one in our church grounds, noting that this could be in honour of the Queen's

jubilee, especially fitting as we believe the original ash tree was planted in honour of Queen Victoria's jubilee. This was unanimously approved and Buff agreed to speak to Museum Gardens.

Action: Buff Reid

2.3. Touchbase

No one has volunteered to edit Touchbase, and it was agreed that it will be in abeyance until such time as someone is able to take it on. It was agreed that Touchbase serves a useful function, and that this should be a temporary pause only.

2.4. Vision Survey

The survey had now been sent out, with a deadline of 27 March; it was agreed to extend this til 30 March to maximise responses, and this would be announced in church on Sunday. It was reported that 33 responses had so far been received, which was agreed to be a good response rate already. When the survey closed, the data would be analysed and reported on by Liz and Helen, including to the congregation as well as the PCC. Liz confirmed that this would then provide us with a steer for the actions to be taken forward for the rest of the year. If any PCC members wish to see the raw data in the meantime, they should email Helen J who will be happy to provide it.

Action: Helen Jones, Liz Hassall

3. Correspondence of Decisions prior to meeting

None had been received.

4. Correspondence for the Attention of the PCC

None had been received.

5. Worship / Covid restrictions

Ben had set out a suggested way forward, together with the newly published Church guidelines. It was noted that the guidelines make the incumbent responsible for decision making, but Liz is keen to gather the PCC's views to ensure decisions are well informed.

Liz and Ben proposed a steady return to services as they were before the pandemic. There was general support for this, noting that conversations with congregation members suggest it is now the right time for this. It was noted that this would have to be phased, partly because of a shortage of people in crucial roles such as sidesperson and server. However, some things would return very soon including the return to the full service as laid out in the service book and the provision of the common cup at communion on an optional basis. The return to e.g. a full serving team and serving

coffee would follow more slowly as circumstances, and the recruitment of volunteers, allowed. Some measures would be retained including non-contact sign of peace, and good ventilation, and it was noted that the Director of Music wished to retain a non-robed choir rehearsing in church as the robing and rehearsal space in the hall are so small. It was noted that this presents issues for the servers setting up the service, and that it is unfair to require them to come earlier and earlier to church to set up before the choir rehearse; Liz agreed that a workaround for this would need to be sought.

It was acknowledged that a return to greater “normality” whilst in many ways desirable, remained difficult for some members of the congregation who needed to be cautious. It was confirmed that the Friday services, and online services, would continue.

It was proposed that a small working group of Liz, Kingsley Boulton, at least one churchwarden and Keith Wright would work together on a detailed plan for returning to pre-pandemic style services. This was unanimously approved.

Action: Liz, churchwardens

6. Social Events

6.1. Spring Online talks

A report on the recent online talk was received, and Ruth was thanked for organizing this. It was noted that online talks often work better in autumn and winter as people are keener to stay at home, and that one of the possible planned events (commemorating the York air raid of 1942) would work well in person, but Ruth was not able to organise this. However, this would be likely to be popular as there is considerable appetite for this topic.

6.2. Voices from the Pews

A report on this new series of talks was received, and it was approved for this to go in the newsletter. Frances was thanked for her work in organising this.

6.3. Future social events

Ruth stated that she wished to stand down from a co-ordinating role in social events, which she had undertaken for a long time. She was thanked for her role. PCC members were asked to consider who might wish to take this role on, noting that individual events could be organised by different people but there is a need for someone to co-ordinate.

Buff suggested we organise a picnic to celebrate the jubilee, and there was full support for this idea. It is proposed that the church and churchyard would be opened up for this, with people from the neighbourhood invited in as well as congregation members. Buff

agreed to take the lead on this, and asked for volunteers to help; Helen J and Doreen volunteered.

Action: Buff Reid

7. Report from Go Green group

Helen R reported orally from the Go Green group. Two meetings had now been held and there were good ideas for going forward. The next meeting would be in April and new members had come forward. Helen was liaising with other churches who had silver status in the eco church initiative, including St Luke's who had much we could learn from. Their representative had volunteered to speak to our group and would be invited to a meeting soon. It was noted that it was important to have a strategy and key objectives, and these would be reported to the PCC as soon as possible; ideally something should be brought to the next meeting, even if it was not yet complete.

Action: Helen Robb and Go Green members

8. Promoting and Presenting St Olave – revised plan

Buff Reid reported that circumstances had changed since the previous PCC when it was proposed to start a small group to consider how St Olave might be better presented and promoted. The strength of the eco-agenda and some fruitful conversations with the church architect now made it seem more appropriate to consider putting in a Heritage Lottery Fund application for funding to undertake some internal reordering of the church, which would also be able to include funding for presenting the church better (which is a required element of HLF applications). Possibilities included levelling the floor to remove steps, replacing the pews and installing underfloor heating, which would improve accessibility and energy efficiency. However, plans were at an early stage. Buff was talking to a consultant, and would be both surveying the congregation and other stakeholders (visitors, neighbours), and looking for a small team to help take this forward, in due course. Clear plans would be brought before the PCC for approval before any work was undertaken.

Action: Buff Reid

9. Safeguarding

9.1. Approval of Safeguarding policy

The new safeguarding policy, unchanged from its source (the national safeguarding handbook) was approved. It was further agreed that the new safeguarding officer would present the contents of the policy to the PCC at a future meeting to be considered in more detail.

9.2. Appointment of new Safeguarding officer

Liz proposed to appoint Mike Thunder as Safeguarding Officer with immediate effect, noting that all his references had been received and were fine. The PCC unanimously approved the appointment. It would be announced on Sunday.

It was further agreed that Gill Pace should be thanked for her long service in this role, which was a very demanding one. The PCC agreed to give Gill a card and flowers, which could be presented when Gill was present at church on a Friday.

10. Items from Priest in Charge

There were none

11. Treasurer's Report

11.1. Audited Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ending Dec 2021

Christine presented a revised version of the report and ran through the document page by page.

It was noted that the financial position at the end of the year was better than had been anticipated, and that the auditor's report on page 7 confirmed that everything is fine.

A question was asked about our energy supplier, and whether they were the most efficient available. It was noted that our energy is supplied via Parish Buying, who are effective at shopping around for the best quotes. They also are trying to move towards greener suppliers, and using them gives us the financial advantage of being part of a larger organisation.

It was noted that the report needs minor amendment to remove incorrect references to churchyard improvements and computer equipment on page 11. This will be changed.

It was proposed that we adopt the accounts (proposed by Paul Towers, seconded by Ruth Sillar). The proposal was unanimously approved.

A vote of thanks was offered to Christine for her huge amount of work on the annual report.

11.2. Accounts to end February

These were received.

11.3. Gift Day

Liz asked whether all contributors had been thanked. However, it was noted that this is not fully possible as many contributions are anonymous. It was agreed that a general thanks would go in a Friday newsletter, noting that thanking people for donations is crucial to ensure that they continue.

Action: Liz Hassall

12. Churchwardens' Report

12.1. New sound system

Ben had reported that the third quote would shortly be received, and he would then report accordingly. Some PCC members expressed disquiet at the proposed size of the work, which would be in the region of £80,000, which seemed a great deal for a sound system. It was noted that this was for more than a simple sound system, and also that better sound provision could allow us to become a more sophisticated concert venue, which would benefit the church in many ways.

Members asked to see more information and a spec for what was being planned. Liz confirmed that this would be provided for the PCC to look at in detail before any commitments were made. It was agreed that Liz and Ben would provide more substantial information to the next PC meeting.

It was noted that Ben had mentioned the need to apply to trusts or foundations to fund this work, and members were asked to volunteer to start to look into this, although in the longer term it would be a role for the new administrator. Helen R agreed to make a start on this.

**Action: Liz Hassall, Ben Pugh;
Helen Robb**

12.2. Church maintenance

The churchwardens reported that the St Giles' room roof needed repairs, and that other general maintenance required following the quinquennial review would also be undertaken. This would be funded by the Marygate Trust.

It was noted that the leaking downpipe in the church hall had not yet been fixed despite repeated requests to the Housing Association. Buff agreed to make more inquiries with them.

Action: Buff Reid

The churchwardens further reported that a visit had been made up the church tower to inspect the flagpole, which was found to be rotten at the bottom. It had also been found that we do not currently possess a St George's flag. There was some discussion about whether we should obtain one, and repair the flagpole, for example, in time for the Queen's jubilee, but there was limited appetite for this among members, especially noting the health and safety implications and the need for a new risk assessment.

It was noted that no one should attempt to go up the tower or touch the flagpole at the present time.

13. Deanery Synod Report

The report was received. It was noted that the diocese has financial needs and is expecting an increase in levels of free will offer from parishes, but we have already indicated that we hope to do this, in the response to *Living Christ's Story*.

14. Next Meeting

The next PCC meeting will be on Wednesday, 18th May

The APCM will also be held in May, jointly with the other churches in the group. It was be at the NCEM. The date will be circulated in due course.

15. Summary of meeting for distribution to congregation

It was agreed that this would contain the following items:

- Admin support
- Ash tree replacement in Museum Gardens
- The lifting of remaining Covid restrictions is being addressed with some urgency, but more details would be provided in a separate item from Liz
- Social events, including the Jubilee picnic
- Go Green plans
- Promoting St Olave's as a large future project and funding bid
- Announcement of new safeguarding officer and thanks to outgoing officer
- Joint APCM in May

The meeting closed with the Grace