



ST MARGARET'S CHURCH

To know and share God's transforming love with one another,
our local community and the wider world

Minutes PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING held at 8pm in the Parish Office on Monday July 24th, 2023

Present; Revd Hannah Gordon (Chair), Jenny Smith, Nigel Smith, Jill Lindsay, Ray King, Tom Sanderson, Kat Wicksteed, Janice Whittle, Perry Esparon, Ian Thirlwall, Revd John Wates, Eamonn Davern Madeleine MacCallum, Rosalind Lumberg, Sally Bowes

1 The meeting was opened at 8.00 pm by reading Isaiah 51:1-6 and a prayer.

2 Apologies were received from Kat Wicksteed, Ian Thirlwall. As Ian was not present the **Fabric Report** would be circulated with the final copy of the minutes, and any questions arising from this would be dealt with by correspondence, emails should be forwarded to Eamonn.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on June 26th were approved and were signed by Revd Hannah Gordon.

4. Matters Arising.

Church Lighting: Madeleine reported back on her discussions with Rick Lancaster to discuss his ideas for improving Church Lighting. All lights are in need of replacement, the current lighting conflicts with viewing the screens and new lighting would have a greatly improved visual impact. An estimate received six years ago needs to be updated, two more quotes are required, and the architect needs to be consulted.

PCC agreed to pay for a revised estimate and two new quotes, a timetable for proceeding with this would be agreed following discussion at a future meeting.

Contactless Giving: Necessary improvements to the WFI system, enabling the installation of a Contactless Giving facility, can be made independently and separately from the AV Upgrade project through moving a disc. A separate or amended faculty application will therefore not be necessary.

DM music, the company installing the new AV system are now booking into next year. There has

been no further response so far to the Faculty Application, or the architect. Sally is following up these issues. PCC agreed that when further progress has been made with the Faculty Application a deposit could be paid to DM Music to secure an installation date and avoid extra expenditure from increased labour costs.

Action: Sally will pursue the Faculty Application and report back to the September PCC meeting.

Anti-Slavery pledge: Deborah is considering designs for posters and has researched material promoting the pledge including investigating Church and other organizations websites containing anti-slavery statements and commitments. The latter are rather uncommon, possibly due to the potential for criticism incorrectly attributing responsibility for situations beyond a supporting organizations control. PCC confirmed that posters promoting messages about slavery would be placed in the Church as soon as possible, and that a full discussion of how to further support for the Pledge would be tabled at a future PCC, the decision to publish a statement on the church website would be reviewed prior to the PCC discussion.

Actions: Eamonn will speak to Deborah regarding promotion of the Pledge and potential for alternatives to placing messages on the Church Website.

5 Stewardship of our Resources

Standing Committee

Hannah explained that Church Rules required St Margarets to establish a Standing Committee and explained the remit of this group, ie to consider authorization of urgent funding requests identified between PCC meetings.

The Committee should include the Rector, Church Wardens, and the PCC lay vice-chair, and if possible additional PCC representatives.

Perry proposed Tom this nomination was seconded by Ray.

Premises Team

A Premises Team is to be established led by Nigel. This Group will build upon and consolidate the work currently being done by the Fabric and Church Yard Committee.

Action: Hannah will discuss the detailed scope of future work with Nigel which will be presented to a subsequent PCC meeting, prior to a request to the Congregation for further Team Members.

PMT Fund

Hannah confirmed that £150k had been received by the Parish as accompany donation. The donor had placed some conditions on use of the fund within overall flexible parameters. The donor had a preference that some of the money should be spent to improve access to the Church and Church Yard. Hannah presented a proposal for PCC consideration that reflected the Donors preferences. John proposed acceptance of this, Ray seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed by PCC.

Hannah confirmed that the intention was to utilise the donation over the next 2/3 years. Deborah would contact the Diocesan Disability Advisor to identify potential improvements and Ian had volunteered to join the discussion.

Request for pre-faculty approval for grave cover

A request had been made to place a stone cover of a grave in the Churchyard. This PCC is required to comply with Churchyard regulations and agreeing this would be in breach of them. The correspondent had referred to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) citing a medical condition making it difficult for them to tend the grave, however it was confirmed that DDA was not applicable in this situation. An individual could apply for Faculty where the Chancellor has authority to make exceptions to regulations in specific cases. If Faculty was applied for PCC would take a neutral stance.

Action: Ian Thirlwall has offered to tend the grave removing any requirement to consider installation of a cover, this will be communicated to the correspondent with a summary of the PCC position re any Faculty application.

6 Planning for our Future

Day for Prayer and Vision

The PCC Prayer and Vision Day would now be scheduled for spring 2024 as opposed to this autumn.

Finance Update

The PCC Treasurer Post remained vacant. It was confirmed that the Treasurer was not required to be a member of the PCC or on the Electoral Roll.

Finance Sub-Committee

It was recognised good practice for PCC sub-Committees to be established to consider specialist functions such as financial management and to prepare advice for PCC. This was especially important in the absence of a Treasurer.

Hannah was particularly keen that a future financial/budget strategy be developed to steer Parish expenditure decisions going forward. She requested that people interested in this role (who were not required to be PCC members), contact her to advise of their interest. The role of the PCC group which had been convened to manage a previous legacy, comprising Tom, Perry, and the then Treasurer Martin Mabbutt, was noted, and confirmed as the type of activity which would fall within the remit of this Group.

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) would include accounts preparation, Gift Aid, Stewardship, Long-term Vision, and setting next year's Budget.

Parish Support Fund Pledge

One third of current Parish Expenditure is to meet the Parish Support Fund contribution. Staff costs account for half of Planned Giving income. PCC had previously identified Heating and Cleaning costs as areas to be investigated to ascertain if savings could be identified, although these were deemed unlikely to be substantial. A review of PA Hall Hiring charges and securing more income from the Orchard could also be explored. Whilst Planned Giving income had dropped over the last four years individual contributions had increased. The number of donors had reduced from 157 to 98 since 2019 reflecting a decline in the size of the Congregation following the pandemic. In this

regard the current deficit could be described as an income rather than expenditure issue, especially in the context of the cost-of-living crisis. A deficit was again predicted however through offsetting PMT fund income and interest from investments in Trust this would be reduced from a previously predicted £93k to £73k.

The design of the Parish Support Fund (a generosity based system), as used in Southwark, compared to many Dioceses which still apply a Parish Share (calculated on an assessment of Parish demography/socio-economic situation) was discussed. The broad range of services provided from the Fund was noted including Stipends, Housing, Pension Contributions, Safeguarding, Training (for both clergy and members of congregations), and especially support for inner-City parishes which often had small congregations but carried out invaluable ministry in some of the most deprived areas of the Country.

St Margarets Indicative Cost Baseline was £86.5k, Hannah advised that this should provide the “floor” figure for discussion. In the current year we committed £100k, a £20k reduction on the previous contribution. Hannah suggested that a Parish Fund Contribution of £86.5k would enable St Margarets to build its vision, with an attendant growth in Planned Giving, and apply due Stewardship in using income. Alternatively maintaining a Contribution of £100k would enable these objectives to be achieved and reduce the deficit as planned without using any of the recent donation. A range of options between these two figures were available with a proportionate implication for planned expenditure and deficit reduction.

After a detailed debate two options were duly proposed and seconded to be put to the vote for PCC decision.

- (1) Maintaining the £100k Contribution with a review after 6 months and possible increased Contribution or one-off lump sum payment following an assessment of the Parish’s financial situation.
- (2) Increasing the Contribution to £115k offsetting this increase against some of the recently gifted money.

Option 1 was carried. The Archdeacon will be notified of the PCC decision as above.

7 Big Thinking

New Service Pattern

Hannah presented a proposal for a return to a pattern of two Sunday services. This had been developed following analysis of responses from the Congregation to the recent consultation.

The new pattern will be introduced in September probably from the Sunday following Harvest Festival. There will be a traditional service at 8:45 with one BCP Communion each month and contemporary worship at 10:15 including a monthly all age service. During months including five Sundays there will be one service at 10:15 on the fifth week. This will be neither an exclusively Traditional or Contemporary service but will be designed to bring together and appeal to all members of the St Margarets worshipping community. It is planned to increase the involvement of children and youth in all age services.

Hannah had discussed BCP provision with Revd Alison Elson of our neighbouring parish St Peters Woodmansterne. St Peters would also offer a BCP Communion once a month on a different Sunday than St Margarets.

It was acknowledged that this plan, which would be reviewed after six months would place extra demands on Hannah, the worship band, organists, AV, hospitality, sides, and readers. Efforts would be made to increase. Volunteers. Hannah advised that Eamonn, Deborah, and James had recently met to discuss making more use of available functionality on the Church Website and decided to investigate introducing the Church Hub system. This had many potential benefits including increasing the visibility of rotas and assisting in more flexible planning.

PCC thanked Hannah for an excellent proposal which was greatly appreciated and welcomed as doing everything possible to address the wishes and differing perspectives of the entire Congregation.

12 Date of next meeting

- 25^h September – 8pm in the Parish Office

The meeting closed at 10pm.