

Parish Church of St Mary Redbourn
Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Meeting
Held on the 28th March 2023 in the Church

Present:

Andy Ford	Lesley Poulton	Keith McAdam	Paul Vernon
Deni Ennals	Catharine Pusey	John Davie	Jim May
Ailsa Hulme	David Walker	David Mitchell	Sue May
Jan Lang	Steven Gell	Mike Woods	Kay Vernon

Michelle Parry-Slater (Chair) Sarah Hill (Minutes)

Apologies: Liz Middleton Daphne Fisher Julia Murphy Ralph Gould
David Forbes Celia Forbes Clive Williams

Michelle Parry-Slater opened the meeting at 8.15pm with a prayer.

1. Sarah Hill approved for recording minutes in the absence of the PCC Secretary..
2. Minutes from 11 & 22nd January were approved as drawn, and there were no matters arising which are not dealt with under the present agenda. With reference to the minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 22nd January, there was general discussion about the number of members on the PCC. The view was that the PCC is too big and needs to be reduced by three people. There are four absentees due to health and vacancies will be created as a result. A reduction in numbers for the PCC is not as easy as first appears and it was suggested to wait for the new Vicar to approve and review the matter, which would result in waiting two years to take effect. There are eighteen elected people in total plus ex-officio. The meeting debated, do we stand with the number we have, which is the correct number for the electoral roll. It was decided to remain with the decision that was made at the extraordinary meeting on 22nd January 2023. The APCM needs to approve the decision.

Matters arising from the minutes – none.

3. Worship & ministry

Paul V stated that in the last few years, (since Covid 2020) the Sunday 9.30am service has been held outside commencing on Easter Sunday. It was agreed at the ministry meeting that the first Sunday outside for this year will be on 7th May 2023 for the Coronation. Then from the first Sunday in June outside worship will continue outside (weather permitting) until 3rd September. The Patronal Festival will take place inside. There was a general discussion about setting up outside and the amount of effort that is required and is undertaken by a very few people. A team of people is needed to set up which includes, moving the keyboard and some chairs for visitors (regular congregation will be encouraged to bring their own chairs from the beginning of the outside season), sound kit etc. It was also noted that music would be live, reducing some of the complexity in operating the sound desk, but that it would impact on the choir and choice of music. This may be easier to facilitate. Reduced complexity for the service itself is also required. The general consensus of the meeting is that it is good to be

outside and more accessible for the general public, in the vicinity and people using the church yard as an act of outreach/witness.

Action: A rota is required for preparation for outside worship. Publicise after Easter and information about help required to set up on Sundays, to be publicised in the pew sheets.

Communion by extension – Kay presented this topic which is to be used in the case of an emergency where there is no vicar to take the service. Host would have to be obtained from a local church nearby after their early service. There is a specified booklet that has to be used. For communion without a priest, permission has to be sought from the Bishop every time. Consecrated wafers & wine are taken from another church, for example Tim Vickers at Southdown, could be asked. This will affect the 8am service.

Kay V proposed and Sue M seconded. Passed Nem Com.

4. **Safeguarding** presented by Jan Lang. Her last visit was in November. Jan presented and reported that we are fully compliant, at this point. However, we must provide a full report. To Note; Compliance should apply April – April, incident reports December to December. There are three people on the PCC who are sick and do not attend, and have not completed their training. Non-completion of safeguarding training may affect our insurance, so it is imperative it is prioritised for those affected. There is a new dashboard for Jan to upload to a system so all the safeguarding information can be viewed.

Action: Impress upon all members of PCC after APCM the need for training completion.

5. **Finance report.** Mike Woods thanked Ruth, who has supported him and spent a huge amount of time and late nights looking over these accounts for the previous year.. Cash & planned giving are both down. Rental from property has increased however the church cottage was vacant for three months. The property is now rented out, so a return has been seen. Bank interest increased due to the rise in interest rates. Hamper fund is now dealt with by Redbourn charities. Parish magazine sales for 2022 are stable however currently unsure yet of the impact on going online although expenses have been reduced. Mpwapwa pumps monies are accrued in last year's accounts. There was an error resulting in £770 given to both Emmaus & Mpwapwa which was discussed to be rectified. Generally all expenses have all increased. Utilities are up a little until 2024 fixed rate. Church expenses increased including heating work and a new boiler, both covered by FOSM. Parish magazine printing cost has increased considerably. Church trips have increased. The catch all £10k additional is over and above what we would expect due to HR / legal fees. The work done on the cottage has proved to be a good investment, and thus allowed an increase in rent. Raising funds is the challenge, Coffee on /off is a contributor to the church. Losses from our investments: property valuation cottage valued at £20k more than last year and old church hall £15k less than last year, net increase of only £5k. One loan on the old church hall has been paid off. Parish share reduced by only 20% due to vacancy. Electoral role to be reviewed which affects the share. It's been a difficult year, utilising resource in best possible way. Operating deficit for the year is £960, however this is due to Mission funds covering everyday expenses, including extra spending on HR services. It is not intended to use property money for operating costs but for outreach & mission which it is not being used for currently.

There will be costs not repeated next year for HR services and Organist and choirmaster's salary (now covered by volunteers) which will be saved next year, as the rest of the costs should be covered by insurance.

Mike W thanked Jim M for doing the banking; there has been a lot of work due to changing the bank we now use. Also add in Gift Aid - this is recoverable is against the planned giving - monies coming into the church.

Agreed that these will go to the APCM voted to go forward Nem Com, with huge thanks to Ruth H & Mike W.

Action: Mike W will provide a report for the APCM to be attached with these minutes of 28th March.

7. Churchwardens & Fabric report

The Quinquennial report approved by the architect has taken a while to come back. The architect will put the schedule of work out to tender, and will liaise with the Diocesan Advisory Committee. We are hopeful that the work won't involve scaffolding on the outside for new vicar Rachel Wakefield's installation, but it is more important to get the work done this year. Bids for the work should come in at about £40k of work, the Transept roof work is not included. This is all within the current balance of the FOSM funds.

Paul V shared the designs created by the Textiles group who are working on this new design for the altar frontal. There are two panels of sewn fabric, to be used for Advent and potentially Lent. Permission required from the DAC.

Also, cushions are being made to match the cushions on the two episcopal chairs and for the chairs in front of the screen.

Michelle has asked for a detailed list of the robes that belong to Will who would like them back, but currently has no need for them.

Action: PCC agreed to submit the designs to the DAC

Eco-church: We have someone interested in joining PCC to step into the role as an Eco-Church lead and who will take us through the A Rocha awards and will bring a challenge on this issue. Keith M raised thanks to David Walker for running the Lent course on the topic of Climate crisis, stating the excellence of this course for the Churches Together in Redbourn, he said the material and subject was very good and challenging. Ailsa H mentioned that there is some limited funding available from Cof E whose aim is to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Action: Eco-church to be on May agenda.

8. Ancillary Buildings

Nothing to report. A question was asked about the property Court Case; this will be in July 2023 at the small claims court in Watford. The outcome will go on the PCC meeting agenda for September 2023.

9. Stewardship report

The Stewardship committee met on 20th March to hear from the Diocesan Giving Advisor, Kate Ford on how to improve giving at St Mary's. The conversation was predicated on the notion that we are not going to operate a large giving campaign whilst in vacancy. However, we do want to nudge giving up to close the gap of £20,000+ in our giving that exists. The following action points came from the meeting; That the Church should adopt the Parish

Giving Scheme (<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/>) – this will be trialled by members of the Stewardship Committee and any willing members of the PCC.

Resolution passed Nem Com: We the PCC of St Mary's Redbourn request the Parish Giving Scheme to commence operation of the scheme on our behalf.

Action: Set up Parish Giving Scheme to be in place by APCM .

10. Youth & Young People.

Ailsa H stated she was very sorry that it will not be possible to run the holiday club this year, there are not enough helpers which affects the ratio of helpers & subsequent safeguarding challenges. Ailsa H reported that people who have been doing children's work for 20 years have said that they will now stop.

Kay V reported her intention to run a confirmation course for a church family.

11. Churchyard

Paul V attended a church yard management day at St Hugh's Lewsey, Luton, put on by Diocesan advisory committee. Rachel Wakefield had attended the same event on the previous day in Redbourn. The take away from this event is that PCC need to be aware of their responsibility. The Churchyard is owned by the incumbent and the PCC has a role to play – there are discretionary decisions to be made, which have historically been made by the vicar, the PCC will need to support Rachel in this.

Garden Of Remembrance: Paul V explained that something needs to be done about the lawn, and the need to tighten up the way that this is organised. For example, only cut flowers are allowed. He said that new signs have just been put up outside and there is a need for greater clarity on the rules and about where ashes are interred. There is a responsibility for rules to be upheld in order to maintain the area and grass properly. It is recognised that this is a growing problem, as people become more comfortable with the idea of death and visiting their deceased relatives. PCC members were encouraged to spread the word on this work.

Action: Further discussion to be tabled for another time.

12. Charitable Finance Committee

Stephen Gell would like to involve more members of the congregation who are encouraged to come forward with ideas and greater involvement.

Food Club Update

Deni E has been offered a spot to raise the profile of the food club at a Sunday morning service. Deni reported that the number of people that are attending is increasing, there are currently fifty-nine Redbourn families, of which 59% are working, and includes nurses, teachers, civil servants.

Paul V. We've received an invitation to attend Harpenden Child Contact Centre AGM on 16th May 7:30, at All Saints church, Batford. Will Gibbs previously had contact with the organisation, it would be good to maintain the contact until Rachel arrives. St M have previously let out the Upper Room on a few occasions to families referred by them. Visiting speaker is a Barrister, Mediator, Family Law Arbitrator. Paul asked if anyone was interested in going.

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of moving PCC meetings to another day to enable potential PCC candidates who can't make Wednesdays. It was noted that some PCC members particularly value the Communion service prior to the meeting. A vote followed the discussion to alternate Thursday & Wednesdays, the outcome was four were against and the rest were for alternating the days. Therefore the next PCC meeting after the APCM was moved to Thursday 4th May.

Paul announced Christine Clough from the Methodist Church and Churches Together, sadly died yesterday. Craig Scudder is her son; David W has been in touch.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Grace at 10pm.

Next meeting: 8.15pm Thursday 4th May 2023