

**The Parochial Church Council of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of Lichfield: Saint Michael with Saint Mary
Special Meeting: Monday 31 July 2023 7.30pm**

Minutes

Present:

Abbie Walsh (Rector – Chair)	Mike Godfrey	Sue Jones
Ray Allen	Richard Brooks	Viv Oliver
Ruth Bull	Trevor James	Maureen Brand
David Easton	Steve Oliver	Veronica Morris (Secretary)
Sheila Irvine	Alan Toplis	Brenda Liptrot
Alison Stevens	Nigel Oakley	

1. Opening Prayer

AW advised that NO had been invited to join this special PCC as he has a lot of experience of fund raising and had joined the Parish Centre team.

2. Apologies - Edward Green, Mike Jones, Joe Sneddon

3. Declaration of Interest – none

4. Parish Centre Development

AW started the meeting by saying the key tasks for the meeting were:

- Agreeing both the vision statement for the use of the centre and the design of the centre. The two must match in any grant application.
- Agreeing the practicalities of the design. She said the Parish Centre team (Sub-committee of PCC) have agreed that it would be better to keep with Option 3 as it meets our vision. PCC must now agree to progress to Stage 3.

Vision statement

AW advised that the statement previously circulated provides a general intention of how the building will be used. However the details would have to be tailored to each grant application.

RA said he liked both the proposed name for the Parish Centre and the focus on community. RBU said she felt the word ‘centre’ sounded better than rooms; it suggested being in the centre of the parish and location.

AW asked if PCC were happy to have the sub-committee look at things in more detail. For example, the vision statement says the Centre will be not- for-profit. To avoid paying VAT, it can’t be used as a space that is rented out most of the time for the purpose of raising revenues. RBU added that if the Centre was rented out we would need a caretaker to monitor usage and deal with security. However, it was noted the Centre could be rented out as a one-off which would be

useful for fostering relationships with partners. If organisations/people want to use the centre they could be asked to cover the costs of using it on a non-commercial basis/make donations.

PCC accepted the Vision Statement. Proposed by SJ and seconded by AT. All PCC members were in favour.

Design of new Church Centre and Stage 3

- **Design.** RBr went through a presentation (attached). He said the design had broadly been accepted by the council and to change it now would mean going back over 5/6 month of work. However, there were some things we could change to the main design which might improve things. These concerned access to the Centre from inside the church and adding windows to one of the new exterior walls. From a planning perspective the council would be more concerned over external design than internal. The priority was to get the external structure of the Centre built.
- **RIBA Stage 3.** RBr said we were now at the end of Stage 2 and had a concept design. Stage 3 was about taking the design in its current basic form and working out how the new Centre would be built and how it would be constructed. Once we know this detailed costings can be done.
- **Costings.** In 2021 the cost was estimated to be around £1million which included an element of inflation. After a period of instability following COVID the costs of building and materials was more stable. RBr added that VAT was critical as it comprised 20% of costs and it could be complicated in terms of what VATable was and was exempt. We would need to get into the details at some stage.
Completing Stage 3 would enable us to apply for planning permission and a Faculty application. Then we could go out to tender to building contractors. In the interim we would need to start fund raising.
- **Fundraising.** RBr showed a large funding spreadsheet that Elanaor at Greenwoods had helped us with. It showed details of organisations that we could apply to funding for. RA asked if it was envisaged that we would apply for grant funding ourselves – the scale of the funding needed (around £300K to £400K) would mean aiming for large amounts. NO said that as we already had money for building the Centre it would be much easier for us to get match-funding as we could demonstrate that we had money to put towards building costs. Funders including the lottery would be interested in this. Once we had the structure built we could then apply for funding the internal works. AW added that the money invested from the sale of the old Parish Room land could not be used for anything else. The Parish Centre Team were all optimistic that the required money to complete the construction of the Centre could be raised – we needed to get grant applications in.

Finance journey so far

The paper circulated prior to the meeting showed that Stage 3 could be funded out of Capital Development Funding. AW explained that to apply for grant funding to cover Stage 3 could take months – it would be much more efficient to use our current funds so as not to hold things up further. SJ agreed- she said we should move forward as soon as possible and start applying for grants. DE agreed. AW said it was also worth PCC agreeing that money could be drawn down from sale of the Parish Rooms land if it was needed.

SO commented that it looked like the roof of the Centre was flat and asked if it could be raised for solar panels. AW this could be considered later on. We would want to use environmentally friendly solutions for heating/energy and also use sustainable materials.

PCC agreed to progress to Stage 3 using Capital Development Funding and if needed money from the sale of the church hall. Proposed by RA and seconded by RBU.

Final comments

AW said she understood concerns about the project and to get to this point in the development process showed hard work and commitment. A lot of work had gone on in the background.

RBr agreed to write something for the magazine on progress.

DE asked about planning permission as this would involve public consultation. AW said Greenwoods would be helping us with this.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm

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5. **Date of next meeting:**

SC 11 September 2023

PCC 25 September 2023

6. **Closing Prayer [AW]**