

PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY REDBOURN

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THE 8TH JULY 2020 via Zoom**

Present: The Vicar Celia Forbes David Forbes Stephen Gell Brian Hayward
 Julia Jeffs Ailsa Hulme Jim May David Mitchell Lesley Poulton
 Michelle Parry Slater Alan Simkins Kay Vernon Paul Vernon
 David Walker Clive Williams Mike Wood

Ruth Hughes, the independent examiner of our accounts was in attendance

Apologies for Absence: Ralph Goold Julie Henman Jill Whitehouse

John Davie was unable to access the meeting via Zoom

The Vicar opened the meeting with a prayer at 8.10 pm

The Vicar welcomed everyone to our first PCC meeting via Zoom. Our sympathies were extended to Keith McAdam and his family on the recent death of his mother.

1) Minutes of the PCC Meeting held 5th February 2020

The minutes were approved as drawn and will be signed by the Vicar in due course. There were no matters arising.

2) Finance

Mike Wood had circulated Draft Accounts for the year to 31st December 2019 prior to the meeting. The approved accounts will be available for the APCM which needs to be held by the end of October. We hope that this will not be a Zoom meeting.

Mike took everyone through the draft, giving full explanations as necessary. Planned Giving saw a rise in the region of 9% following a successful stewardship appeal before Lent last year, which also increased Gift Aid by a relative amount. Transept lettings showed a considerable increase, thanks to the good administration of Wendy Cruickshank. Our overall income was similar to the previous year. Our Parish Share, although raised by 4%, was still paid in full. Parish Office expenses showed a marked decrease following the decreased expense of having a curate for only half the year. A major overhaul of the organ cost some £11000, and we are grateful to the Friends for their generosity both for this and some major work in the churchyard.

Overall there was a very significant improvement over our precarious position at the end of 2018. Mike reported that he has been liaising with a number of suppliers in order to get better deals for our utilities.

Approval of the Accounts for 2019 was:-

Proposed by: Ailsa Hulme Seconded by: Jim May Passed: Nem Con

Ruth Hughes will check with the Charity Commissioners as to the timing for the lodging of our accounts. It is expected that the timing may have been extended because of the Covid 19 virus. Mike and Ruth were thanked profusely for the time and effort they have put in to produce the accounts.

Budget for 2020

Although the Covid 19 circumstances have greatly influenced our finances, a keen watch has been kept on our cash flow. Will's letter to the congregation was very well received and resulted in donations of some £24000 including gift aid. We are very grateful to all who donated.

The Sum Up terminal is being set up again, and the votive candle stand sees regular payments for the purchase of candles. This is emptied every day.

Mike and Ruth took us through the budget which was accepted with no amendments.

As a matter of interest, the Diocese expects to be £1 million short this year. We are pleased that the Wheathampstead Deanery as a whole, has been able to pay 92% of their Parish Share.

Formal Adoption of the Budget for 2020 was:-

Proposed by: Mike Wood Seconded by: Brian Hayward Passed: Nem Con

General Finance

Mike reported that the new Bank Accounts are open, but not everything has yet been moved over from HSBC. Paying our Parish Share is always at the forefront of priorities. The CFC Charity for 2020, the water project in Mpapwa, will be carried over into 2021, as our ability to fund raise has been so curtailed this year. However, we have been able to pass over the sum that has been raised so far in order that the project can get under way.

3) Churchwardens' Report

The gutters and gulleys have been cleaned out recently. Will was thanked for keeping a watchful eye over the buildings for the last few months.

4) Covid 19

Will had circulated a lengthy paper prior to the meeting, setting out the situation as it affects St Mary's, and asking for feedback from PCC members.

Many people have stated how much they have appreciated the online services and the skill required to produce them.

Many have missed the friendship and social interaction they are used to from fellow worshippers, especially those who live alone, may have no family nearby, and particularly those who have recently been bereaved.

Many felt that their spiritual needs are being met, and that the online outreach is good. It has been appreciated that so many have been included in the services for readings and intercessions, and that there is such a great age range in participants. The choir and organ

music are appreciated. Many have remarked that they enjoyed the filmed visit up the church tower and around the parish.

The lesser involvement of the young people is concerning and more effort will be needed in order to engage them. The elderly who may be less computer literate and those who are housebound are also very concerning. It could be some time before we are able to offer lifts to church in safety – the Day Centre, in particular, comes to mind.

Will has been taking round 'Worship at Home' packs, and Stephen is able to make DVD's for those without internet.

We will try to be ultra safe and compliant with authority, but we cannot ourselves give anyone a guarantee of safety – it is up to individuals to weigh up the pros and cons of joining larger groups of people, even if socially distanced according to their own underlying health.

Will drew attention to the proposal to offer church services, albeit to reduced numbers, and to maintain a safe flow of people around the church. It was suggested that Will might circulate a letter to the congregation outlining the proposals. The wi-fi signal has now been installed in the church as well as the transept, and we will encourage the use of technology to follow the services so that books need not be handled quite so much.

All things considered, we must ensure that what we try to deliver is sustainable. It is planned to have some outside services starting on 26 July, which will of course, be governed by the weather. The Patronal Festival will be on the 6th September.

In order to reintroduce the service pattern proposed in this phased way, a resolution by the PCC is needed to cover our obligations for offering public worship under Canon Law:-

"The Vicar and Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Redbourn acting jointly authorise the dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as require by Canon B11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B14 on the following occasions:- Sunday 5th July 2020, Sunday 12th July 2020 and Sunday 19th July 2020. The reason for the dispensation is that in the light of the Government guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus, there is no church in the benefice which can be used safely for public worship on these occasions"

Proposed By: Ailsa Hulme Seconded by: David Forbes Passed Nem Con

It will be possible to hire the Transept for small bookings, but this raises the issue of the amount of cleaning necessary and the implied extra cost.

Safeguarding

There was nothing to report in regard to Safeguarding.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Grace at 10.45 pm.

Next Full PCC Meeting: 2nd September. (This could also be by Zoom – to be confirmed)