

St Mary's Newick PCC Meeting
7pm, Barn Centre, Monday 18 March 2024

MINUTES

Present:- C Hume (CH) Lay Chair, Tony Bailey (TB), Sara Fuller (SF), Kate Francis (KF), Dan Cowley (DC), Audrey Ford (AF), Linda Farmer (LF), Geoff Clinton (GC), Ian Reekie (IR), Anthony Mallinson (AM), Caroline Smith (CS), Patsy Bailey (PB), Rob Bellis, Guest.

1. Commencement. Geoff Clinton opened the meeting with a reading and a prayer.

2. Apologies. Jonathan Fenton-Vince, Rev Paul Mundy, Jeremy Burdett, Mandy Stockwell.

3. Minutes of Meeting held 11 November 2023. Acceptance moved by IR, seconded by KF, passed unanimously.

4. Churchwarden Items:-

- **Reordering.** CH noted that we must either restore the Church to its original state before last year's Temporary Reordering or apply for a Faculty to make it permanent. CH reported that we had been advised not to go for major changes over and above what we had already done. Such action could generate major objections from the likes of the Victorian Society which might lead to delay, litigation and expense. A further consideration is that our budget is tight, we are heavily committed to the paths and Barn Centre projects so conserving our executive (body problem) and financial resources is key. Accordingly CH suggested that applying for a Faculty to make permanent the current changes, with one additional pew to be removed, as per diagram presented (attached to minutes as appendix) would be the best way forward.

GC asked what we proposed to do with the pews removed. After discussion agreed that positioning pews around inside wall as at present and making them fit as flush as possible to that wall, was the best way forward.

A proposal was moved by IR, seconded by KF, that we proceed as proposed by CH with the addition of a decision to implement the pews-around-the-wall suggestion.

Agreed Unanimously.

- **Body Problem.** CH noted that this fits with Youth Work, as the two issues are related.

CH noted that NYC is a noted and very welcome success which continues to gain momentum. However our provision for younger children up to secondary school age needs attention. At Crib Service last Christmas Eve we had 141 children present, but had only 3 present at the final Owls meeting in 2023. We need to improve our offering to the under-11 age group.

There have been several suggestions. One is to start a three stage offering on Sundays during term time (mirroring NYC timing) offering a “Good Life Program” to three age groups – up to 7, 7 to 9 and 9 to 11. We would need to integrate that with Rev Paul’s excellent work at Newick Primary School, work which itself probably needs additional support.

PB suggested we might consider one-off fun specials to suit the time of year eg Easter, Christmas.

AF suggested involving Chris Wagstaff to make music a part of our offering.

LF suggested we should work on inviting back those who have been baptised. SF noted this had been done for Crib Service. Noted that this group could be the subject of a summer special as suggested by PB. LF noted the success of the Lindfield 0930 family service complete with a band, puppets etc which lasts 45 mins to an hour. Running the same Eucharist service every week is off-putting for some. Noted that we failed to hold the 20 odd Owls parents who came frequently when Owls was at its best with Ali Brown – the parents seemed to find the service too long and did not gel with the Eucharist.

There was general discussion on the topic. The need to make services aimed at Children shorter to suit them and their parents. “Engaging and short” – KF. The role of Children’s Choir must be integrated into whatever we do. Noted that summer club is a popular offering.

PB noted we should offer spiritual food in all its various guises in formats that worked for the very different audiences we must address – young and old, new Christians and our long-term faithful and parents with little Church exposure.

Agreed that we should work to optimise our reach to people with event anniversaries, maybe run a “special” for some groups.

CH to look at a celebration event for baptisms/weddings, maybe an annual event.

PCC to look at service options and ensure we achieve progress towards a more diverse offering, which may include mid-week communions, and continue this discussion at our next meeting(s).

- **APCM date.** 21 April.

- **Christmas Tree Festival** weekend of 7/8 December. We need to avoid any clash with (and support) Newick School PTFA whose Christmas Fair is first weekend of December.
- **Outward Giving.** PCC noted that the Outward Giving committee had been unable to make its planned expenditure of £4000 in 2023. Noted that our regular planned outward giving of £4000 was included in the 2024 budget as circulated.

IR proposed and GC seconded that we should make an additional payment of £4000 in 2024 to cover the giving not achieved in 2023. **Passed Unanimously.**

5. Barn Centre and Paths.

TB noted that prioritising projects was discussed at last PCC.

The priority he is hearing recently is making the footpaths safer. TB is pursuing the Council regarding Church Road repairs, including the footpaths, with some success but there is much more to do.

TB has pursued a drop kerb at the Church entrance for funeral parties and wheelchairs. Latest advice is action “between May and July”. No cost mentioned so far. Need to ensure the job controls water coming down Church Road and doesn’t send it down the churchyard.

Church Footpaths. TB and CH have met 3 of 4 contractors for quotes. Final contractor meeting due 19 March. Contractors are John Penfold (who did the new carpark), Tim Tapp, GT Developments and Driveways. The surface we are looking at is resin bound stone, similar to that used in recent work at Sheffield Park, and as circulated by sample to the meeting. It is porous, laid over porous tarmac and a hardcore layer. Colour can be chosen to suit. We plan to use existing bricks to line the paths. We shall need a full marketing campaign to fund the project. We shall have to make a full and detailed presentation to our congregation to get buy-in. Ballpark figure (NOT a quote) provided by John Penfold is circa £50,000.

John Penfold is also quoting for work to fix **potholes and defects in right-of-way between Tudor Barn and Barn Centre** and at entrance to carpark.

6. PCC Updates.

- **Risk Assessment and Policy Review List.** RA’s have been received from all group except Owls and NYC. After brief discussion accepted that no further risk assessments needed for Choir or Youth Choir.
- Lewes District Council have reviewed our kitchen for “Safer Food Preparation”. A very long (over 100 pages!) form has been completed and reviewed by CH and TB, awaits approval from PM.

- Among the bureaucratic nightmare of this LDC form is a requirement to create and complete a form every time we cook in the Barn Centre for eg Mens' Suppers. Not needed when we hire the hall out, responsibility rests with hirer.
- **Churchyard.** Connick Tree Care have checked our Churchyard and carried out a program of work. All clear for health and safety. Gardening Days will be on April 13th and October 12th.
We have been offered a new seat for the Churchyard. Checking where we might find room for it.
- **Electoral Roll.** Some members have passed on. Several new members are signing up, including one couple who have come to us through Garden Days/Mens' Suppers/Youth Choir.
- **More Chairs with arms.** After discussion proposed TB seconded LF that we should purchase a further 6 for £100 each. **Agreed unanimously.** Agreed we should appeal to congregation to pay for these chairs -**action CH.**
- **Runner Carpet in Church Aisles.** TB noted, after conversation with PM, that these carpets need professional securing. TB so moves, seconded LF, **Agreed unanimously - action TB.**
- **Access Ramps.** Our current removable ramps move while in use, which is an issue the outside ramp has tripping and falling hazards. The outside ramp will be fixed when we do the footpaths. **TB to submit proposal for fixed indoor ramp.**
- **Kitchenette at back of Church.** CH/TB reported that the Diocesan funding adviser says grants are available for such a facility. Our advising architect Richard Andrews, who has installed such a facility says he could make up drawings for approx. £750. **CH/TB to investigate further.**
- **Small tables for after-Church coffee.** GC asked why there had been no follow-up on this suggestion of his at our last meeting. CH reported that he had discussed it with the Verger who felt it infeasible citing storage, reorganising the relevant area after the service in time to serve, and subsequent clearing up/body problem issues. **GC to follow up with Verger.**
- **Window in Office.** The outside mortar has failed and is no longer waterproof with water ingress now a problem. We shall need to repair this wall whatever happens with the Barn project, as this wall is planned to remain. Proposed TB, seconded LF that we accept quote of £1146 to fix it. **Agreed unanimously.**
- **Finance Report.** The report had been circulated with meeting papers. CH noted that all PCC members carried responsibility as Directors under Company Law. IR introduced the budget noting that it was many years since St Mary's had a formal budget. IR proposed the budget as circulated for approval. Seconded GC, **agreed unanimously.** IR thanked members for the input they had provided, particularly TB who had provided very detailed estimates in his areas of concern as Sexton. IR

reported that our software program MFA is working well for us and we are able to track income and expenditure in each area of Church affairs month by month and quarter by quarter. He expects to present such analysis to the June PCC. LF enquired whether we had budgeted for altar frontal renewal/repair. IR replied that this is just the type of bigger picture item we should have in our 5 to 10 year planning. CS commented that even with the village growing we aren't expanding our numbers at services and in the Electoral Roll. We should seek to encourage people to get involved in fund raising from the wider community.

- **Parish Share.** CH reported that he and Sara Fuller as Churchwardens had met with Rev Paul Mundy to discuss this. Recognising that St Mary's had now had two successive years where current expenditure exceeded current income, and that as incumbent of St Mary's and PIC St Peter's the combined Parish Shares paid well exceeded the full Diocesan Parish share for a stipendiary Priest, we should hold our Parish Share steady at the £68,668 paid in 2023. GC enquired whether this would leave us short of what the Diocese asked? CH replied that we had not been asked for a specific number and noted that if we increased the payment to £70,000 as we initially considered, subject to analysis of the 2023 results when available, we would be paying the same as Uckfield a town four times the size of Newick. We are punching above our weight, and the progress we are making in cooperation with St Peter's is getting a positive response from the Diocese, as reported by Rev Paul Mundy. After discussion AF proposed and SF seconded the resolution that we should maintain our Parish Share payment for 2024 at £68,668. **The motion was passed with one member abstaining, all others in favour.**
- **Giving.** CH reported that our giving as a Parish had increased by some £20,000 in 2023. He also noted the success of the Christmas Appeal for Youth Work aimed at raising £15,000 between the two parishes with the Newick contribution realising over £12,000. GC asked would this cover this year only and will we need to do this again? We may need to appeal for eg Pastoral Care. CH replied that we are "running hot", doing a lot and stretching our resources and will need to increase our income to meet our aspirations.
- **Pastoral Care.** PB reported this is a real plus for the Church. The Hub is a major outreach doing amazing work at zero cost to us. It raises money to maintain the Community Centre. We can show the love of God away from the Church which puts people more at ease for some reason. Handwarmers are still being made and sent to Ukraine. PB noted the major contribution Malcolm Smith is making to the Hub and this work, and example of us fulfilling the Diocesan wish to expand beyond our immediate Church boundaries.

The Dance Group at the Church continues – 16 years and going strong, and entertaining at Care Homes. PB will do a grant application when time permits.

Lunch Club is going well, but transport is a real difficulty. Chaplaincy is very busy with funerals at the Church. Outreach at Nightingales is going well and helping to spread the word.

Tea at 3 has many regular attendees, and there is now a regular meeting in the Pantry on Tuesday mornings which continues to grow support.

PB noted that most events are self-funding but it is good to have a budget for those who need financial support.

CH reported that last year some £2,500 was paid out in discretionary pastoral care by our Rector. There is still £6,500 in the Pastoral Care fund.

PB noted that the funding available allowed the purchase of flowers which can be dropped off to save a visit as the team is time poor.

- **Positives and achievements we should recognise and celebrate.** CH noted that our Rector was keen we should take stock of our positives. The substantial increase in our giving in 2023 is notable and very welcome. One positive in our generous congregation is the constant supply of cakes and goodies donated for our in-Church hospitality, Garden Days etc. St Mary's enjoyed an amazing December in 2023, with over 2,500 people through our doors. We had significant firsts like Chailey School coming for a service of Lessons and Carols and enjoying it so much they have already booked a repeat for 2024. The Christmas Tree Festival, and in particular opening the Church for stalls on the Saturday, had been a great success. Our Christmas services were wonderful.
- **Safeguarding.** CS reported we are up to date with all our checks. Nothing further to add to her report as circulated.

7. Confidential Items. None

8. Amended timings for remaining PCC Meetings:-

- Monday June 10th or Monday June 17th at 4.30 – please advise SF or CH of your availability.
- Thursday September 12th at 7pm.
- November To Be Confirmed.

9. Any Other Business.

- GC raised the question of potholes in the right-of-way into the Barn Centre and Carpark, and in Church Road. CH/TB reported we are awaiting quotes promised for this work, having abandoned earlier DIY attempts. CH Asked, re Church Road, would sending in individual letters help? TB said there are forms online which can be filled in or there is a phone reporting facility.

10. Closing. The meeting closed at 9.25pm with a prayer led by Ian Reekie, and the saying of the Grace.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

- **Reordering.** A proposal was moved by IR, seconded by KF, that we proceed as proposed by CH with the addition of a decision to implement the pews-around-the-wall suggestion. **Agreed Unanimously.**
- **Exploit event anniversaries. Agreed** that we should work to optimise our reach to people with event anniversaries, maybe run a “special” for some groups.
CH to look at a celebration event for baptisms/weddings, maybe an annual event.
- **Outward Giving.** IR proposed and GC seconded that we should make an additional payment of £4000 in 2024 to cover the giving not achieved in 2023. **Passed Unanimously.**
- **More Chairs with arms.** After discussion proposed TB seconded LF that we should purchase a further 6 for £100 each. **Agreed unanimously.** Agreed we should appeal to congregation to pay for these chairs -**action CH.**
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- **Window in Office.** The outside mortar has failed and is no longer waterproof with water ingress now a problem. We shall need to repair this wall whatever happens with the Barn project, as this wall is planned to remain. Proposed TB, seconded LF that we accept quote of £1146 to fix it. **Agreed unanimously.**
- **Acceptance of Budget.** IR proposed the budget as circulated for approval. Seconded GC, **agreed unanimously**
- AF proposed and SF seconded the resolution that we should maintain our Parish Share payment for 2024 at £68,668. **The motion was passed with one member abstaining, all others in favour.**