

# St. Andrew's Church PCC Meeting

## A SHORT CATCH UP FOR ESSENTIAL ISSUES

**Venue: By Zoom App**

**Meeting ID: 764 342 5312**

**Password: PCC Meeting**

**7.00pm - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

In attendance: Canon Ed Pruen (EP) Chairman)  
Mrs Anne Lofthouse (AL) (Churchwarden)  
Mrs Sarah Rees (SR) (Churchwarden)  
Mrs Wilma Hainsworth (WH) (Treasurer)  
Mrs Yvonne Haigh (YH) (Secretary)  
Mrs Sarah Bankhead (SaB)  
Mrs Sharon Blackshaw (ShB)  
Mr Stephen Blackshaw (StB)  
Mrs Gabriel Howard (GH)  
Mr I Jurd (IJ)  
Mr John Lofthouse (JL)

Apologies:

**1 Prayer and Worship:** EP began the meeting with a prayer.

**2a Apologies:** Mrs Diane Balchin (DB); Mr Patrick Busby (PB); David Hayward (DH) (Fabric Committee only); Diane Palmer (DP)(Safeguarding only)

**2b Declaration of conflict of interest:** IJ declared a pecuniary interest in the refurbishment of the boiler housing.

**3 Treasurer's Report:**

WH thanked everyone for their steady planned-giving donations. This was beneficial in financial planning and had made a real difference during these unusual times. She decided at the start of lockdown to be pro-active and maximise income where possible and keep a close eye on expenditure. She sent a letter, (approved by EP, AL and SR), to most people on the Church electoral roll, who were not part of the planned-giving scheme. This gave details of the Church bank account in case anyone wished to donate directly when the Church and Hall were closed. It reaped early success and resulted in 5 new regular monthly donations and 2 substantial donations.

WH went on to summarise the income over the 6 month period, (Jan-June) and gave a breakdown including the "Giving" element (Standing orders, Parish Giving Scheme and other donations.). The total income received for 6 months is £53152.87 and most income arrives early in the year. A legacy of £1000.00 for general funds had been received and WH said that this extra

income would allow the PCC to be mindful of those people experiencing hardship due to the pandemic, and encouraged everyone to think of suitable causes to consider donating some of this income to. WH said that even in hard times for ourselves, we should be able to think of others. She explained that income from other sources was significantly falling due to the closure of the Church and Hall and gave examples. However, a grant specifically for the Church Hall for £10000.00 had been received, and was proving beneficial. This grant is clearly marked for Church Hall expenses and will be used solely for such purposes as agreed in future meetings.

The Treasurer summarised the expenditure and advised that the Standing Committee had authorised a payment of £1430 to an architect for work done last year in a faculty application. That invoice had only recently been received. WH spoke of the first payment made in relation to our new Church heating project; £3786.98 for the new pipe line to be laid in Church grounds for the supply of gas. A payment of £200.00, agreed by the PCC earlier, was sent to Alton Food Bank. The overall expenditure for 6 months is £27433.86 but more expenditure is expected shortly due to the heating project.

Overall, in the short term, WH said that the finances are manageable, but will get more difficult should the Church and Hall remain closed for further lengthy periods.

WH suggested members support DH in obtaining grants and recovering VAT on the various contracts and elements of the heating project.

ALL

In relation to Mission Giving, members were asked to consider good charitable causes and bring ideas to the next meeting.

A request for 2021 for the Common Mission Fund (CMF) had been received today from the Diocese and amounted to £24079.60. This represents 35.5% of the Benefice total.

- 4 Approval of Previous Minutes 28.1.20:** DH clarified and suggested changes to the previous Minutes regarding the boiler. Suggested amendments were read out by EP and the PCC approved the changes. Amended and signed by YH on behalf of EP due to the meeting being held over Zoom.

YH

**5 Church Hall Report:**

**(i) Appointment of new hall co-ordinator and caretaker:**

Aloma James has been approved by the PCC and has been made Bookings Manager for the Hall. When the Hall reopens she will begin a three month probationary period. ShB offered to support Aloma in the role. The PCC will have to decide whether it is appropriate to employ a hall caretaker at some point in the future to assist with hall maintenance and also Fabric Committee tasks.

ShB

**(ii) Church Hall Toilets; Quotes:**

IJ was actioned to do this but has not been able to do much, due

IJ

- to the lockdown and retailers being closed.
- (iii) **Church Hall Grant:** £10,000 was received from East Hampshire District Council in line with the Government direction for losses due to the Covid-19 closures. **WH**
  - (iv) **Hall License:** This requires renewal very soon and Debby Barnes (previous licensee) is retiring. Therefore we need to train another member of the PCC or ask the Pub Landlord at the Castle of Comfort if he would be willing to take on the role for the hall. Good communication would be required between the Bookings Manager and the Pub so that things could run smoothly. SR will approach the Publican. **SR**
  - (v) **Hall Cleaner:** Maxine has had a baby boy, and thinks she may be able to return to work in a few months. EP suggested that we pay her 80% of what would have been her last three months' earnings as a gift. PCC approved unanimously by those present. WH to liaise with AL to fulfil. **WH**  
**AL**

**5. Canon Ed's Report:**

Cathy Dumelow and Liz Preece are organising a Benefice Said Communion Service at Bentworth on 19th July. There will be no singing. An outdoor Evening Prayer Service will be held outside Shalden Church on the same day. EP is working with all the Benefice Church Wardens to make this happen.

Weddings and Funerals can take place in Churches from Saturday 4th July. There is a limit of 30 people maximum at venues, and some will be too small. EP and Wardens are to decide whether the Church Buildings are too small for this to work. **EP**  
**AL**

EP will continue producing services online for those who are finding them helpful in the current climate. EP wished to give a note of thanks to all who have helped with readings and music, and contributed to the services. **SR**

EP wished to thank those who have been delivering food to the Foodbank Box in the Church Porch. 750 tonnes are needed per week to support 70 local families in the Alton area. There is a real need for this at the moment.

**7. Church Warden's Report: SR**

The heating faculty has been granted. Update in next agenda item. Still need to get the projector screen looked at re earthing as it is still not working. **SR**

Ian Jurd has the keyboard from the vestry in lieu of the replacement door for the electrical board.

SR is still trying to locate the faculty paperwork for the replacement organ to know what we can do with the organ pipes stored in the external cupboard. Having been through all files in the Upper Room which have been transferred to the Hub, will have to wait for Hampshire Records office to

open to locate the original.

Smiths of Derby have been contacted regarding the clock winding (due a service) and timing can then be corrected. No response as yet.

A rota needs to be established for unlocking and locking the church for private prayer (Sunday 10-12 and Wednesday 2-4pm). **AL**

SR and AL met a local resident to discuss trimming overhanging branches and replacement of fence to end of their garden on edge of churchyard, so need to liaise with Parish Council (re tree). Ian Jurd has suggested that the fence belongs to the Church. **SR**  
**AL**

EP thanked the Churchwardens and very especially SR for all the work they had done during the Pandemic lockdown.

### **Church Heating Update**

David Hayward has accepted SGN contract for laying gas to the church. Before lockdown there was a minimum 55-day wait, so we are now in their queue.

DH has contacted Steep Oil Tanks about removing the old tank, disconnecting and draining down the boiler. Then A+ Asbestos can remove the oil fired boiler. Carl McHenry can then undertake the electrical upgrade work approved in the January PCC Meeting. Some repointing and brickwork can then be done to allow for the gas meter to be installed with the appropriate vents added to the side panel by the new door that IJ installed. This is an additional requirement following discussion with SGN and the boiler supplier having thoroughly checked the relevant British Standards and the Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers Technical Guidelines. Quotes need to be sought. IJ has given us a quote. **DH**

The boiler can then be installed; the overhead expansion tank removed from the church and DH can take a holiday!

Due to pecuniary interest EP requested IJ to leave the Zoom meeting. EP said he would email him to return to the Zoom meeting. EP very grateful to IJ, DH, SR and others who have done such a huge amount of work with the steps and organising the new heating. SR summarised the work so far and the preparation work required prior to installation of new boiler. IJ had offered a quote for the complete work required to prepare for the installation of the new boiler. This had initially included a labour charge of £300. Having consulted the Archdeacon, EP reminded the PCC that we are not permitted to offer paid work to one of the Church Trustees (a PCC member) without seeking at least one other competitive quote. There is no rush to complete the work. IJ is going on holiday from 14th July until September and would prefer to do any work before going, ideally from 5<sup>th</sup> July onwards. EP said that we are not going to fall within that time frame if we have to get other quotes before deciding on who does the work. He acknowledged that one of the PCC was willing to contribute towards the cost of labour, and he

acknowledged this tremendous kindness.

StB suggested that he and DH thought it is almost immoral to ask other people to provide quotes for this work when we know that IJ's quote is probably 50% cheaper than most quotes for the work will be. DH would have to put a schedule together, knowing that those people are not going to get the contract. WH said that if you are a Trustee you have to abide by protocols of the good governance of charitable committees and rules are in place to prevent favouring one of the Trustees. She said, with respect, DH is not a Trustee, so understandably cannot comment on these matters.

StB said that he reads the protocol on conflict of interest rules as: so long as one of the members does not profiteer by doing so, and the PCC agree to it, you don't have to get further quotes.

WH said the problem (with respect to this) is that a Trustee is asking to be paid for work, and so would profit, regardless of whether the quote turns out to be cheaper. We should follow good protocol as Trustees, and IJ is a member of the PCC. StB questioned that if IJ did the work with no labour charges, we would not have to go through this. Members agree that would be acceptable. WH reminded members that SR does not take payment for being an Administrator and neither do some of the other officers of the Church. This is proper practice for Trustees, such as on the PCC, who wish to claim payment for services.

AL questioned what objection could there be to getting other quotes? StB reiterated that it was down to the fact that DH still had to put a schedule together, and be available for the other tradesmen to inspect. AL pointed out that tradesmen always realise that they are not necessarily going to succeed with every quote, so if they are prepared to quote, then we should go down that route.

JL agreed that it was right and proper to get other quotes if a Trustee is planning to charge - we have no other option. SaB agreed with this, and said that if IJ's quote is cheaper we would consider him, but if it doesn't fit with our timescale because he is away, then we would not have to necessarily take the cheapest quote – all things have to be considered, to follow due process and to protect everyone involved.

EP recognised that IJ was offering a good price for the work, but we must absolutely follow protocol on these matters as directed by Charity Law and the Archdeacon's ruling on this. He explained that there have been serious problems across the Benefices where such regulations have not been followed. 'The Archdeacon would question me if we are in breach of the Church Law.' He totally understands the additional work for David, StB's point of view and the offer of IJ, but we cannot be in breach of the Archdeacon's advice on this.

StB would like to know if there were three quotes done for the electrical work in church? SR confirmed that she went through Parish Buying, and that

their suggested tradesman's quote was much more expensive than the chosen quote, and that the PCC approved that decision to go with CMC back in January's PCC meeting, and it then went into the faculty application.

EP suggested that he invite IJ back to the meeting, and that he will tell him that even though the offer is good, that we must also get quotes. Present PCC agreed with this decision except StB. EP emailed IJ to return to the meeting.

WH mentioned that DH is looking for help in recovering grants for the various boiler contracts. Possible grant may come from FOSAC.

StB and JL have left their screens currently. ShB says her Zoom has crashed and she cannot see anyone. PCC members can see her and hear her. She will disconnect and reconnect.

AL announces she is leaving the meeting in five minutes.

IJ returns and when told that we recognise his kind offer but that we are duty bound, as directed by the Archdeacon, to get another quote first. IJ then withdrew his offer and all offers of work for St Andrew's church in the future. EP regretted this reaction and stated it was not to be taken personally. IJ felt that it was a very personal decision on the part of the PCC as they had accepted a quote from an electrician 'without getting other quotes', who is not a member of the church, and it makes it appear that they trust the electrician more than they trust him (IJ). IJ feels that it will now delay the heating installation ('and that is on your heads'). IJ reminded EP that he had already emailed him and offered to do the initial preparation work at no cost. EP agreed this, but had understood that only the initial work for installing the gas meter was without charge. IJ agreed that this was indeed the case. StB had already agreed to assist IJ to ensure that there are safe working practices. EP said that this initial work, labour free, and with StB's assistance would be totally acceptable, but that we would still need quotes for the remainder of the work that he would be charging labour for. (IJ's wife Jackie, suddenly joined the meeting). They mentioned that problems 30 years ago with the church had nearly made them bankrupt, and that he was not prepared to be treated in this way by people over concerned by regulations. Jackie Jurd and IJ leave the meeting.

EP expressed his sadness by what they had said.

StB says that he feels the same as them, and that wanted to leave the meeting, and withdraw his help for the church from now on. When EP requests him not to, StB said that 'all the hiding behind legality sounds like you are a bunch of Pharisees sticking to the law and not to the ethos that we have of trying to live a Christian life and getting things done'.

SaB reiterates that the church is a Christian organisation under Charity Law and that we have to stand by these rules and obligations. She believes as a Trustee we are doing the right thing. EP said that IJ was offering to put a

vent in by the door and some initial repointing work for the gas meter installation. This was the only work he might do voluntarily, and not the other work quoted for (2 - 3 days work). He apologised if he had not made that clear earlier. EP said he can only follow the advise he has been given that we cannot pay fellow Trustees for work without getting outside quotes. It is not personal.

SR said that the reason this work needs to take place is that DH has been very thorough with regard to his overseeing the heating installation and aims to make sure everything is up to regulation. SR said that there was no immediate urgency for the meter to be installed, and that it has just been accelerated due to IJ going away on holiday, but that we cannot by-pass the correct procedure, just because of that. 'If somebody is going to accuse me of being unchristian, immoral and a Pharisee then go ahead.'

EP tells StB that he is overburdened with rules and regulations, and has always warmly welcomed generous offers of help from the good people like IJ of this world. But unfortunately he is constantly being told we have to obey regulations. EP will talk with IJ before he goes away, consult with him 'and hopefully keep our friendship'. EP says that he immensely values everyone's kindness, and knows it comes from Christian hearts and that this is what makes the church what it is and can then care for the bereaved and do all that we do. But the church nationally is burdened by buildings and therefore can't always do all that we want to do. He then acknowledged StB's and ShB's vast amount of time and work. SR does an enormous amount of work behind the scenes as Benefice Administrator, and again, IJ's contribution and work for the church has been exemplary, and EP is sorry that he doesn't feel valued. 'IJ's contribution to the life and ministry of the church is exemplary.'

StB wanted to know if there was a lower limit on tenders for the church, i.e. to change an electrical plug. Technically, do we get three quotes for that? SR said that there is no lower limit unless the standing committee can set a lower limit. StB agreed that this would be a good arrangement. SR confirms that the quote looks very reasonable, but that she can't assess a daily rate or length of time for the job, as she is not qualified builder.

JL returns to the meeting and is sad to hear all the animosity and that IJ does not feel valued with the years that he has put in, or StB or ShB, because of course they are valued. But it is a matter of practicality rather than personality.

EP suggests a pause to pray for healing amongst our friends and fellow members. EP leads the PCC in prayer for healing and that we would treasure one another, not just the old stones but the living stones

**9. Safeguarding:** DP not present and no report received.

**10. Social Committee:** ShB raised the planned 'virtual fete' which may still go ahead, but outside villagers' front doors with tables. She proposes three stalls

in the hall car park, as church grounds are off limits. A tombola, sweet and book stall are planned. She requires the PCC's support to confirm that they may contact the congregation for donations. There were no objections amongst present members to this idea. Any money made will go to the food bank. EP confirms that the hall cannot be used, including the toilets at the moment. SR confirmed and suggested that we get a risk assessment from Logan Colbeck (LC) (H&S Advisor).

ShB  
LC

11. **Music Committee:** PB sent a report in his absence which was read out by EP: 'Everyone is deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend Jean Penny who over many years contributed enormously to the music at St Andrews as well as the wider benefice, not only as a wonderful alto in the choir, but also in many concerts. She is deeply missed by all of us.'

The music committee feel fortunate to have been able to contribute musical recordings for our virtual services and will continue to provide this for as long as necessary. Many thanks to Wendy Busy, John Lofthouse and family, Ed and others for providing music to enhance these services. We look forward to providing music when we are able to hold services again in our Benefice churches.'

EP reminded us that no wind instruments or singing are allowed when church buildings re-open.

12. **Correspondence:** YH Confirmed that no correspondence has been received.

13. **AOB:**

- (i) **Parish Council War Memorial Responsibility**  
SR thinks that the Medstead Parish Council are responsible for the War Memorial, but this will be confirmed in due course when the Diocesan Office have checked their records. **SR**
- (ii) **Food Bank:** SaB updated the members: Food is now bagged up beforehand, and that there are three sessions per week. Demand is higher due to the current situation. They now have e-referrals for confidentiality. The Food Bank appreciates all the giving and donations. ShB reminded EP that the requirements listed on the website are now out of date. EP will update the website to read 'Please check the Food Bank website to see which donations are currently required'. Margaret Pruen and EP had collected nearly £1000 of food from the church porch during the pandemic lockdown. **EP**
- (iii) **Planned Resignations:** Both churchwardens. APCM might be in October, so be aware and proactive in filling those gaps. EP has approached people, but no positive response as yet. Gay Howard is stepping down as Deanery Rep. Antonia Goor (Lasham) is the

Benefice Representative now, so as long as we are represented, EP reassured members that will be fine.

(iv) SaB congratulated EP on his 40 years of service.

(v) Becci Barnley is standing down as a Medstead school Foundation Governor.

Anonymous CVs are being put forward for new governors and one may be a possible Foundation Governor replacement.

**14. Date of Next Meeting:** The date of the next PCC meeting will be confirmed by email.

EP

**15. Closing Prayers:** The meeting closed with the Grace led by EP.