

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

*Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council
held in the Church Hall on Wednesday 25 November 2009*

Present: Huw Nicholas in the chair, Amanda Ferris, Margaret Bell, Morag Broadbent, Mike Farron, Claire Harald, Gavin Horner, Ian McMullen, Andrew Stoten, Roger Thomson, Ray Tye and Judy Watson.

Apologies: Margaret Dack, Cathy Rogers, Margaret Owen, Claire Pedrick, Dianne Sheppee and Paul Thomson.

Claire Harald read from Philippians 4 and continued in prayer.

09/43 Approval of minutes of PCC meeting held 16 September 2009

These were approved and signed.

09/44 Matters arising

None.

09/45 Matters arising from Standing Committee meeting held on 10 November 2009

- a) The amount contributed by All Saints for decorating materials was £150.
- b) Jo Nice has completed the undercoating in the vicarage, in six and a half days.
- c) The Heritage Foundation has granted us £800 towards the cost of new curtains in the hall. The contractor has measured the area and it is hoped to have the new curtains fitted before Christmas.
- d) Peter Wright has repaired the heated cupboard in the hall kitchen.
- e) The Shoebox appeal proposed by Lauren Sowden will be reviewed by the PCC at the next meeting.
- f) David Heymans will liaise with Vicky over a date for the Orpheus Choir.

09/46 Finance and Budget for 2010

Andrew Stoten distributed updated figures for the current year and a budget for 2010. Income to the end of October was £146,752 and expenditure was £95,134. The forecast figures for the end of December are income of £172,576 and expenditure of £146,152. This would mean an income of about £20,000 above budget and an expenditure of about £7,000 below budget. Tony Andrews' legacy and the youth worker grant contribute largely to the higher income figure, and church hall costs of about £8,000 below the expected figure account for the reduced expenditure.

In his budget for 2010 the income and expenditure are balanced at £148,000. Income is still uncertain due to the late return of gift envelopes. An increase in youth worker costs of £2,000 has been budgeted for, although we may be able to obtain a further grant to cover this. A reduced figure has been included for heating and lighting in view of lower tariffs.

Morag Broadbent reported from the stewardship committee that there is a possible deficit of about £21,000, but many envelopes have yet to be returned. Further information is needed from Malcolm Summerville.

Andrew proposes to leave the repair fund as it is, and to pay for the recent church improvements out of the general account. He also questioned whether our invested money has to be with the Church Commissioners, or whether it could be transferred to a fixed income bond. Amanda Ferris will make enquiries.

Thanks were expressed to Andrew for his excellent and informative report.

09/47 Health & Safety

Huw Nicholas reported that Rosemary Cowie had gashed her leg on one of the projecting posts on one of the church chairs. The suppliers had been contacted and advised that this was the first known injury of this nature since 1989. It was agreed that this should be treated as an isolated incident and that no action should be taken.

The policy document has had no updates since the last review and it was re-signed by Huw Nicholas.

09/48 Fabric

Nothing to report..

09/49 Social Committee report

Ray Tye reported that the Treasure Hunt had been successful and just paid for itself. It may be repeated in 2010, possibly linked with a harvest lunch in October. The games afternoon has had to be postponed until the Spring. The Barn Dance is scheduled for 27 February 2010. The Ivel Valley Band has been booked at a cost of £220. No ticket price has yet been fixed. A minimum of 40 participants is required, with a maximum of 80.

Although the Heritage Open day event is only every 2 years, feedback from this year's event showed that, next time, we should involve youth more, advertise earlier and wider, give free refreshments, involve the uniformed organisations and persuade people to get out of the bus! He also canvassed support for a "musical event" in which a travelling group will come to us and teach the participants through the day with a view to giving a performance in the evening. They provide the music and can provide soloists if needed. The cost would be £250. He will make further enquiries.

It was agreed that "Social Committee" should be added to the Time & Talents form, to recruit new people to the social committee.

09/50 Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults

Judy Watson had circulated a 2-page report before the meeting. Page 1 was to be replaced by a new page 1 which she distributed. She explained that all people working with children and vulnerable adults will need to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) by July 2015. There will be training in the New Year. It was agreed to implement all the recommendations proposed in the report, namely:

1. The 2 referees for an Enhanced Disclosure (ED) should include the most recent or current employer if appropriate, and someone who has known the individual for at least 5 years.
2. EDs are renewed every 5 years. Confidential disclosure forms should in future be filled in by everyone seeking renewal, even if they have previously completed one.
3. Attend further training
4. Identify all vulnerable adults served by the Church family
5. Advise those involved with vulnerable adults about the current need for an ED
6. Ensure all who need to know are informed in good time about ISA registration.

Discussion followed as to who are "vulnerable adults". These are those over 18 who live in residential homes, sheltered accommodation, etc. It was agreed that this embraces car service drivers, lunch club drivers and those who administer home communion. It was agreed that Jeremy Goodwyn and Rosemary Cowie need to get in touch with their volunteers at an early date to explain these needs to those of their volunteers who do not have EDs. Cathy and Huw will inform Jeremy and Rosemary of this.

Judy reminded the PCC that EDS are not "portable", i.e. EDs granted through other bodies will not cover church activities.

09/51 Reprographic needs

The lease on the Risograph in the church office expires in February. A cold-calling sales representative from a Xerox company has given Vicky a quotation for a machine which would replace the present Risograph and the photocopier and which would give colour copies, at a price. It was agreed that colour is not something which we would want as almost nothing we print is for long-term storage. It was agreed that Roger Thomson and Vicky would go back to Dave Dibden, the Risograph man, and see what deal he could offer us on an extension of the lease on the existing machine.

09/52 Communion

Ray Tye questioned why we do not have wine in the communion service. Amanda Ferris explained that we are following the advice given by the Archbishops and that we do need to protect others, especially young people. It was agreed to continue as we are. (N.B. We have since received advice from the Archbishops that we may revert to our normal practice – and we are doing so).

Morag Broadbent expressed concern at the process of the children entering church for communion. She felt that the children needed more direction and should stay together to reflect the reverence of the occasion. It was agreed that Huw Nicholas would remind those on duty when to call the Junior Church from the hall. Amanda Ferris will also discuss this with Clare Townsend at their next review meeting. It was considered that a more disciplined entry could be achieved by one of the JC leaders in each group preceding their children and another following them.

9/53 Deanery Synod report

Ian McMullen reported that at the November meeting Revd John Luscombe and Revd Barry Pate talked about their recent sabbaticals in the Caribbean. On Wednesday 28 April there will be a service at St George's Church with Bishop Alan Smith.

09/54 Vacancy update

Huw Nicholas reported that the recent interviews have resulted in the joint appointment of Revd Simon Moore and Revd Louise Moore, who will be licensed in May 2010. For legal reasons Simon will be licensed as priest-in-charge and Louise (most likely) as assistant minister. In practice they will work a jobshare with equal status. The exact arrangements are still to be finalised by the diocese. They will be paid one stipend and we shall only pay one parish share. It is anticipated that Simon will be 2/3 and Louise 1/3. Louise will continue her work at the hospice.

Thanks were expressed to Huw and Cathy for their dedication and hard work over recent months.

09/55 Correspondence

Hazel Barrett had written to express concern at the request in the church notices for financial contributions towards the materials for decorating the vicarage. She questioned why this had not been budgeted for in view of the fact that Anne Lovegrove was known to be retiring. The general view was that those who gave money did so as a goodwill gesture and that if they could not give of their time to help they could contribute in this way.

09/56 Any other business

1) Margaret Dack has offered to coordinate a Lent Bible Study course prepared by Bishops Alan, Christopher and Richard. This is based on the gospel readings for each Sunday. The PCC welcomed her offer and would encourage individuals and groups to use this material which can be downloaded from the Diocesan website.

2) Claire Pedrick was concerned that the ministry team might become overloaded by May 2010 and that she could approach various contacts to help ease the load. Amanda thanked her but explained that we have a rota up to the end of April and all the preaching slots are filled, with at least 2 bishops joining us.

3) Amanda Ferris explained that Clare Townsend would like to explore the creation of an after-school club for 9 year-olds upwards. The problem is that the hall is solidly booked. The regular hirers have contracts which we cannot arbitrarily break, although Clare feels that a church activity should have preference if there is a choice. She is looking at a 6pm slot. Use of the church is an option, but it does not lend itself to the sort of activities which would appeal to this age group.

4) Morag Broadbent reported that the stewardship committee met on 23 November and planned to put the Time & Talents operation into effect. Their committee felt that it would be nice to thank the coordinators for their work. The PCC agreed that a letter from Amanda and Margaret should be sent out after the campaign, to go with Gill Farron's letter to the coordinators. Stewardship Sunday will be on 31 January 2010.

