

Minutes PCC Meeting 4.30 at Peter's 12/3/20

Present: Canon Ed Pruen, Peter Rankin, Jane Shirvell, Sarah Floyd, Kirsty Ennever, Henry Wilson, Ian Champness, David Lacey

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies. Cynthia Buchanan,

The agenda for this meeting is:

1. The role of Shalden Church within the benefice

With reference to the Archdeacon's reference in correspondence with Michael to 'Deployment of Future Resources by the Diocese'.

Canon Ed confirms that there are no known plans to close or change the role of Shalden Church. Questions or further clarification?

Does this effect what we may wish to do for future improvements and facilities to serve the building?

2. The role of Shalden PCC in leading our church community

The role description of the PCC has been circulated by Canon Ed.

"It shall be the duty of the Incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish. The functions of the PCC shall include: Co-operation with the Incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical; the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest. "

What does this mean to the members and how might this be developed to meet the parish's current and future needs?

It is suggested here that each member expresses their view, concerns and opportunities for 3 minutes max.

David will then summarise and we can then propose agree and propose actions and next steps.

EP Welcome everybody. It's good to see we don't have to do the usual PCC agenda. Today is about our long term thinking, and the ideas that we have, and for us to listen to each other. Here is an opportunity for us to be listened to. I think it is fair to say that we wanted some reassurance about whether or not the church is ever likely to close or not. To quote the email that Michael got from Richard Brand, "the current situation is that diocesan synod has asked for the development of a diocesan wide deployment plan. The purpose of this is to ensure that the vision and strategic priorities of the diocese, which are well known, have ministry resources deployed to best deliver those priorities. The expectation is such a deployment plan will affect a large number of parishes across the diocese. The details this is being worked through. To my understanding, whilst this plan may result in significant pastoral reorganisation in many places, it does not involve plans to close churches. We want to continue to be present in every community: given resources and changing needs, how you are at present will change in many cases. If a local community or benefice can no longer afford to keep the church in good repair, or discerns that the time has come for one or more of its churches to be closed, we would work with them to that end. But to repeat there is currently no diocesan plan to close churches. Your question uses the words "in full-time use". This is above, how we are present as a church in many communities will need to change. So, for example, the sharing of services across an area may well have to change. Some churches will have to become a version of what are called festival churches and be used for major services, occasional offices and one or two other occasions."

Response to a similar question from Michael del Mar of Lasham, Rolf Hawkins said, "is the responsibility of the incumbent and the PCC and only with their approval could the church ever be closed. If the incumbent or the PCC ever decided that the church could no longer be a viable building, was no longer in regular use for services, a number of options could present themselves. The church could become a Chapel of Ease, it remains consecrated for certain services and is the responsibility of the village.

Any reordering carried out should have a reasonable expected life."

So what I am hearing from the Archdeacon is that there are absolutely no plans whatsoever to close any church in the diocese unless a PCC requested specifically. It is very expensive to close a church and they don't want to be doing that.

MC Who is preparing the Diocesan wide deployment plan?

EP I don't know. There is talk on Deanery level of bigger benefices with more staff. The old model of putting in a single priest into a benefice and the parishes in that benefice expecting the priest to behave like a parish priest is not viable. Vision for the church is much more to do with working together in partnership with lay people, with lay people having much more opportunity for training, and services that aren't constantly dependent on a priest.

IC Can I ask for clarification? In the annual report you say there needs to be at least an exploration of coming together as a single PCC, doesn't that lead to closing of the church?

EP I don't see why. It becomes one parish, with four housekeeping types of meeting going on. The money is kept separate in individual designated accounts.

KE Our reluctance to consider the single parish has been our experience of working together with another village on the fete. Lack of cooperation between the individuals, and obviously it comes down to individuals, made it impossible. As a PCC, we do have individual differences, but when we meet to work on an event together we put aside those differences and work very well.

EP That is because we have the same aims. It would be good today to agree what are the aims of the Shalden PCC. What do we really want for Shalden parish and for the church?

HW I think if something's not broke, you don't fix it and the church in Shalden is not broke. I think a discussion about closure is a dangerous discussion, because it could be a self-fulfilling prophecy. I am not in favour of there being a single parish because I think there will be a lot of friction.

MC there is going to be a diocesan wide deployment plan, and that is going to consider these very issues that we are talking about now and that is why it is important to discuss them. I would love to see the possibility of being more integrated within the benefice. The advantage would be survival, bringing in new members of the congregation.

JS I think our congregation is healthy for the size of the church. We don't have young people. Yes, it would be lovely to have young people but they are not interested.

MC The whole country is becoming more secular. I don't see why people should turn to the church. We are lacking in leadership. The church is not offering enough.

HW There are young people in the parish with children, but they do not want to go to church at 9.15 and probably not at 6 o'clock in the evening. But those children will grow up and make their way in the world, and just as we did, and then they may go to Church. It is all moving. They get involved in the village. We have a very good community, but I think the community should be based around the church. If we change it, I think we risk everything.

PR one of the questions for this meeting is how can we gain a wider engagement of the community in the village with the church. There are a number of people who are helpers in the church, whether it is cleaning, or opening doors, we don't see them very often in the church. We need to think about a way of engaging better with that wider community, which are there but we are not harvesting them.

JS They come to the special services.

KE one suggestion I do have, a positive suggestion, is to do the questionnaire again. Obviously it would have different questions, but it is trying to find out what the people in the village want. It was really revealing last time. Something like 90% would mind if the church closed. This time we could do it online.

EP The sustainability of the pattern of services is a problem. We cannot rely on retired clergy as part of the equation. The only way to get back to having a monthly benefice service is to cut one of the services from Shalden or Lasham.

The question is how do we change the thinking of the church, this model as it is one vicar to a group of churches, who does all the services, chairs all the meetings, attends the WI, does all the millions of things that he has to do, that is what is unsustainable and in a way yes it is broke. I can't be your parish priest that you might have known a parish priest before. It is all about lay ministry nowadays.

KE one of the problems is the layers of bureaucracy that seem to have emerged in the church as a whole. £200 million has been put aside for child abuse victims, that is enough to fund all the bishops and the palaces and their staff for four years. So that is £50 million a year to run the bishops. I find that shocking.

HW what gets me is church speak. It is absolutely alienating. Why can't they write like other people and give a simple message.

MC the message wants to be simplified. The simplification is that we are lacking in morals and those morals need to be said, just take the 10 Commandments.

IC there are statements from the Synod, such as recently, partnerships cannot be blessed. What planet are they on? People's perception is the church is out of touch with reality.

JS Role of Shalden PCC in leading the Church community

At this time I have no confidence in the leadership of the Church of England and feel that they have become a top heavy business who are becoming impossible to respect. By imposing so many rules and regulations and demands both financially and politically, they are losing the willingness of the good folk who actually just want to be able to help their local Church and worship their God in a quiet, peaceful and joyful way.

Saying that, I feel that as a PCC we all work hard to support the running of our Church. Personally I would not be willing to extend my role beyond my current involvement. I think by trying to show a Christian outlook by a warm and caring attitude to friends, neighbours and visitors is the most important way to encourage more to come to Church..and trying to get as many involved in taking part in normal and special services, flowers, cleaning, coffee rotas, etc as we can.

SF I feel that we need to keep the building as such in the best order we can without going over the top. I feel it's very important to keep the building watertight, not all the frills or whatever.

JS it's such an important thing, to be able to go into the church to talk to the God that you want to talk to. We don't all have the same view, the same face, we have an individual way of how we think of God or Jesus, and I am not one who would go up to somebody and start talking about God. But I would like to think that somebody would look and think.....

IC the part of the function of the PCC that I am uncomfortable with is, "cooperating with the minister, in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. I remember Ben saying to us, "I am far too busy to go round and knock on doors. That is your job." I want to know if I can stay on the PCC if I don't fulfil these things.

EP A lot of these things are written by people who have never been an incumbent and never worked in a parish.

DL Canon Ed to spend part of one day a week visiting people in Shalden. Visit people who have never come to church, hello, I am your vicar, I do your christenings weddings and funerals and baptisms, I just wanted you to see my face and give you my card which has got my numbers on it just in case you need me and of course you're very welcome to come to church if ever you wish. Also to see people 6 months after a bereavement, or a wedding. I think for example just to make a personal point, you were really good when Monica was dying, stunning, absolutely stunning, but after she died I didn't see you. It just may be good, because you are in a delicate situation, to get a visit. Should the priest go and see these people three or six months after their husband or wife has died? People who get married in the church, it would be good to see them six months afterwards and ask them: how are you getting on? There needs to be somebody in the community who asks them do you fight?do you argue? is everything alright?

I think we could do services combined with talks so for example, Canon Ed, you were suggesting to allow parishioners to take services, if a priest cannot be supplied, so for example, this year Aug 6th is the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb. It would be interesting to have a service during which there is a talk on nuclear weapons, nuclear

bombs, nuclear power, the effect on Japan. What I would really like to do is to have a look around the village and see who is a good speaker, find a subject for them to speak on, and then find an anniversary when they could speak. So that the church service would not just be a religious occasion, there would be a religious bit to it, but the main bit would be a speech by a villager. Also the hundredth anniversary of Einstein's discovery of the General Relativity. So that we could have a service and also some sort of academic input.

I also like Jane's idea of special services. Services with a particular slant such as the animal service and the Queen's Anniversary are popular and could be increased. This is another version of working on anniversaries. This year, for example, is the 100th anniversary of the tomb of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey. It is the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Pilgrims landing Cape Cod. Aug 20th is the 80th anniversary of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill making his famous wartime speech containing the line "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"

Are there any opportunities for more people to participate in services. I don't see any evidence of numbers increasing at Christmas Carol Services which have a variety of people reading, but I feel the idea of getting other people in the village to come in and read is good.

So 4 proposals:

1. Canon Ed to visit people in Shalden part of one day each week: mainly people who do not know him.
2. Chose someone who is a good speaker, and find an anniversary that they could speak about in a service. Chose people who do not generally come to church.
3. Have more 'special services'.
4. Encourage more people to participate in services, e.g. to read lessons.

SF Canon Ed does not have time to visit people, what about having one service a month less, and he could use that time to see people in Shalden.

MC I like the idea of people talking in services. It could be reactive, rather than proactive, so that, if we hear that someone is staying with Henry for example, seize the occasion.

EP We all feel quite bad that we do a funeral, and then you're on to the next one. Sarah Bankhead is unfortunately not available for this. Guilt is what I experience because I do not manage all the visits I need to make.

KE What about having a schedule for making visits when schools are on holiday?

DL Talking to people when you see them is different to a formal sit down, face-to-face meeting in which specific questions are asked.

MC Would you be amenable to someone ringing up and saying, we have matins on Sunday and we have this amazing person staying who could give a talk.

EP Yes, as long as it is not a sermon, I have too many sermons to preach. As long as it is within the ethos.

IC We need discussions of topical issues.

EP What we desperately need is a family worker, skilled to do funeral and wedding follow ups.

MC Brian Pritchard said, we do not want people like you in the Synod, we want active, visionary people. How are we going to get these people?

APCM

IC As an ageing PCC are we looking for younger members. I approached Luke. He is interested and needs to talk to you (Canon Ed).

HW I very much welcome Luke. We should never say there is no room for younger people.

KE The questionnaire? : publish this next year and then it will be 5 years.

There are a lot of people who help on an informal basis, it would be useful to have a list of these.

PR Michelle and myself are happy to host a tea for them.

HW Can we enlarge the list of readers? I would rather they read a lesson at a normal service. It gets people involved.

PR We could ask a few people at this tea party.

EP Thank you very much.

The Grace

Proposals

1. Send out questionnaire, to find out what the people in the village want.
2. To determine the aims of Shalden PCC.
3. To keep the building as such in the best order we can without going over the top.
4. Canon Ed to visit people in Shalden part of one day each week: mainly people who do not know him.
5. Chose someone who is a good speaker, and find an anniversary that they could speak about in a service. Chose people who do not generally come to church.
6. Have more 'special services'.
7. Encourage more people to participate in services, e.g. to read lessons.
8. Have a tea party at Peter's for a lot of people who help on an informal basis.