

St Mary the Virgin Linton Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the meeting of 14th November 2022

Molly Warrington in the Chair

This being the first meeting of the PCC since the discernment process, it seems appropriate to record here the appointment of the Reverend Paul Seaton-Burn as the new Team Rector of the Linton Benefice; Paul will be installed on 14 February 2023, thus ending a vacancy of 19 months.

1. Molly Warrington (MW) opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Apologies were received from Sue Mudge, Patricia Schofield, Richard Tonry and Cathy Watts.
3. Minutes of 8th September 2022 were received as a correct record.
4. **Matters arising:**
 - 1: David Parry-Smith (DPS) reported that a service had indeed been held to commemorate the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.
 - 6i: The Free Church were continuing to use the Pavilion whilst their church was being renovated. David Watts (DW) confirmed that all safeguarding checks were in place.
 - 7: Together with God: Lindi Kent had offered to help prepare and co-lead this every other month.

5. **Safeguarding report:** This had been circulated in advance in Cathy Watts' absence, and reported as follows:

- Clergy & LLMs have undertaken/or are undertaking C2 leadership training, which must be completed in order for licence to be reissued.
- APCS now send a reminder of DBS renewals. It was noted that Sue Ellis, Sue Filby and David Parry-Smith all need renewed checks.
- Cathedral are holding Safeguarding season this week with various meetings and events.
- Safeguarding Sunday is this week 20th November.
- Our Parish Safeguarding Dashboard needs an annual review.

6. Churchwardens' report

- Linton Free Church use of pavilion (as in 6i above)
- Warm Hubs: DW reported that a number of people have trained to be volunteers to staff a Warm Hub at the church using the pavilion, which was an appropriate location in terms of heating and lighting, although without Wi-Fi facilities. Planning is proceeding towards the first session on December 1st at 11am running through to 2pm, with snacks and drinks made available. (Make Lunch Club are using the facilities on the School Inset Day, 25 November, for parents and families to have Brunch). The costs are funded by the Warm Hub scheme and the district council. DW appealed for a co-ordinator and agreed to formulate a job specification for this role, in the hope that one or two people would agree to undertake the role (a job share is feasible).
 - **Action: DW**
- Pavilion Cleaning: Charlotte Ellis (CE) summarised the position with reference to pavilion cleaning, currently being undertaken only by Sarah Thorne (ST) before the Baby Steps group meets on Fridays. Charlotte stressed that the current situation is unsatisfactory and underlined the need for a cleaner, a band of volunteer cleaners or the agreement of the PCC to pay a cleaner. Jacki Burge (JB) offered to join a group, and

it was agreed that an appeal would go on the Pewsheet for other volunteers, since the budgetary situation makes it difficult to commit to more paid roles. **Action: CE**

- Graffiti and vandalism: DW updated the PCC on isolated incidents of vandalism (graffiti to the back of the notice board, disruption of evening prayer and some vandalism of dolls in the children's corner on the Friday before half term). These incidents were reported to Police using the online reporting system and have crime numbers. They were also reported to the local PCSO and John Bald. The Principal of Linton Village College had been informed of the second incident since the children were clearly in LVC uniform, and was most supportive in her reply.
- Church email addresses: DW reminded the PCC that It is part of safeguarding and good practice (if you are a church officer, leading church activities in the wider parish, a member of the PCC or a minister) to have a functioning church email address, and asked council members to contact him after the meeting if they still required one. DW added that an updated list of contacts is being compiled to go on the website, and asked members to contact him if they objected to being on such a list.
 - **Action: all PCC members**
- PCC and officer photographs: CE informed the PCC that she is in the process of updating the PCC members' photographs on the website, and asked members to contact her if their photograph needs renewal.
 - **Action: all PCC members**
- Changes to services: DW reported back on the recent Team Ministers' meeting, which had agreed that on every fifth Sunday of the month, the 10am service would be a joint service in one of the churches in the team, with the first one scheduled for Sunday January 29th in Horseheath. The PCC welcomed this initiative, noting that it reverted to a practice previously adopted in the benefice. In discussion, it was agreed that no further significant changes to the pattern of services would take place before the arrival of the new Team Rector, with the PCC confirming that they were currently content that the choir processes out at the end of the service (health and safety issues notwithstanding!), and that the Gospel continues to be read from the body of the church without a procession involving the crucifer. In response to a question from Helene Evans (HE), it was reported that the Music Group (on the fourth Sunday) continued to use the new stalls which had been installed in the north aisle, but that the positioning of the choir for services on other Sundays would be reviewed when the new incumbent was in post.
- Grants Update: the PCC noted with some irritation that the current diocesan system for agreeing to faculties seemed to be bureaucratic in the extreme, and restricted officers' capacity to apply for grants. More hopefully, it was reported that DW and Andrew Gore (AG) were meeting with Geoffrey Hunter, from the DAC, on 15th November in an attempt to move things forward.
- Zoom services: in the papers for the meeting, the PCC had received a costed proposal from John Thorne (JT), in conjunction with Revd. Michael Wilcockson (RMW), for the equipment needed to improve the quality of Zoom services offered from the church. The PCC thanked JT / RMW for the detailed work which had been undertaken but noted the £9k cost which would be incurred. It was agreed that – in the light of the current budget – this item would be deferred for further consideration and other quotes / types of provision also explored.

7. **The Ministry Team** had not met since the September PCC meeting.

8. **Finance and Stewardship committee report:** Sue Ellis (SE) presented a comprehensive and very informative report on financial matters, on behalf of the Finance and Stewardship Committee. Her report highlighted a number of crucial issues for the PCC to consider:

- Actual expenditure at the end of October was £18,600 higher than in 2021, necessitating the transfer of £15k from deposit to current account.
- Unrestricted funds stood at £27k, a reduction of £14.5k from the position in October 2021, when unrestricted funds stood at £41.5k.
- £52.5k remained in designated or restricted budgets, compared to £51.5k in October 2022. Members noted that a new restricted budget for the organ fund (£2.5k) had been initiated, in response to donations and anticipated future need, and - to clarify - SE explained the difference between restricted and designated funds.
- Although the deficit budget for 2022 will be lower than originally anticipated, with the current variance of £15,680 indicating that the eventual 2022 deficit might be in the region of £20k rather than the £35k when the budget was originally approved, SE indicated that the future situation was unsustainable, particularly in the light of budget requests for 2023 and the falling reserves which remain in unrestricted funds.
- On a slightly more optimistic note, SE reported that income for the current year was on target (in October, £92.3k as opposed to £93.1 predicted), but unsurprisingly was not increasing in line with inflation.

In considering the draft budget presented for 2023, PCC members noted that potential contributions from the Friends of St Mary's for fabric work and improvements (possible grants in the region of £164k) meant that year-on-year comparisons between 2022 and 2023 could not be drawn.

However, SE drew the PCC's attention to the fact that financial requests for 2022-23, if met in full, would mean a further deficit budget of £31k. On income, SE had predicted an increase in regular giving of around £15k, including a bi-annual gift day which it was hoped would raise around £3k. It was acknowledged that this was optimistic, and would need proactive planning, especially in the current economic context.

Following detailed discussion of the draft budget, the PCC passed a number of resolutions, all of which were unanimously carried:

- To continue to maintain charitable giving at 10%, to the current 'charities': proposer DPS / seconder AG
- To commit to pay the full Ministry Share: MW / AG
- To increase payments to the Parish Administrator / Family and Children's Worker by 5% (in line with the diocesan offer to clergy), and to offer a similar increase to the Director of Music: SE / MW
- To continue the current arrangement for payment of expenses to the Team Rector, to be reviewed on his arrival: John Organ / DPS
- To **not** proceed with the proposed new equipment for Zoom services, pending further exploration, thereby saving £9k: CE / DW
- Whilst gratefully accepting any donations for existing restricted funds, to refrain from initiating or supporting fund-raising for new projects until such time as income and expenditure were more closely aligned.
- To reduce the grant for Peace Garden furniture / plants from £3k to £1k: JB / JO.
- To prepare a letter / article to circulate in the wider community, stressing the place of St Mary's within the community, and appealing for donations from the community and increased giving from the congregation; MW / SE / AG agreed to initiate this.

Given these amendments, the PCC unanimously agreed to accept the draft budget, recognising that a deficit budget of £20k would be the outcome even if expenditure could be controlled in these ways and income raised in line with the Finance & Stewardship Committee's projections. It was noted that this situation remained unsustainable into the medium term future and that a more coherent stewardship campaign would be necessary.

MW, as Chair, thanked Sue Ellis for her detailed and ever-willing contribution in monitoring financial issues throughout the year.

9. Reports to PCC: in introducing these reports, MW expressed regret that there was insufficient time to consider the reports in detail but reiterated that this did not mean that the extensive work involved in each area was unrecognised or taken for granted; she thanked those who led each area for their commitment and dedication, both in the presentation of the reports and in the extensive work detailed therein.

- Fabric committee: it was noted that the current seating arrangement in the Resurrection Chapel needed to be reconsidered, and that members of congregations which used the Chapel had expressed their desire that it returned to the former format, with pews facing the altar rather than at right angles to the altar. ST drew attention to the fact that the Chapel had become rather 'a dumping ground' and needed restoration to its former beauty. AG reported that the remaining pews in the church seemed to have been obtained, at some time in the past, from Michaelhouse / Gt St Marys in the city, and may have a provenance which will need to be considered before any scheme for disposal is implemented.
- Children and Families Team: ST was thanked for her continuing outstanding leadership of this work. Her request that a full-time Children and Families worker be fully funded in the future, on her potential future 'retirement', was noted. MW stressed that it was important that this received full consideration at a future meeting.
 - **Action: Sue Mudge for a future agenda once the new incumbent is in post.**
- Infant School report: The Chair of Governors (Nicola Collard) was thanked for her detailed report, and Michael Younger asked to convey congratulations to the Headteacher on the high quality (Good overall) of the recent Ofsted report.
 - **Action: MY**
- Deanery Synod: report noted.
- Events committee: CE reported on the range of events held, which included the Harvest Supper, the monthly Saturday Coffee Mornings and the Hadstock Silver Band concert on 29th October which raised £609.56 for the organ fund. The PCC noted forthcoming events (Christian Aid Quiz on 26th November, New Year's Eve party, Vintage afternoon tea on 4th February 2023). The PCC thanked CE and all those who contributed to these social events, and it was stressed that, although these were essentially social in purpose and not fund raising per se, the events did generate a significant profit.
- Pastoral Group: RMW thanked Sue Filby for continuing to chair this group, and reminded the PCC of the range of work undertaken in this area. He mentioned particularly the continuing ministry at Nichols Court and the renewal of regular links

with Symonds House, and reiterated that any visiting needs should be passed through to him during the vacancy. It was agreed that the monthly prayer cycle should be reinstated.

- Beacon Trust: report noted, and the Youth Worker thanked for her continuing work with students from the Village College and children from the Heights Junior School.

10. **There being no other business**, the meeting concluded with prayer and the Grace at 2130.

11. **Dates of future meetings:** Thursday 12th January 2023, Monday 13th March 2023