

St Bride's Church Fleet Street

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting

Held on Wednesday 20 March 2013

Present: Ven David Meara (Rector & Chairman), Emmanuel Adeniji, Christopher Betterton, Gerald Bowey, Geoffrey Burgess, Helen Fraser, Clive Hill-Archer, James Irving, Janet Kitchen, Beverly Leach, Ian Locks, Peter Longland, Claire Seaton, Peter Silver, David Smith, John Smith, Terence Smith, Grace Stedman

1. Opening Prayers

The Rector opened the meeting with prayers.

2. Apologies for absence

These were received from: Eric Davies, Robert Jones, David Lowish, Janet Smith, Lindsay Nicholson, Mary Walker, Jerry Wright.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

4. Matters arising not on the agenda

- a. Memorial for Brian Chappell. This was now in progress; an Act of Dedication would be held at a 3rd Sunday morning service.
- b. Djuna Barnes Fund. James Irving would meet with the trustees of the Authors' League Fund, whilst on holiday in New York. It was noted that film rights were being discussed.

5. Rector's Report

The Rector reported that: Lent began early this year as Easter was early, but we had begun our Lent programme, with the usual services, and the Lent Sermon Series seemed to be going well. Our sleep out in aid of the Diocese of London's Lent appeal, Street Child World Cup, attracted 19 stout souls who between them raised over £5000 in sponsorship. The Guild Sunday Service went well thanks to the sterling efforts of Terence and Janet, and we had already held a number of memorial services with a large number booked in. We have had three weddings, and the season begins in earnest in April. The restoration work had begun and that would have an impact on the running of the building over the next six months.

The Rector had attended various press functions, including the British Press Awards, and the PPA celebration of its 100th anniversary. We are exploring ways of working more closely with them. Freshfields were holding an Easter service.

The three new lay chalice assistants would be commissioned on Palm Sunday and join the existing team. During Holy Week there would be two extra events, one

about Syria, and a 10th anniversary remembrance of Terry Lloyd. The AGM would be on 23rd April. Lindsay Nicholson had indicated that she would like to step down as churchwarden because of pressure of work. The Rector and churchwardens would like to propose that Helen Fraser be nominated in her place. Helen has a long career in publishing and is currently CEO of the Girls Day School Trust. A number of PCC members' terms would expire at the AGM, and the Rector indicated that Rachel Corp and Ashley Painter had expressed an interest in standing.

The Rector noted that HRH The Duchess of Cornwall was Patron to the Guild and that he was attending a meeting at Clarence House to discuss ideas for engagements for the next 12 to 18 months – any ideas would be well received.

The Rector extended his thanks to everyone who works for the church – the staff, the Guild, shop volunteers, Sunday School team, tour guides etc. There are more people involved than ever before which could only be a good thing.

The Rector felt that this was an exciting time in the life of the church, especially with the restoration work beginning. It would be a busy year.

6. **Financial Report**

Accounts

- a. The figures were similar to the ones presented to the last meeting but with a late adjustment to result in a slightly higher surplus.
- b. The summary statement of financial activities showed net incoming resources for the year of £45,897.
- c. The surplus comprised unbudgeted income of £77,000 and expenses of £31,000.
- d. Certain income items were overbudget: Church Rates by £34,913, Other Donations of £13,000. In addition Legacies of £29,163 were received.
- e. Costs were overall within budget, with the exception of Office publicity / promotion costs of £10,000 for website, Staff and choir costs over £5,000 each, totalling £11,000 (extra over time and pension costs and higher choir costs as a result of fewer special services in the early part of the year). There was also Depreciation of £10,000 to be taken in to account.

Proposal to designate funds £29,163

- a. The finances were in good order. Carry forward reserves were £416,661 from 2012. Designated reserves were £319,470 which was made up of £150,000 for the Inspire! Appeal and £169,640 church furniture.
- b. The underlying cash reserve was £95,902. According to our Reserves policy we aim for a balance of £72,000 to cover two months income for emergency situations and the reserves balance exceeded this by £23,902.
- c. It was proposed to designate the £29,163 legacy income for 2012 for the Inspire! Appeal.
- d. The Treasurer thanked James Irving for working so hard to produce the accounts in time for this meeting working to a very tight timetable.

Discussion

A discussion followed regarding the presentation of the accounts to the wider church membership, and whether a graphic representation of the figures could be adopted to show the financial position. There was some concern that the accounts only show the position at a particular point in time and did not reflect future commitments, and that a simple graphic could prove to be counter-productive. It was noted that, excluding unexpected income (including legacies and rates), the church effectively works on a 'break-even' position. It was agreed that James Irving and Beverly Leach would look at other ways of presenting the information outside the formal structure of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Proposals

The following proposals were unanimously agreed:

- a. The Council formally approved the Report and Accounts.
- b. The Council agreed the transfer of legacy income (£29,163) to the Appeal.

The Council thanked James Irving and Beverly Leach for their work.

7. Inspire! Appeal

Architect's report.

The Architect reported that: tenders were received at the end of January and, following their analysis, the contract was awarded. The contractors, Bakers of Danbury, are established well over 100 years and (like the other tenderers) very experienced and of a suitable size to undertake this kind of specialist work.

There are several main areas of work. Joints, cracks and flakes on the tower wall faces will be repaired and rusting iron cramps replaced. Seriously eroded stone ledges will be replaced and protected. Sculptural elements, many now almost unrecognizable, will be repaired or replaced. A huge number of stones are to be inspected and decisions made on their individual treatment. The lightning protection arrangements will also be extended.

The spire restoration began on site on Monday and it will take thirty-six weeks to complete. After scaffolding is erected – which itself will take around eight weeks – cleaning trials will be undertaken, inspections begun, replacement stones scheduled and sculpture templates made. Stone cleaning will continue until the early July. New stone carving will be executed off-site in the contractor's stonemasonry yard.

Repairs, replacements of stone and joint refilling will continue until late October as will the remaining works, and the contract completed a month later.

A quotation has been received for certain lighting works in the church and in the medieval chapel. Lighting behind the reredos can best be undertaken in conjunction with the redecoration work in due course but other adjustments to the main church lighting will be needed sooner.

Overtures had been made to our neighbours with a view to revitalising the spire's floodlighting in due course, in conjunction with energy use reduction measures planned as part of the Appeal work in the coming years. Support has been given to various initiatives under the 'Inspire!' Appeal. Advice has been given on a proposal for a wifi infrastructure. Repairs in the men's toilet are completed.

Appeal Report

Gerald Bowey reported that: the Working Group had done much good work and was about to launch a campaign to local businesses. Thirty or so companies had been identified and would be approached with a set target amount. Ken Shuttleworth had agreed to give the next Wren Talk. It was noted that that media had not yet been approached in a meaningful way. Gerald Bowey was to meet with Crown Paints to discuss a donation of paint for the project, the covering of the spire scaffolding and the possibility of an education facility in the Crypt.

Financial Report

The Council was reminded that as Trustees, members were responsible for the work and the finances of the Appeal. It was noted that the Appeal Committee had agreed to underwrite any theoretical shortfall upto £300,000, although it was keenly felt that this facility would not be required.

John Smith was thanked for his work to date on the project.

Congregation element

It was noted that the Advocacy Programme would be rolled out after Easter; the congregation would be approached with two lead programmes ('Clean the face of an angel' and 'Talents'). The members of the working groups were thanked for their work.

The Architect was asked whether the external notice boards would be mounted on the scaffolding (to possibly include information on the works) and also to ensure that the churchyard was kept in good order by the contractors.

8. Electoral Roll Report

On behalf of the Electoral Roll Officer it was noted that 200 applications had been received and that Council members must be on the Roll. Janet Smith was thanked for her work.

9. Architect's Report

The Architect had no additional information to report.

10. Any other business

Holy Communion before Confirmation.

It was noted that two children had been admitted to Holy Communion before Confirmation at another church in the Diocese and were receiving Communion at St Bride's. Questions were raised as to the validity of this. The Council was advised that

churches may seek approval from the Bishop to admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation under a strict regulatory framework. The Council was also advised that Regulation 10 under Canon B 15A explicitly allowed for children who have been admitted to Communion under these regulations to be admitted to Communion at any church, regardless of whether that church had formally sought approval for its own membership. It was agreed that a discussion would be held at a subsequent Council meeting to explain the thinking behind the policy and discuss how we should respond.

11. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.