

**The Parochial Church Council of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of Lichfield: Saint Michael with Saint Mary
Meeting: Monday 15th April 7.30pm**

Minutes

Present

Abbie Walsh (Rector – Chair) (AW)	Brenda Liptrot (BL)	Sue Jones (SJ)
Joseph Sneddon (JS)	Alan Toplis (AT)	Richard Brooks (RBr)
Sheila Irvine (SI)	Edward Green (EG))	Maureen Brand (MB)
David Easton (DE)	Steve Oliver (SO)	Veronica Morris (Secretary) (VM)
Alison Stevens (AS)	Mike Godfrey (MG)	Viv Oliver (VO)
Mike Jones (MJ)		

In attendance - Revd Helen Barton (HB)

1. **Opening Prayer** led by AW
2. **Apologies** - Revd Ruth Bull, Trevor James
3. **Declaration of Interest** – there were none
4. **Notification of Any Other Business**
 - Misuse of the church car parking area (see 8.2b)
 - Letter from councillor regarding tree branches over hanging Burton Old Road West
5. **Minutes and Action List of previous PCC meeting 5.2.2024.** These were agreed.

6. **Matters Arising**

Standing Committee (SC) approvals since last meeting for ratification by PCC:

- Purchase of 3 metal tree guards approx. £114
- Purchase of tools for the graveyard £27.22
- Pruning of hedging at the rectory £300
- Supply and erection of leaf mould bin by compost bins £150
- Repairs to major potholes in main drive £80

These were agreed.

Pastoral visiting guidelines – Revd Helen Barton was in attendance for this item. AW expressed her gratitude to HB for taking over responsibility for co-ordinating pastoral care visiting and for drafting the new guidelines. She also thanked June Frayn for everything she had done.

HB advised PCC that having these guidelines in place was very important towards meeting changing requirements. She had referred to the Association of Christian Counsellors website in drafting the guidelines and MB had also made a contribution. She added that there were plans to hold twice yearly meetings for visitors to share their experiences and review segments of the guidelines. She hoped that more people would come forward and join the current team of visitors.

DE stated that it was very useful to have the visitor role clarified and what was involved. SJ also gave her thanks and support.

AW suggested that it would be nice to have a short article in the church magazine.

Action: HB

7.3 Pastoral

a) Safeguarding – MB reported that she was in the process of updating information. She mentioned that the diocese had introduced a safeguarding dashboard and that she registered both churches on it. She would be standing down from the role of safeguarding office at the APCM - the role had become more pressurised and involved. She added that she was putting together briefing files for both churches. AW thanked her for the care and effort she had put into the role.

Going forward, AW said there would be a team working on safeguarding including the new church administrator who would deal with the administration of DBS checks, safeguarding training, verification of IDs, monitoring records, renewals and training, and issuing reminders. There would also be 3 safeguarding co-ordinators – one for Wall, one for vulnerable adults and one for children and young people. These 3 roles would be advisory in nature, and facilitate discussion between colleagues. The team would also liaise with diocesan groups. AW said she had consulted with the Diocese about moving to a team approach and they were in support; it was a structure other churches had adopted. However, she advised there may be a need to appoint a coordinator for the team for diocesan purposes which could be the new administrator. The new arrangements would come into place after the APCM.

Action: AW

b) Health and Safety – RBr reported that there had just been a small incident by the steps that had been reported. Otherwise everything was fine.

c) Social activities – AW said that the date for the Barn dance would be July 5th. It would be in St Chad's church hall and include a fish and chip supper.

d) Pastoral visiting – see above

e) Church Fellowship - SJ reported that the group meets monthly between 2.30 and 3.30 and was well received. The group was growing as word got around.

9. Finance

VO circulated a written report and highlighted the following:

- a) **2023 accounts.** VO reported these were almost ready – she was just waiting for a bit more information from the diocese. She advised the balance showed that there had been a decrease in income and an increase in expenditure – the main drivers for this were:
- Repairs to the roof

- Problems following the installation of a smart meter and SSE taking larger than expected direct debit amounts. These amounts may be refunded.

She also reported that she had changed some of the codings from 2022; this would affect the distribution of entries but not the overall totals. Altogether we were heading towards an £11k loss.

Action: VO

Contactless machine. Apparently the diocese had sent an email to both Sandy Baker (SB) and VO last summer to say that they would no longer be overseeing contactless machines/payments. Neither SB nor VO could find the email. This meant that payments made since this time had not been actioned. AT had now taken over responsibility for managing contactless payments – a new £374 card machine had been purchased which the diocese had given £300 towards. It will allow different donation amounts.

Investments – VO said these had picked up since last year and were recovering well.

- R&P accounting – VO confirmed that the diocese had advised that if we went over the eligible amounts we would have to go back to accrual banking.
- Gift Aid Stewardship recorder/software package – nothing to report
- Giving – AW advised there was still a need to increase regular giving
- St Michael's Trust Grant – MG confirmed that a grant had been made of £1,500 in 2022/23 towards roof repairs. The same amount had been approved in March for 2023/24.

7. Ministry

7.1 Worship

- Revd Ruth's retirement – AW said she would talk to Ruth about how she would like to mark her retirement. She anticipated that Ruth would then take a 6 month break. The churchwardens will be arranging a collection from the congregation. AW advised that Ruth had been thinking about how her responsibilities might continue; baptisms especially involved a lot of work and AW said she was grateful for everything Ruth had done. However, she needed to be realistic about what she could do.
- 8am Sunday service – AW advised that there was only her, Ruth and Jeyan available to deliver this service; and there was no holiday cover. AW said she would ask members of the ministry team what they were willing to do but her key concern was ensuring that the current service pattern could be maintained in a sustainable way in the long term. Numbers attending were normally around 6/8; the congregation was faithful but not growing. She said she would consult with the regular 8am congregation about options, as soon as she could, including having an 8am service on the first Sunday in the month and on festivals. There was also a possibility of having a traditional BCP some Wednesday mornings. AW appreciated that some people would be very disappointed PCC supported these proposals; there was one abstention. **Proposed by AT and seconded by BL.** **Action: AW**
- Family Communion – low numbers in the choir were due to a variety of reasons.
- Lent and Holy Week – AW ran through the programme of services and activities held during this time and invited feedback. PCC members said everything had been good.

Highlights included

- The Saturday evening fire service
- Compline
- The adult baptism at the Easter Sunday communion service

However, there was a general view that the Lent course was not as insightful as the previous year and AW said she may go back to courses developed by the author of last year's course. She also said that she would put something in the magazine next year about the Saturday evening fire service to promote it. **Action AW**

7.2 Mission

- a) Inclusive Church – AW said this was progressing
- b) School – The Head Teacher had announced her retirement at the end of the summer term. AW said she would talk to her about how she would like her time to be remembered, there were lots of activities planned. In response to a question from RBr, AW advised it was likely the church would get involved in some way in the recruitment process for a new head. MB stated the Head's departure would be a loss- the happiness felt in the school was down to her leadership.
- c) Junior Choir – there was nothing to report
- d) Shaping for Mission - AW advised that she had offered support to Christchurch during the upcoming vacancy. MB enquired if there would be a regrouping of parishes in Lichfield but AW said that this was not on the cards but there was a need to work collaboratively; there were many new housing estates being built in Lichfield which affected all parishes.

8 Church buildings and churchyard

8.1 Buildings

- a) Church Maintenance – SJ reported that Alliance had removed all foliage from the church roof and the slipped tile on the north side had been put back into place. There had also been a PAT test undertaken. The inspection had cost £600 and there were a few things that required action. **Action: BL**
- b) Audio Visual System Update - AT said this was ongoing **Action: AT**
- c) Electrification of church clock - MG said a Faculty application was in progress and the diocese were doing what they could to move things along. In the meantime he was keeping in touch with Smiths. **Action: MG**
- d) Parish Centre – RBr reported that things had progressed onto RIBA design stage 3 and various surveys had been commissioned including energy, topography, nature. Once these had been completed revised drawings could be prepared in readiness for applying for planning permission, hopefully in September, and a Faculty application. Once planning permission had been obtained we can then start preparing grant applications for funding. He anticipated this would start in January on a 6 month timescale. In response to a question from MB, RBr advised the public would be consulted at the planning permission application stage.

8.2 Churchyard

- a) Cremated remains area – AW advised that the existing cremated remains area was reaching capacity – there were only 10 spaces free. She said there were 2 options:
 - To stick with individual memorials and to make more spaces available along the path by Hawthorn Close

- To move away from individual memorials and have loose burials with ashes buried in the ground and names added to a memorial, possibly in the closed part of the churchyard. A garden area with benches could be created.

She added that if we applied for a Faculty for individual plots it may not be supported. We would also need a Faculty for the second option. There were cost implications in both. She had written to the Chancellor about the matter. EG said initially he had supported the individual plot idea but had come round to the idea of the second option with a garden and bigger area. SI and VM also expressed their support. AW commented that she recognised that some people would find the idea of a loose burial area difficult to accept.

Action: AW

b) Report – BL advised that the Probation Service had moved towards having a national programme rather than local programmes. However, Mark Harris from the Payback team said he would speak to his supervisor to see if work in the churchyard could continue in some form.

Misuse of the church car parking area – BL raised concerns that some cars were parked for a whole day in the parking spaces in the churchyard. RBr suggested we look at using an App which would enable us to charge people for parking in the spaces on a daily basis (not at the top by the church building). AW said at her previous church an App was used to charge people for parking. It was agreed to explore further the practicalities of using an App. AW said a 'no parking' sign would need a Faculty application. **Action: AW/RBr.**

Letter from councillor regarding tree overhanging Burton Old Road West - AW said she had had a look at the area of the graveyard concerned and could not see any trees overhanging the road or pavement. Also no trimming was allowed at this time of year. The trees had recently been assessed and were deemed safe. She did not think any further action was needed and had advised the councillor. **Action: AW**

c) Church Bench – nothing to report

b) Elizabeth Logan Grave - AW said she had submitted a Faculty application.

10. Deemed Business

a) Standing Committee (SC) Meeting Minutes 18.03.2024 – these were noted.

11. Any other Business

a) APCM 19 May. PCC approved the 5 reports prepared by the –

a) Secretary

b) Deanery synod rep (ET said he had omitted TJ's appointment as Deanery Synod which he would add to the report.

c) Church wardens

d) Electoral roll officer

e) Draft fees report

The safeguarding and finance annual reports would be circulated together, hopefully by the end of the week for PCC approval.

Action: AW and VO

f) Roles and responsibilities. AW said that at the APCM PCC would be appointing 2 new church wardens - BL and SJ were standing down. Two people had put themselves forward to stand as wardens – Steve Oliver and Peter Hawksworth. They will need to be voted in at the APCM. EG said he would stand as assistant

warden to help with enabling access to the church. Appointments to the safeguarding team would also need to be approved.

12. **Date of next meeting:**

SC May 20th

PCC June 3rd

Special PCC to discuss Parish Centre June 24th

13. **Closing Prayer** - led by AW

Meeting closed at 9.50pm