**Parochial Church Council of the**

**Ecclesiastical Parish of Lichfield: Saint Michael with Saint Mary**

**Meeting: Monday 20.11.2023 at 7.30pm**

**Minutes**

**Present**

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| Abbie Walsh (Rector – Chair) | Brenda Liptrot | Sue Jones |
| Trevor James | Alan Toplis | Richard Brooks |
| Ruth Bull | Edward Green (Ted) | Maureen Brand |
| David Easton | Steve Oliver | Veronica Morris (Secretary) |
| Mike Jones | Mike Godfrey |  |

1. **Opening Prayer** led by AW

2. **Apologies.** Alison Stevens, Ray Allen, Viv Oliver, Sheila Irvine, Alan Toplis (for being late), Richard Brooks (for being late)

3. **Declaration of Interest** [- there was none

4. **Notification of Any Other Business –** there was none

5. **Minutes and Action List of previous PCC meetings: 25.9.2023**].These were approved. **Proposed by RB and Seconded by Brenda Liptrot**.

VM advised that in future items on pause would only be reviewed by SC and not included in the action list circulated to PCC.

6. **Matters Arising**

VM thanked PCC members for responding promptly to requests for approval. However, she asked that PCC members only reply to her rather than copy everyone else in when responding to request for approvals if she forgot to BCC all PCC members in.

She also said that she found it difficult to send a personal acknowledgement to response because of how her email works. AW suggested that when enough responses had been received VM send a summary email out. This was agreed,

AW advised that under church representations rules 2 weeks was given as the response time but it would help if people responded sooner especially if a quick decision was needed. If people have an opinion they need to say so; it would be useful to hear PCC members’ views. A non-reply would not be recorded as an abstention.

PCCapprovals since last meeting:

* Fixing gas energy costs - gas prices were now fixed. However St Johns had had found some other suppliers for electricity including Octopus from whom a quote would be obtained when the electricity contract was up for renewal.
* 2022 Accounts – These had been dealt with and signed by MG and AW in-between meetings.

7.3 **Pastoral**

1. Safeguarding – MB said that DBS checks and updating were routinely taking place. She was liaising with Dudley over the choir. She also reported that in the next magazine there would be a copy of the new poster: a copy had also been up in the porch for the last 2/3 weeks. This coming Sunday Revd Ruth Bull would be saying something about safeguarding as it was Safeguarding Sunday.

MB then stated her concerns about the overcrowding in church for the recent School Harvest Services; children, their parents and grandparents were in attendance. The church was packed and she said it would have been difficult to get people out in an emergency. AW thanked MB for raising this issue and advised PCC that she was already acting on MB’s concerns. She, RBr (Health and Safety officer) and the School were going to meet to write a risk assessment for services that were expected to be busy. There had also been a big funeral service in the summer where chairs at the back had to be removed. AW said there would be a risk assessment in place for the school advent services and Christingle.

When RBr arrived he confirmed that he had done some research into the maximum number of people allowed into public buildings and that previous legislation had been replaced by risk assessments. He acknowledged more clarity was needed on who was responsible at school services. He then went through the list of policies we had including Health and Safety and Fire Risk.

1. Health and Safety – covered in a) above.
2. Social activities - AW thanked BL and SJ for organising a Fellowship Coffee afternoon held in October. 22 people had attended. There would be another one this Thursday. The plan was to give the Fellowship social events 3 months to see how they went. Transport was also being looked at.

Following the success of the recent barn dance and quiz AW said she would like to get something else in the calendar, possibly with St Chads, so we get to know each other more - maybe as a fund raiser. A Beetle Drive was suggested. EG said the choir might also be holding fundraising events to support a possible choir visit next year.

1. Pastoral visiting – SJ and BL expressed concerns about poorly and housebound people in the congregation. Currently there were 2 people in the congregation doing a fantastic job of visiting people, but it needed better coordination. SJ said she had spoken to Revd Helen Barton on the Ministry team about being a Ministry Team contact and Revd Brian Rosthil had also been approached to support the initiative. BL said we need to keep our established links with Copperfields and Darwin Court, as they want to be involved with St Michaels Church. AW reported that requests for visits mostly came to her through the church office and that most people were known to the church. It was recognised that there could be some safeguarding issues with people being visited in their own homes which would have to be explored and whether a DBS check would be needed.
2. Bake and deliver – SL reported she had received 32 nominations and offers of baking from 7 people. She was compiling lists!
3. Church Fellowship – covered in c) above.

9. **Finance**

Steve Oliver presented VO’s comprehensive financial report as she was unable to attend.

1. 2022 accounts - These have now been signed off by the Diocesan Director of Finance. The main points to note are:

* A drop in regular gift aid income
* An increase in our parish share
* The cost of church major repairs connected with the roof
* A grant from St Mary’s Fabric Fund to St Mary’s Guild - no further funds are owed to the guild
* Losses on our investments due to disruption in the money markets of 2022

1. 2023 accounts – PCC were asked to make a decision on whether to revert to Receipts and Payment (R&P) accounting or continue with Accrual accounting. VO’s recommendation was to revert to R&P accounting as it was easier to manage. Once a decision had been made VO will be able to start migrating PCC’s accounts and the year’s transactions to an upgraded version of MyFundAccountingOnLine. **PCC agreed unanimously to adopt R&P accounting.**  **Proposed by EG, seconded by TJ**

RB mentioned that our income may increase as the Parish Rooms development progresses. It was assumed that VO had taken this into account when making her recommendation for R&P accounting.

1. New Gift Aid Secretary/ Stewardship recorder - AW said that she was grateful to VO for standing in as recorder until a new person came forward to do the role. This will enable VO to get an understanding of how the process works and to introduce a simpler system of recording. VO was the right person at the moment. DE wished to extend his appreciation to VO for doing this role.
2. Giving - AW commented that current levels of funding were OK but our cash flow situation was precarious. She had asked VO to analyse the difference on income between having a collection during services (pre Covid) and having a plate at the back (post Covid). AW commented that we needed to talk about Giving as part of discipleship and to encourage people to give or increase their giving as appropriate. She added some services may have collections. MG asked about the use of the card machine and AW said it was well used at baptisms, weddings and festivals: most people attending the Sunday services used planned giving. The card machine was worth having. Discussion then moved onto taking the plate up for a blessing along with the elements. AW concluded by saying she would talk about giving during Lent and its different forms - including planned giving, one-off donations, legacies
3. Magazine subscription 2024 – PCC endorsed the action to retain current levels of payment. A recommendation on 2025 levels will come to PCC in good time next year. SO commented there were fewer advertisers in the parish magazine as there used to be and he was looking at the types of business that might be relevant and how they might be attracted. This was agreed. **PCC approved retaining the current subscription level for 2024. Proposed by SJ and seconded by BL.**
4. Charity Sundays 2024 - BL introduced her paper. She said that she intended to give up the role of coordinator at the end of the year. AW thanked her for everything she had done. PCC recognised that it needed to look seriously at the number of charities currently supported if people were going to be asked to up their giving to church as well as supporting all the charities listed. It was suggested that we consider reviewing the number of charity Sundays from 4 to 2 in the first half of the year. PCC were asked to make their views known to BL. **This was agreed. Proposed by EG and seconded by SJ.**

7. **Ministry**

7.1 **Worship** [AW]

1. Family Communion – AW commented that Family Communion was now the best attended service but it was still work in progress in terms of finding the balance for what works for children, families and everyone else. DE felt the Q&As during the Eucharist brought meaning and depth. AW said she was happy to be flexible over the service and was looking at simpler gospel readings for the next service which children might find easier to read. The service could be different every time. RBr said the children appreciated moving around during the service – it worked well having the children sitting at the front.
2. Remembrance and All Souls – AW said there had been about 50 people the All Souls service and people had responded to individual invitations. EG said he would suggest no changes to the All Souls service. The Remembrance Day service was also well received – RBr said it was lovely to see the uniformed organisations there. Some families had also attended the service in church. It was recognised the audio system did not work very well outside and the weather did not help. However the team had decided to go ahead and shorten the service. People could stay in church if they preferred. AW said as a result of the service, the uniformed organisations were holding a carol service in December and wanted to come to Family Praise. AW suggested an invitation was sent to them once a term. PCC members commented that more service sheets were needed for these services as numbers continued to grow. AW asked people to let Angie in the office know how may were needed. **Action: Sides people**.
3. Advent and Christmas – there was not much more to add from last time.

7.2 **Mission** [AW]

1. Inclusive Church - AW commented that the recent series of sermons had gone though some of the prickly issues that churches have had difficulty with in the past. And she would like PCC to decide today about signing up to inclusive church. This involved welcome people into our church and helping people to feel safe. It was not about requiring us to make a statement on things. AW reminded PCC that information about Inclusive Church had been included in church magazines, if some members of the congregation wanted more information. And once we sign up we will have access to resources to support us going forward and help us to gain more understanding of the issues. Inclusive Church was about including people who disagreed with it as well.

**PCC unanimously supported the proposal to sign up to Inclusive Church. Proposed by EG and seconded by RBr.**

AW added that when signing up, Inclusive Church asked for a donation and PCC settled of £250 which included a one-off donation from TJ.

1. School - this was continuing to go well with Eco Church and school services.
2. Junior Choir – this was continuing to go well
3. Shaping for Mission (and vacancy at St Chad’s) - nothing further to report

8 **Church buildings and churchyard**

8.1 **Buildings**

1. **Church Maintenance** – Repair to flashing on church roof. SJ reported that the flashing had been repaired and she had received a quote of £2,170 exc VAT to remove the tree growing from the guttering and make good. It was quite a long process. **PCC unanimously agree to go ahead with the work. Proposed by RB and seconded by RBr.**
2. Heating – SJ had arranged quotes for installing under pew heating which were £27K for all the main pews and £21K for every other pew. These figures did not include upgrading the electrical connections. It was felt that it was not reasonable to ask for fund raising from the congregation. Chandelier heating would be more expensive.

AW had bought a couple of heated cushions for people to try out - power packs were needed to heat them up. PCC agreed to purchase 10 cushions/power packs for visitors and for people to try out at a cost of around £400; the cost of buying them for all the congregation PCC noted would be too much. Instead members of the congregation would be encouraged to buy their own and charge them up for use in church. MG thought this was a good idea as other options were unaffordable. **PCC agreed in principle to buy 10 cushions and packs. Proposed by EG and seconded by RBr.**

1. Audio Visual System Update – AT said he taken the advice from the diocese about installing the screens. He had obtained a quote from Johnsons for the required electrical work which was £1 020 plus VAT. AT requested support in principle to progress with the work from PCC. The donation should cover the full cost of the work. Johnsons had said that all our electrical systems were operating at maximum. **PCC agreed to proceed with the AV installation. Proposed by SJ and seconded by RBr.**
2. Electrification of church clock - MG said there had been no further communication since the visit of the Faculty representative and that he would find out what was happening. **Action: MG**
3. Parish Centre –AW said that things were happening. Meetings had been taking place with Greenwoods and the Architects to discuss the detail for RIBA 3. We were awaiting further information on timescales and costings. SJ said there was a meeting of the Parish Rooms Team this coming Thursday to discuss next steps.

8.2 **Churchyard**

1. Report

* BL reported the Payback leaders were having to go on a health and safety course which meant they couldn’t do some work (eg Strimming) without safety equipment so they were restricted in what they could do. However they had cut back some low branches and continued to clear up needles every week.
* The church yard team had planted some more bluebells
* AW had met with Treeworks to discuss dying trees. She had also walked round the churchyard with RA. A tree had been planted without permission and AW would therefore need to see permission retrospectively. She had also received a request for another tree.

b) Church Bench – this had been installed at last! AW thanked MT for doing the installation work. AW reported she had also received another request for a memorial bench which would need a Faculty. She suggested halfway down the long path near the Pettit Memorial. If PCC were in agreement she would submit a Faculty application. It was agreed to consult with MT on the proposed siting to make sure it didn’t impact negatively on grass cutting. SJ to send costings related to the position of the recent bench to to AW for information. **PCC approved the new memorial bench. Proposed by EG and seconded by MB. Agreed by PCC.**

10. **Deemed Business**

a) SC Meeting Minutes 6.11.2023. These were noted with the one correction that SI had been in attendance.

11. **Any other Business**

1. Access to Charity commission info – AT reported this had now been sorted. PCC agreed access be given to AW, AT, VO and VM
2. Fees 2024 – AW advised that CofE fees had gone up a bit but that we had discretion to set our optional extra fees relating to the organist, funerals, weddings, verger, heating choirs, and bells. AW indicated that she felt the majority of fees were proportionate but recommended

* The organist fee for weddings be increased to £120, the same as for funerals
* The choir fees for weddings be £80 the same as for funerals.

PCC members agreed to these proposed changes.

12. **Date of next meeting:**

**SC** 22 January 2024

**PCC** 5 February 2024

13. **Closing Prayer** [AW]