

St Bride's Church Fleet Street

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting

Held on Wednesday 22 May 2013

Present: Ven David Meara (Rector & Chairman), Gerald Bowey, Geoffrey Burgess, Rachel Corp, Eric Davies, Clive Hill-Archer, Janet Kitchen, Beverly Leach, Valerie Locks, David Lowish, Ashley Painter, Peter Silver, Ingrid Slaughter, Janet Smith, John Smith, Terence Smith, Grace Stedman, Jerry Wright

Also attending: Christopher Betterton (Secretary), James Irving, Claire Seaton, David Smith

1. Opening Prayers

The Rector opened the meeting with prayers, in particular for those caught up in the events in Woolwich, for Robert Jones, due to have an operation, and for Colin Stanley, whose funeral had recently taken place.

2. Apologies for absence

These were received from: Helen Fraser, Ian Locks, Peter Longland and Mary Walker.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 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. The order for the plaque had been placed. It was reported that Yvonne Chappell was very much looking forward to the memorial.
- b. Djuna Barnes Fund. James Irving met with the trustees of the Authors' League Fund, whilst on holiday in New York. It was reported that there was some renewed interest in re-publishing some of the books and that St Bride's and the Author's League Fund had signed up for any prospective film rights.

5. Appointment of Treasurer, Secretary and co-opted members

- a. Beverly Leach was appointed Treasurer.
- b. It was reported that, under Charity Commission regulations, paid employees of a Charity could not also be trustees (elected or co-opted). Christopher Betterton was appointed Secretary, but would not be a member of the PCC.
- c. John Smith, as Church Architect, was co-opted onto the Council. It was noted that the Architect is not employed by the Church, but was remunerated for his work under agreement.

6. **Electoral Roll Report**

The Electoral Roll Officer reported that the Roll stood at 226.

A proposal was put to the PCC that the Electoral Roll be updated once a year, in September, going forward. The Rector noted that the Church Representation Rules allowed for persons to be admitted to the Roll 'from time to time' and that his preference was for that practice to continue. It was felt to be encouraging to have new persons continually admitted to the Roll. It was noted that persons submitting valid applications were admitted to the Roll as soon as their form was received and were not required to be accepted by the PCC.

It was agreed that the Roll would continue to be maintained as now but that care would be taken to remove those persons from the Roll who no longer qualified for inclusion.

Janet Smith was thanked for her work as Electoral Roll Officer.

7. **Election to fill Council casual vacancies**

The Rector reported that the PCC had the power to elect members to fill casual vacancies on the Council and that there were five such vacancies. The PCC unanimously elected the following:

Rachel Corp and David Lowish (to seek re-election at the 2016 APCM)

Valerie Locks and Ingrid Slaughter (to seek re-election at the 2015 APCM)

As had been previously reported, paid employees of the Church could not be PCC members (elected or co-opted). It was agreed that James Irving, Claire Seaton and David Smith would be invited to attend PCC meetings for the year. Robert Jones would be invited on an ad hoc basis if required. It was also noted that James Irving would stand down as a Deanery Synod representative.

8. **The role of Council members**

James Irving made a presentation to the Council on their fiduciary and other responsibilities. Members were reminded that they were legally appointed Trustees of a formally appointed Charity and, as such, were required to fully understand the role they had undertaken. In particular, the finances of the Church were in the highest category of Charity governance and it was essential that PCC members were fully conversant in how the accounts were prepared and reported. Two documents had been sent to PCC members which it was hoped would assist them with their responsibilities. It was emphasised that the onus was on the individual member and that if a member felt unable to fulfil the role s/he should not remain as a trustee. It was also noted that the Church did not have a personal liability insurance policy, and that quotes would be sought for this. [Post meeting note: James Irving noted that the PCC did, in fact, have existing Trustee Indemnity Insurance cover.]

9. **Statements of Non-disqualification and Conflicts of Interest**

James Irving reported that PCC members must declare that they are not dis-qualified from being a trustee by signing and returning the form which had been sent to all members.

PCC members would also be asked to declare any Conflicts of Interest. It was noted that a Conflict would not necessarily arise due to a member being a trustee of more than one trustee body (unless those bodies were engaged in formal negotiations).

The declaration form should be returned to the Church Office.

10. **Rector's Report**

Holy Communion before Confirmation

Following a discussion at the previous Council meeting, the Rector reported that it was not his intention that the Church adopt the policy of admitting children to Communion before Confirmation, but also that it was not his intention to deny those children who had been admitted to Communion from receiving. The Rector acknowledged that although the policy was not in line with mainstream Anglican thinking regarding Confirmation, Synod had laid down guidelines in 2006 to accommodate it.

Some members expressed concern that the Church would seek to adopt the policy whereas others noted that family members had been admitted to Communion before Confirmation. It was also noted that children in the Church had asked about the issue.

The Rector felt that the Church should be relaxed, and answer all those who questioned the policy in an honest and straightforward way – that the practice was allowed elsewhere, although it was not planned that St Bride's would adopt it. The Rector advised the meeting that he had sought to ensure that children who presented themselves for Communion were authorised to do so.

11. **Financial Report**

The Treasurer reported that:

- a. There was a deficit of £41,689, which was to be expected in the first quarter of the year. It was sustainable due to the undesignated reserves of £ 67,000 carried forward from 2012, which had allowed us to avoid any cash-flow issues in the first quarter.
- b. There were more memorial services and weddings in the first quarter, than for the same period last year. As a result collections and gift-aid donations was higher.
- c. The rate we are permitted to charge for Parochial fees had increased and there were more services in the first quarter resulting in an overall increase to £3,133.
- d. Expenditures were generally as expected for the first quarter.

- e. The net choir cost for the quarter was higher than last year due, predominantly, to Easter falling in March as opposed to April.
- f. A separate sheet showing the income and expenditure from special events during 2012 had been circulated. All events showed a surplus with the exception of the Messiah. It was suggested that ticket prices for this event be increased or further sponsorship sought.
- g. The Treasurer had written to all those who donated by Gift Aid to thank them and advise of the amount of tax recovered by the Church.
- h. The Treasurer would report on the 2014 Common Fund request to the next meeting.
- i. It was reported that staff costs had been above estimates due to an increase in pension costs and some overtime for the work on producing the excellent congregational appeal brochure.

Beverly Leach was thanked for her continuing work as Treasurer.

12. **Architect's Report**

The Architect gave a pictorial presentation on the state of the Tower and Spire, including details of how the stone will be cleaned and repaired. It was also noted that bird protection will be installed where possible.

The Architect reported that the Church lighting would be looked at, including stalls lighting.

John Smith was thanked for his work as Architect, particularly for his involvement in the preservation of the building.

13. **Any other business**

The Secretary noted that the next meeting would be Wednesday 24 July 2013 and that the Annual Meetings would be held on Wednesday 30 April 2014.

14. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.