

St Andrew's Church, Girton, Parochial Church Council
Minutes of meeting held in the North Room on 16th May 2022

PCC members present: Michael Bigg (Rector, in the chair; = M.B.), Dugald Wilson, Sheila Hiley, Martyn Johnson (= M.Jo.), Wendy Hunter, Bruce Hunter, Jenny Knights, Geoff Burt, Alastair Lorimer, Christina Deacon, Malini Jesudason, Helen Wilson and Chris Barrow.

Also present: John Hall (Secretary).

1. Apologies for absence and welcome to new member. There were no apologies. Helen Wilson was welcomed to the PCC.

2. Opening reading and prayer was by M.B., who read from Numbers 9 on the Israelites following God's commands on their journeyings in the wilderness, reminding us that we must do what the Lord tells us.

3. The minutes of the meeting of 21st March 2022 were approved.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

a. Whether the PCC should have a lay chair (minute 14.b.1). This is allowed by a recent change in the church's rules. It would relieve M.B. of some work, but not much, in preparing PCC agendas, briefing notes, etc., and would leave him free to speak his mind on contentious matters without having also to ensure that all PCC members had a fair chance to speak. However, it was felt that only an elected PCC member, of whom there few, would be suitable as lay chair, and no PCC member showed any strong desire to take such a position.. Helen Wilson suggested that, if M.B. wished to express strong views on a contentious matter, he could yield the chair to a deputy for that item of business, and on this understanding it was agreed to make no change,

b. Congregational questionnaire (minute 14.b.2). We must be careful to find the right questions, and not to phrase them in a way that will suggest the answer that is wanted. Chris Barrow suggested asking people how they felt and what they wanted as things return to normal after covid. Bruce Hunter said that the questions must leave it open for people to write about what they wanted, and that we must respond to whatever is said.

It was agreed that Dugald and Helen Wilson should, in consultation with M.B., put together a draft questionnaire. It must be possible for the questionnaire to be answered either on paper or by computer, and it must be possible for the answers to be anonymous.

5. Ratification of online vote: the clock face and the royal coat of arms. The PCC ratified its consent (subject to the receipt of a hoped-for benefaction) to the redecoration and regilding of the clock face and to the cleaning and restoration of the royal coat of arms.

A donor has given £1,000 and agrees that it should be spent on the clock. Mick Collingwood of Histon is keen to do the job and will charge about this sum, for work including the use of gold leaf. It was agreed to accept this quotation. (Smith of Derby has

quoted a much larger sum, but that would include work on the clock's mechanism.) A faculty is needed for the work on the clock.

It may be possible to obtain a grant for the work on the royal coat of arms. We have had a quotation of £2,500 for cleaning, without gilding; another quotation, for more elaborate work, is £4,000 to £8,000. The PCC agreed to go ahead with this work, provided we obtain external funding.

6. Life and worship

a. Easter services and events. The services went well but the Easter breakfast was less successful, with few people attending, and much effort involved in setting it up and clearing away afterwards. It was suggested that next year it should be replaced by an event following the 10 a.m. service. However, covid infections were widespread at Easter time, which may have put people off coming; it was agreed to postpone a final decision about the breakfast until January.

Twenty children attended the 10 a.m. service, and much enjoyed the Easter egg hunt which followed it.

Sheila Hiley asked that we record Jill Watkins's deep appreciation of the Good Friday service.

b. Forthcoming services. There will be a service at 7 p.m. on Ascension Day, May 26th. (Malini Jesudason suggested an early service on Ascension Day. It is too late to arrange one this year, but we may hold one next year.)

On Sunday 5th June there will be at 3 p.m. a service for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (this will follow a village party on the Recreation Ground). There will be a special flower display and, if possible, an anthem (see next para.)

c. The adult church choir no longer functions effectively. Often, only two people attend choir practice. A full choir is now possible only for high days and holidays. We hope to find singers for an anthem at the jubilee service, after which there will be no choir. We will try to get singers together in September with a view to holding choral services in the approach to Christmas. After that we may try to arrange a monthly choral service.

d. Early services. M.B. plans in future to hold 8 a.m. communion services on two Sundays each month, probably the second and fourth Sundays.

e. Church contribution to the Girton fête (Saturday 9th July). We plan to have a gazebo, in which "baskets and bears" will be on offer. "Bears" means any soft toys. Wendy Hunter will bring baskets to church next Sunday and request people to fill them with appropriate contents. The loan of a gazebo and help on the day would be greatly appreciated.

f. "Happy birthday". Sheila Hiley asked that the regular singing of "Happy birthday" at the all-age service might be revived. It used to be sung for anyone who wished it, whose birthday was within the two weeks before or the two weeks after the service.

Christina Deacon suggested that we might arrange anniversary of baptism services.

7. Mission and outreach: Children and Families Minister. Dr Eona Bell has been appointed and it is hoped that she will start work in June. Helen Wilson and M.Jo. were thanked for the administrative work they have done in connection with this appointment.

Eona Bell will officiate at Bobtails and choir church and other activities, possibly including messy church at the Baptist Church. She will be responsible for the rota for refreshments at Bobtails and choir church. We must see that the best possible use is made of her time.

8. Finance

a. The current finance report had been previously circulated. M.Jo. regards the position as satisfactory at the moment. A large part of the money shown in the report as paid out of the Churchyard Fund is for the backlog of money owed for past mowing (see minute 8c of the PCC meeting of 21st March).

b. Miscellaneous. The churchyard is not currently being mown twice a month, as it ought to be: no mowing was done in April. The Parish Council is going to give the mowing contract to a different contractor.

We are waiting for the Diocese to fulfil its part in the amalgamation of the churchyard trust funds.

Rent for the Parish Office should continue until October, or possibly November,

c. The card reader. The existing Goodbox card reader, for receiving card payments, has ceased to work and cannot be repaired. Goodbox will supply a replacement only on terms much less favourable than before. M.Jo. therefore proposes to get a card reader from a different company, SumUp. It will not be possible to leave it in the church unattended; however, little money was received on the old card reader when it was so left. The PCC agreed to M.Jo.'s proposal that he should be authorised to spend up to around £150 on a replacement card reader facility from SumUp.

9. Fabric, etc.

a. Damp in the walls. The south wall will be left for the summer for the damp in it to dry out, after which Able Construction or another contractor will deal with the wall. The Rector Board (which lists the church's rectors) is touching the south wall and has been affected by the damp. It will be refixed in such a way that damp in the wall cannot reach it. The south wall has plants growing in it and needs to be repointed.

There seem to be signs of damp also in the west wall.

b. North Room bookings. The Parish Council is considering the introduction of a single online booking system for hireable rooms in the village, and this could include hirings of the North Room. This might increase the number of hirings. It would be essential for us to have a reliable system for recording the bookings in the church diary. M.B. will wait to hear more from the Parish Council before any decision is reached about hirings of the North Room.

c. The church toilet. The toilets in the pavilion are not normally available for public use, but the toilet in the church is available for as long as the church is open. It has been suggested that a notice should be put up by the pavilion saying that the church toilet is often available. The PCC does not wish to restrict the availability of the church toilet but does not consent to the proposed notice.

d. Re-ordering

(1) **The west end.** English Heritage and similar bodies are being consulted about the proposed work at the west end of the church. We will take steps to put the work out to tender when English Heritage, etc., indicate that they have no objections.

Concern was expressed about the grating near the south door, at present covered by a blue carpet, which may be removed. However, this is just outside the area being re-ordered, so the carpet can remain.

Planned new audiovisual equipment will affect the joinery work. We have had two quotations for this equipment, of which the more expensive is more detailed and professional-looking. M.Jo. and M.B. will discuss this and make a decision.

(2) **A screen at the chancel arch** has been proposed, which will at most times be out of sight but can be let down when wanted. Assuming the screen is in the nature of a large TV screen (rather than a projection screen) it would not affect the work at the west end and could be undertaken as a separate project. M.B. is unsure if we need a screen.

(3) **Solar panels** would provide some electricity which we would use, and we would receive some money for supplying to the national grid electricity we do not use. We applied some time ago to South Cambs District Council for planning permission, and should revive that application. The church authorities have no objection, and we believe that the district council has no objection in principle. New district councillor Richard Stobart, who is Churchwarden of Waterbeach, may be able to assist with obtaining actual permission.

10. Safeguarding. Helen Wilson said that she has nothing to report.

11. Matters of report

a. Action Abroad. Thanks were expressed to Claire Conboy and her team for their work at the art exhibition. The net proceeds are not yet known.

b. Friends of St Andrew's. There will be a coffee morning at 3 Bandon Road on Saturday, 20th August, and on Saturday, 22nd October, a concert in the church for solo clarinet given by Poppy Beddow.

c. Deanery. Chris Barrow was thanked for her report, previously circulated, on the Deanery meeting with Bishop Stephen on 12th May, and M.Jo. spoke on the replies received from parishes to the Deanery Planning Group's questionnaire. Bishop Stephen spoke at his meeting of the need to share gifts and talents across parish boundaries. We should be thinking of what we might share with others and what we might need help with, but fears were expressed that lack of time would limit the sharing which might be done.

12. Any other business. There was none.

13. Future meetings will be on Monday, 11th July, at 7.30 p.m. and on Monday, 12th September, at 2 p.m.

The meeting closed with prayer by Dugald Wilson.