



## **WARFIELD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 9.30am at St Michaels Parish Rooms**

**PRESENT:** Paul Allen, Gaynor Boulton, David Brown (Minutes), Catrina Cappleman, Andy Colpus (Lay Chair), Juliet Date, Chris Drage, Ashley Hill, Abi Howe, Catharine Mabuza (Chair), Lily Mirza, Amanda Palethorpe, Kevin Pearcey, Michelle Porter-Babbage, David Ritchie, Gary Rivington, John Watts.

**APOLOGIES:** Penny Brinkley-Brown, David Chislett, Alex Fry, Beth Gomm, Kate Tyson

**23.138            Opening**

The meeting began with Communion.

**23.139            Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations additional to those recorded in the Register

**23.140            Where have we seen God at work?**

Members shared recent examples:

- (i) Amanda shared examples of God at work in St Andrews, e.g. giving Bibles to two people who came in, and someone coming into the Bereavement Journey.
- (ii) John Watts shared an account of God's provision for his "business as mission" work in Cambodia.
- (iii) Gaynor shared how people from her company were volunteering at Woodlarks in Farnham, a camp for disabled children.
- (iv) Catharine shared a story from someone at Easthampstead Baptist Church who told how their local MP came to a coffee morning.

**23.141            Minutes:**

**Proposal: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October be approved as a true record and should be signed by the Chair.**

**Proposed:        Michelle Porter-Babbage**

**Seconded:       Ashley Hill**

**All agreed, and minutes signed.**

Subject to the amendment that Juliet Date be shown as present at that meeting.

**23.142 Matters arising not covered by the agenda.**

None

**23.143 Progress with actions.**

All covered on the agenda for this meeting except:

- (i) With regard to the Finance leaflet, in response to a request, the pie chart has been updated and the revised leaflet will be circulated.
- (ii) A policy from SHARE Bracknell is being chased.
- (iii) Timelines for the sale of Portia Grove are linked to budget and so this item is still pending.

**23.144 Tree for Churchyard.**

A paper from Alan Ridell was shared with the meeting (attached)

After a brief discussion the proposal was put to the meeting: **“That the PCC accept the request of the family of the Late Winifred Ferris for an acer tree to be planted in the area specified in the attached proposal.”**

**Proposed: Gary Rivington**

**Seconded: Gaynor Boulton**

**All present voted in favour of the proposal.**

**23.145 Procurement Process / Expenses Policy**

The Warfield Church **Procurement Procedure** document was circulated ahead of the meeting on 17 October.

A copy of the Warfield Church **Expenses Policy** was circulated ahead of this meeting on 25 November.

- (i) Andy Colpus clarified that in Procurement document, the section entitles “Payment Process” the reference to “bigger amounts” meant items over £1000.
- (ii) Catharine Mabuza noted that in the Expenses document:
  - Any reference to the Senior Minister should be changed from “his” to “his/her”.
  - There are no staff credit cards at the moment. This issue is currently being explored. At the moment some staff are paying for items on their personal credit cards and then claiming the cost as an expense.
- (iii) Gaynor Boulton raised the following questions / suggestions.
  - That in the Expenses document, under the section on travel, the reference to “train travel” should be amended to “train *and air* travel”.
  - That in the Procurement document, under the section entitled Annual Budget, the statement should be “A rolling five-year plan of capital expenditure *is currently being put together*”.
  - That in the Procurement document, under the section entitled Suppliers, it should be added that “ If another supplier is chosen for a good reason, *this should be verified by the Operations*

*Manager and be subject to regular review, and then the budget holder ...”*

- That in the Procurement document, under the section entitled Payment Process, with regard to “Items up to £300” there may need to be some statement added about multiple claims just under £300 being subject to scrutiny.
- (iv) On the general issue of Authorisation and Approval of expenses, Amanda Palethorpe made the observation that for on-line banking it has to be one person. It should be understood that Ali will only make a payment if someone else has authorised it.  
**Action: CM** to remind all staff that authorisation is needed before Ali will make any payments.
- (v) The suggestion was made that Revolut virtual cards be explored.
- (vi) It was also noted by Chris Drage that a source of refurbished laptops had become available.

After full discussion it was **proposed: That the Procurement and Expenses policies be accepted, but updated in the light of this discussion and recent changes, especially in the area of on-line banking.**

**Proposed:** Ashley Hill

**Seconded:** Chris Drage

**All present voted in favour of the proposal.**

## 23.146

### Staffing Update

Catharine Mabuza spoke about the recent dual announcement of her own appointment as Archdeacon of Surrey, and Michelle’s appointment as Pioneer Oversight Minister in the Godrevy benefice in the Truro Diocese. Inter alia she made the following points / observations:

- (i) The fact of two appointments, and therefore two departures, at the same time is purely co-incidental – though both were aware that the other intended to move on at some point.
- (ii) Catharine is delighted that Michelle has found the right post.
- (iii) This has big implications for Warfield Church
- (iv) Catharine, Andy and David Brown met with Bishop and Archdeacon on Wednesday of this week and have a very helpful conversation.
  - David Brown has offered to resume full time hours, and the Bishop and Archdeacon have approved this. (David will still go ahead with his plan to move into his own house before the end of the year.)
  - David Ritchie and David Chislett remain in post. David Chislett’s curacy will end at some time, and at present his professional work is increasing to such an extent that his availability for ministry within Warfield Church is very limited.
- (v) These departures will have financial implications with regard to Parish Share, and the Archdeacon is intending to have a conversation with the Diocesan Director of Finance (who is however, currently on leave)

- (vi) In terms of looking to re-appoint, it is likely that there will not be a like for like replacement for Michelle's post – not least because of our financial situation (more will be said about that in the later budget item). In any case a reappointment would be unlikely before a new incumbent is appointed, and will be impacted by other factors, such as when David Ritchie moves on, and the technicality of whether it is Michelle or David Brown's post that would be lost. All of this is still to be worked out.
- (vii) There will obviously be a new incumbent at some point, but that too is impacted by various factors, not least the ongoing discussions surrounding the Living in Love and Faith conversations (also on the agenda for later).
- (viii) It has been agreed with Bishop Olivia and the Archdeacon that David will be 'Senior Minister' in the meantime during the vacancy,
- (ix) It has also been agreed that we will take time in the first five months of 2024 to carefully look at the way forward for Warfield in the light of the LLF conversations and the decisions made at General Synod last week. We are looking to scope out a series of evening sessions on these issues, starting in January 2024.
- (x) We will then begin the process of looking for a new incumbent from June 2025 onwards.
- (xi) There is a defined process to be followed during a vacancy, in summary:
  - PDA helps parish to draw up a Parish profile, role description.
  - Two Parish representatives are appointed, often but not necessarily the Church Wardens.
  - There are formal Section 11 and Section 12 meetings with the Archdeacon.
  - Advertise the post.
  - Interview.
- (xii) This process usually takes between 6 to 9 months, and so we could realistically hope to have a new incumbent in post in early 2025.
- (xiii) In the meantime, mission and ministry will continue. There will be a need for people to step up and volunteer, and at the same time to be willing to review everything we do.
- (xiv) We can trust in God!

David Brown paid tribute to Catharine, congratulating her on her appointment.

Andy Colpus expressed thanks to David Brown for being willing to resume full time ministry and assume the role of Senior Minister during the vacancy. Juliet Date requested a prayer stop at this point.

## 23.147

### **St Andrew's Church Project Update.**

A paper on this subject had been circulated by Andy Colpus ahead of this meeting.

This has been discussed at the St Andrew's sub-committee meeting and it is their **proposal that: Mark Goodwill-Hodgson be engaged to conduct a feasibility study on the St Andrew's building project.** (It was noted before voting that Mark could start this at the beginning of December 2023).

**Proposed: Catharine Mabuza**

**Seconded: Juliet Date**

**All present who voted were in favour of the proposal.**

**One member (John Watts) abstained from the vote.**

**23.148**

### **Finance**

The following documents were circulated ahead of the meeting:

1. A financial statement for the period to October 2023
2. A narrative financial report for the period to October 2023
3. A draft budget for 2024
4. Mention was also made of a Giving Analysis Report will be concluded after receipt of the PGS report on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Chris Drage made the following observations about the information contained in the financial statement, report and budget for 2024.

#### **About income:**

- (i) There has been a significant improvement since the last report with income up around £23k.
- (ii) Giving Sunday produced some one-off gifts totalling around £16k.
- (iii) The short fall in regular giving remains the same.
- (iv) Sunday offerings are higher than expected at £4k.
- (v) Little Starz is breaking even.
- (vi) We are in receipt of legacies of £21,600.
- (vii) We have received the Parish Share rebate.

#### **About expenditure:**

- (i) Expenditure remains very much as predicted.
- (ii) With regard to project costs, apart from the money for St Andrew's there is a limited amount for quinquennial work.
- (iii) The St Andrew's project cost is reduced from £8k to £4k
- (iv) We are now running at about £40k deficit which is an improvement on the £52k deficit shown last month.

#### **About issues:**

- (i) There has been an improvement in the situation with cash flow.
- (ii) Our investment funds with CCLA are almost back to their value in April.
- (iii) We are looking at the option to move to a fixed rate account for a period, looking at an alternative account from a bank with good ethical credentials.

#### About the draft **Budget for 2024**

- (i) It is still a draft budget: Chris has not yet spoken to budget holders.
- (ii) It is a “status quo” budget and does not include any new elements.
- (iii) It is another “deficit” budget.
- (iv) CD believes that it is possible to bring us back to a balanced budget within a 3-to-5-year timescale.
- (v) It forecasts an increase in one-off gifts.
- (vi) It predicts a slight increase in regular monthly giving.
- (vii) It does not include and income from legacies.
- (viii) With regard to expenditure and salary increases, we expect to increase in line with Diocesan clergy increases and are assuming a 4% increase.
- (ix) Biggest uncertainty is project costs in 2024. A significant sum is included for St Michael’s Quinquennial work – some of which urgent and will require scaffolding which will incur and large upfront cost.
- (x) All still leaves us with a deficit of £94k, which is £40k better than our 2023 forecast but £50k worse than what we achieved in 2023.

#### About possible **mitigation**

There are things we can do to close the gap, e.g.

- (i) Move investments to a high interest savings account.
- (ii) Focus all our Extra Income Group energy on applications for funds and grants for project work, that would otherwise have to be covered from our normal income.
- (iii) Target funds that invest in repairs for listed buildings, and support outreach to the local community.
- (iv) These latter two could potentially bring in £20k to £30k per year.
- (v) Regular giving campaigns.
- (vi) Confident that these and other measures could bring us back to a balanced budget by 2026.

The budget will need to be approved at the PCC meeting on 5 December.

Catharine thanked Chris for all his work in this area, and added thanks to Catriona for effecting a good handover to Chris.

There was a break for lunch.

## **23.149**

### **Living in Love and Faith – update after General Synod**

Catharine reminded the PCC of the conversations that had taken place about this earlier in 2023, and the expectation stated then that within the life of this PCC (i.e. before the next APCM) we would need to make some local decisions.

She referenced the recent debate in General Synod from this the main outcomes (as summarised by +Steven at a recent Diocesan Synod meeting) were that:

- (i) The suite of Prayers of Love and Faith will be formally commended before the end of the year for use in existing services.
- (ii) A process for taking the prayers through a process of commendation under Canon B2 will begin in the coming months, probably after the February Synod. This will involve referrals to Diocesan Synods.
- (iii) The House of Bishops will consider making standalone services available on a trial basis at the same time, so probably from March.
- (iv) The Pastoral Guidance will be refined and issued in the coming months. + Steven expressed a hope that, in the coming months and years, the Bishops will do further work on pastoral reassurance, the protection of conscience for clergy and PCCs who do not wish to use the prayers, and on pastoral provision.

Catharine then summarised the situation here in Warfield Church as:

- (i) Not much further forward in our discussions.
- (ii) With a number of personal and pastoral conversations going on.
- (iii) Still aware of people holding deeply differing opinions.
- (iv) With a whole spectrum of how interested people are or how strongly they feel.
- (v) The Ministerial Team have started to scope out a series of evenings for 2024 when we will have an opportunity to hear from people of differing views and have opportunity for discussion. Probably:
  - Three evenings open to all
  - One evening for PCC and members of Congregational Leadership teams
  - Followed by PCC coming to a “decision”.
  - This would then clear the way for the Parish profile to be written and an appointment of a new vicar to be made.
- (vi) For further clarity Catharine added:
  - Prayers within existing services will be the decision of the incumbent, but strongly encouraged to consult PCC.
  - Draft guidance for the use of the prayers in “stand-alone” services suggest that this should be a joint decision of the Incumbent and the PCC though no clergy person can be forced to use the prayers. Nor could a PCC stop their incumbent from choosing to use the prayers in other settings than their own parish.
  - It is possible to say “not an issue for us at the moment” and press a pause button, but that would not be helpful or really an option here in Warfield Church.
- (vii) Catharine expressed the hope that whatever the outcome and whatever direction Warfield chooses, that we can do it well.
- (viii) There is an acknowledgement that we are not all going to agree, but it is possible to disagree well, and even if there is a parting, to part well.

In the following discussion a number of points were made:

- (i) A recommendation to look at the CPAS website for their session on handling differences of opinion.
- (ii) A question of how we would handle a situation where members of Congregational leadership teams held differing views.
- (iii) What are the potential outcomes if some kind of separation happens? With associated comments about loss of buildings, and the provision of alternative oversight.
- (iv) The need to be gracious in all our conversations.
- (v) That some kind of timeline would be helpful.
- (vi) That “clarity is kindness”.

**23.150 Any other business.**

There was no other business.

**23.151 Review of how the meeting has gone.**

- (i) Better in person than on line for such big issues.
- (ii) Catharine expressed gratitude to people for giving up a Saturday.

**23.152 Closing Comments:**

Catharine made the following closing comments:

- (i) Helen Francis will not be continuing as PCC Secretary and so we need to find a replacement.
- (ii) We still need another Church Warden.
- (iii) This is Catriona Cappleman’s last PCC having served on PCC since 2008 as well as a stint before that. Dave has been at Warfield Church for 39 years and Catriona for 36 years. Their final Sunday will be 10 December and Dave will preach at Warfield Church North. They plan to move on 12 December.
- (iv) The PCC were invited to share with Catriona things for which they are thanks about both her and Dave, and then the PCC prayer for them.

**23.153 Next Meeting.**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 5 December and will be on-line.

**23.154 Close**

The meeting closed with prayer.

**Chair:**

**Date:**