

**The Parochial Church Council of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of Lichfield: St Michael with Saint Mary
PCC Minutes**

Date of meeting: Monday 6 February 2023 at 19.30 in Church

Minutes

Present:

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Abbie Walsh (Rector – Chair) | Lyn Shiel | Sue Jones |
| Ray Allen | Lynn Edge | Viv Oliver |
| Alan Toplis | Elizabeth Clarke (Liz) | Maureen Brand |
| David Easton | Brenda Liptrot | Veronica Morris (Secretary) |
| June Frayn | Mike Godfrey | Mike Jones |

1. The meeting opened with prayer, led by the Rector.
2. **Apologies** were received and recorded from Revd Ruth Bull, Edward Green (Ted), Steve Oliver
3. **Declaration of Interest.** Alan Toplis declared an interest in Item 8.2b
4. **Notification of Any Other Business.**
5. **Minutes of Meetings and action list.** The minutes and action list of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 were proposed for acceptance by Lyn Shiel and seconded by Sue Jones. Agreed unanimously.
6. **Matters Arising. Approvals since the last meeting:**
 - An increase in verges fees was approved by PCC by email circulation following the meeting.
 - A change of PCC date from 8th to 15th May 2023.
7. **Ministry**
 - 7.1 **Worship**
 - 7.1a) **Special services – Review of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Services.** It was felt the services had gone well and had been well attended. Services had been advertised through Facebook and the Rector had produced a booklet listing services during the Christmas season. For next year the Rector said she wanted to partner with the Co-op Funeral Service to invite families to a service who had had a bereavement during the year – this would be a bigger commitment. She also said that she might put back the Epiphany carol service back a bit (maybe to Candlemas) to more evenly spread the commitments for Dudley and the choir.
 - 7.1b) **Plans for Lent and Holy Week** – The Rector took PCC through what was planned including:

- There was to be a Lent course based on the film 'The Kings Speech' on Wednesday mornings after the service which Revd Abbie would lead
- Instead of a sermon at the 10.30 service there would be interviews with members of the congregation about their faith
- A range of services were planned for the Holy Week starting with a Palm Sunday family Eucharist. The school children Abbie was preparing for confirmation would be invited
- There would also be a service in the churchyard Easter Saturday evening
- Revd Abbie said she was preparing a leaflet of everything planned for Holy Week.

7.1c) Messy Church and First Steps (Children's ministry) – Revd Abbie referred to the report previously circulated prepared by Alison. New families were attending which was great but this made the numbers for catering more challenging. More people from the congregations were needed to be involved. First Steps had taken place that morning and 3 new families had attended – there was now a small group of 10-15 children. Revd Abbie thanked everyone involved in these important aspects of ministry.

7.2 Mission

7.2a) Film Club – There had been a children's film club before and after Christmas – the one after Christmas was not well attended so may not be repeated in future. Revd Abbie added there would be film club over 4 days of the coming half term. She would ask people to sponsor it and get involved. She said that the Film Club for grown-ups probably supported the children's film club – it didn't make any money.

7.2b) School, homework club and school uniform – The Rector said she was active in the school and preparing children for confirmation. Bishop Michael would be visiting the School and she was hopeful he would confirm the children in the summer. 6 children were now attending homework club. Uniforms for all ages were now sorted and stored in the church – a school mum was providing a conduit between the church and families who needed items of uniform. In addition:

- St Michael's had held Harvest Festival services and a school Eucharist in church.
- The school had led the December Family Praise.
- There would be a change of day for the Homework Club in 2023.

7.2c) 'Warm welcome' and cost of living increase - On the whole numbers attending had been small. There had been one well attended session before Christmas where 80 people (children and young families) attended with Santa in attendance and chips provided. It had been lovely and a positive experience but was not the target audience. Since Christmas there had been no-one so the Rector has called it off. She said there might be too much provision across Lichfield. MJ asked if there was any feedback on take-up from other projects and the Rector said both Wade Street and Curborough Community Hall were both well-established provisions and well attended.

7.2d) Bake and Deliver – SJ reported that approx. 40 people had received bakes. Both members of the congregation and school parents had baked cakes. It had gone really well. The Rector thanked SJ and everyone else who had supported the initiative.

7.2e) Church Nature Day – a programme for Saturday, April 1st, had been previously circulated. RA said there would be 2 experts leading sessions - one in the morning on herbs and the other in the afternoon on lichens. RA said there would be a display of what we had done in the churchyard, including what the working party has achieved. There would also be activities for children.

7.2f) Shaping for Mission – Revd Abbie said she was currently chair of the deanery group as it moved into Phase 3 of its work. She explained that Phase 1 involved mapping the deanery and Phase 2 coming up with strategies to respond, which was more long term. Phase 3 was about implementing the vision taking the priorities from Phase 1 and using current resources and structures. A recent meeting had discussed cost of living issues and how people could support each other, through, for example, sharing information at Deanery Synod and Chapter. The aim was to work towards better collaboration within existing structures. PCC welcomed this more inclusive approach.

7.3. Pastoral.

7.3a) Safeguarding - MB reported that progress had been made with PCC members completing DBS checks and doing the training. However she was not getting any response to her emails from St Mary's House and was concerned about sending personal information into a void. Revd Abbie said it was important to keep submitting DBS applications as if there was any incident we could demonstrate that we had done all we can and it would be up to the Diocese to defend itself. She also hadn't received any responses to her emails and that the issue would be discussed at the next Diocesan Synod which was the highest place it could be raised at. PCC agreed that information should continue to be sent to St Mary's House.

Proposed by Sue Jones and seconded by Brenda Liptrot.

LC said she was still having IT issues with accessing the training on line. Revd Abbie responded by saying she was going to raise at Deanery Synod about whether training could be coordinated across the diocese and that she was also prepared to provide training to individuals.

7.3b) Health and Safety. SJ reported that the lightening conductor had been checked 2 weeks ago and all was OK. A certificate confirming this had been received.

8. Church buildings and churchyard.

8.1 Buildings

8.1a) Church Maintenance.

Church roof - SJ reported here are two repairs required on the roof and a meeting had been held with the architect to discuss the best options:

1. The leak in the choir vestry - 2 quotes had been received before the PCC meeting. The intention was to ascertain the best value repair work as potentially the wall with the leak may be removed to make way for the new parish meeting rooms.

2. Some ridging tiles need replacing on the high roof in the main church and also a large patch of tiles by the west end will need to be replaced.

When the architect has provided quotes/options they will be shared at the next PCC meeting. **[Update** – quotes were received a few days after the meeting and PCC members were circulated with information who approved Lang to complete the work; this started w/c 13th March].

AT

Action SJ and

Heating - a heating engineer had been to service the heating in the last week. They confirmed that the heating was working. The engineer had showed Revd Abbie how to use the controls – there were just 2 settings. It was straight forward to use.

RA said there had been complaints about the noise and the cold and said the heating needed to be sorted out. Members of PCC recalled that the heating system was one that could be afforded when it was installed. One benefit was that it heats up the building very quickly but was very noisy when it was on. MB supported RA but noted that we could not afford a new heating system.

Revd Abbie hoped that the new ground floor heat pump proposed for the new parish rooms might also benefit the church. After much discussion PCC agreed that the best approach at the moment was to manage the heating system more effectively. Rev Abbie suggested having the heating on during Eucharistic prayers and hymns and services but not during intercessions and prayers.

8.1b) Parish Rooms Update.

SJ said we were still awaiting the archaeological report – nothing further could be progressed until we had that.

Action SJ

Revd Abbie said the meeting with the HS2 Engagement Officer had gone well and the ‘take home’ message was that we meet the criteria but there were too many information gaps in the previous unsuccessful application. If we provided this information with the second application we should be OK. A big hurdle was that the church did not own the land (the land had never been registered) which was a requirement of HS2 – it was ‘ancient’ land. She commented that other churches in the same position had used some wording provided by their diocese which had been accepted but apparently we are too ‘ancient’. Revd Abbie had asked RBr to look into this for us. She was hopeful the issue would be overcome somehow.

Action AW & RBr

Revd Abbie reported that Support Staffordshire would fund facilities between £10K and £15K in cost but not major building works. If we can’t get HS2 funding there was a possibility of having two phases – Phase 1 building works and Phase 2 facilities. Until we had the archaeology report and HS2 funding Revd Abbie said we could not move forward with certainty.

RA referred to the Standing Committee minutes which said that between £12K and £15K had been paid to Greenwoods and the architects; he asked what Greenwoods did– it was not clear. SJ confirmed that Greenwoods role at the moment was in seeking funding and also providing some project management; she would look further into what the money had

been spent on and to whom it had been paid and would advise PCC. Revd Abbie said RA had made a reasonable request and it was important to get some clarity on the matter.

VO confirmed that most of the funding for the new parish rooms will be coming from the sale of the parish rooms' land which was now invested by the Diocese and gaining interest. In response to a query by MJ she said she would ask for an update on how the funds were performing. Money left in the St Mary's Trust fund for developments was funding costs so far but this was nearly all gone.

Action AW, SJ & VO

8.1c) Audio Visual System Update. AT reported that a few adjustments had been made to the original specification and a revised quote had been sought. The work was to be funded by a donor. Some cut-out screen shapes would be mounted in the actual position where it was intended the screens would go on Sunday, 12th February, both for feedback from members of the congregation and to get comments to support our Faculty application.

Action AT

8.1d) Electrification of the church clock. PCC agree unanimously to progress with electrifying the clock. MG said he would now be able to get a revised quote to that originally provided 18 months ago. The next meeting of the St Michaels Land Trust would consider an application for funding some of the work (approx. £5K in total). In addition MG had also submitted a couple of smaller grants for funding.

PCC also agreed to consult with local people about the clock chiming – having the clock chime would need a faculty and an application would not be considered without feedback from the local community.

Action MG

8.1e) Environmental and ecological award – on pause. There were just a few things to see to.

Action AW

8.2 Churchyard

8.2a) Churchyard Report. RA was thanked for his report, which was attached. He specifically highlighted the tree planting scheme – an application to plant 11 trees has been approved by the diocese. This includes all requests to donate trees by people in the last 12 months. RA will speak to people about their preferences regarding the type of tree and where it could be planted. He was hopeful the payback team would help with the planting at the end of March. From next year people wishing to donate trees will be able to choose from a menu (in preparation), which is part of the scheme. PCC agreed the tree planting scheme.

Proposed by Viv Oliver and seconded by Ray Allen

Action RA & AW

8.2c) Tree Works.

Pollarding. Revd Abbie said that trees along the church perimeter with Elan Homes required pollarding. She asked for PCC agreement in principle to contribute towards the costs of this work, if asked by Elan Homes, especially where tree branches were hanging over into the churchyard. This was agreed by PCC to an amount of £500.

Proposed by Sue Jones and seconded by Lyn Shiel.

Ash Trees. Revd Abbie had met with the tree surgeon about the self-seeding ash trees. The tree surgeon had recommended we get rid of them as they will die at some time due to disease. The smaller ones can be removed with AW's permission as Rector but the larger trees would need a faculty. Some ash trees were growing through graves. Revd Abbie said that the application would need to be supported by photographic evidence and also evidence of PCC support. PCC were unanimous in their support.

Proposed by Alan Toplis and seconded by Brenda Liptrot

8.2b) Bench near Church Door. SJ said that she had heard from the family concerned who confirmed they wanted to cover the costs of a new bench. The plan was that Michael Toplis would remove the concrete posts and then replace with the new bench. A faculty would be needed both for the new bench and a suitable replacement. Once we had obtained this we will then be able to go back to the family to explain what we have permission for. Revd Abbie thanked SJ for her work on this issues. PCC agreed the proposal.

Proposed by Sue Jones and seconded by Lyn Shiel

Action SJ and AW

9. Finance.

External charitable giving – VO confirmed that in 2022, £2,204.26 had been collected for external charities. This would increase to £2,328.41 once gift aid had been received.

Money had also been collected for Poppies which had not been approved by PCC. It was agreed this money would be sent to the RBL and the Poppy Appeal would not be supported by the church in future.

Diocesan fuel grant and church running costs – VO advised that the church had received £950 in fuel grant and up until the end of September 2022 had spent just over £8k on church running costs. The majority of the expenditure related to cleaning expenses and EIG insurance

10. Deemed business

10a) SC meeting Minutes 23 January 2023. The minutes were noted with one proviso the amount paid to Greenwoods and the architect approx. £10- 12K. This would need further investigation to identify the accurate amounts

Action SJ & VO

11. Any Other Business

11a) Preparation for the ACPM and review of PCC members – PCC noted the timetable circulated before the meeting. Arrangements were in hand for the preparation of reports.

The Rector said that Lyn Shiel was standing down as church warden after many years of service. Someone had yet come forward for the role the rector asked for the role to be kept in peoples' prayers. LS agree to talk about what the role involved at a 10.30 service 19th February to hopefully attract interest.

Current membership of PCC had also been circulated prior to the meeting. The term of office for those people named in the first column 2020 – 23 had come to an end. However the Rector stated that they would be very welcome to stand again. Deanery Synod membership would need to be reviewed in May

Action AW, SJ, LS, VM

11b) First Aid Training. It was agreed that Wednesdays after Eucharist would be a good time to hold First Aid training and LS agreed to try to arrange this after Easter. **Action:**
LS

11c) Approval to spend £80 (£40 each) on raw material for Sewing Bee to make 2 chasubles – these were to be a gift for Revd Abbie. This was supported by PCC.
Proposed by Alan Toplis and seconded by Sue Jones **Action SJ**

12. Dates of next meetings:

SC Monday 13 March 2023

PCC Monday 27 March 2023

13. The Rector closed the meeting with the Grace

Signed 27 March 2023

The Revd Dr Abbie Walsh
Rector

Veronica Morris
PCC Secretary

Attachments

Item 8.2a CHURCHYARD REPORT TO PCC: FEBRUARY, 2023.

Donations of Trees.

An application for permission to plant 11 trees was recently sent to Lichfield Diocese. This application has now been approved. Most of the trees have been donated by members of the Congregation and will be planted by the end of March. 3 Crab Apple trees for the Crab Apple Tree Avenue will be planted between November 1^{st.}, 2023 and March 31^{st.}, 2024.

Community Payback Team.

The Payback team have continued to remove debris from graves. They have now painted bollards, gates and the metal bench.

On January 14th, I asked them to remove used Christmas wreaths from the New Churchyard. This they did. However, about 10 days after this work was done 3 people complained about the removal of the wreaths, saying they had not been given any notice and that they had been removed too soon after Christmas. I take full responsibility for this and I am sorry it happened. We will be working out new arrangements for the removal of wreaths next year. This year is the 50th. Anniversary of the Payback Scheme and, to mark the occasion, Team Leaders are giving free trees to Community organisations. St. Michael's Churchyard and St. Michael's School have each accepted 2 free trees which will be planted by the Team in March.

Churchyard Working Party.

The monthly Working Party sessions have resumed after the December break. We are doing winter clearing, pruning, general tidying and making log piles.

Guided Walks In The Churchyard.

Year 1 pupils from St. Michael's School were taken on a guided walk in January looking at historic graves and memorials. A Risk Assessment sheet has been written for Guided Walks in our Churchyard using information and guidance from the Caring For God's Acre Churchyard and Burial Ground Action Pack.

Churchyard Nature Day.

We are planning a Spring Nature Day for the Community. This will be held on Saturday April 1^{st.}, from 10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. We have 2 visiting experts. Marion Standing will talk about and show us examples of herbs; and Ivan Pedley, who is a lichen expert, will give an illustrated talk, followed by a walk to look at lichens we can see in the Churchyard. We are also hoping to have activities for children. As well as the opportunity to learn about 2 aspects of nature, I hope we can also encourage people to join us at our monthly Working Party sessions. Hot & cold drinks and biscuits will be provided throughout the Nature Day. Ray Allen.

