

## St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

### Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting Held on Wednesday 30 April 2014

**Present:** Peter Silver (Vice-Chairman), Gerald Bowey, Geoffrey Burgess, Chris Cottrill, Eric Davies, Paul Dyson, Helen Fraser, Clive Hill-Archer, Janet Kitchen, Beverly Leach, Ian Locks, Valerie Locks, Peter Longland, David Lowish, Ashley Painter, Ingrid Slaughter, Janet Smith, John Smith, Terence Smith, Grace Stedman, Mary Walker, Jerry Wright

1. **Opening prayers**

The meeting opened with prayers led by the PCC Secretary.

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Emanuel Adeniji.

3. **Business matters**

a. **Conflicts of interest.** There were no reported conflicts of interest.

b. **Non-members in attendance.** The Vice Chairman noted that although the meeting was a formal Council meeting, non-members attending the AGM were welcome at it, although they would not be able to vote.

The following non-members were present: Ann Bawtree, David Bawtree, Christopher Betterton (Secretary), Guy Black, David Bolton, James Irving, Gloria Lizcano, Claire Seaton, David Smith.

4. **Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 'Section 11' items**

a. **Parish Profile.** Jerry Wright reported that the Profile and Job Description had previously been distributed to Council members for comments. A number had responded with suggested corrections and general thoughts on the documents. A number of suggested changes to the Profile had been adopted, including concerns that the document needed to better reflect the parish's spirituality and a greater emphasis on the role of the laity in the parish. The Job Description was updated to reflect *inter alia* the incumbent's Health and Safety requirements and the parish's I.T. aspirations.

It was anticipated that the documents would be completed within the week. The churchwardens thanked the office staff in particular, and Council members in general, for their work in producing what were seen as excellent documents.

b. **Council representatives.** The Vice Chairman noted that at a previous Council meeting it had been proposed that Peter Silver and Jerry Wright should represent the Council and Parish during the appointment process. At the Dean's suggestion, Helen Fraser would also participate in the process. Gerald Bowey proposed and Valerie Locks seconded the appointment of these Council representatives. The vote was passed unanimously. The Archdeacon of Charing Cross (Ven Bill Jacobs) would also sit on the panel as the Bishop's representative.

- c. **Advertising the vacancy.** The Dean of Westminster, as Patron of the Parish, had requested that the post be advertised. Adverts would be taken in the Church Times and in the national press in The Times, The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian. The advert would give a web link to the documents on the church web site.

It was proposed to advertise from 9 May, with a closing date of 27 May and interviews to be held at Westminster Abbey on 9 June. There were no formal plans to invite candidates to the church, although it was likely that this would happen.

- d. **Section 12 meeting.** As the churchwardens had met with the Patron and the Bishop on a number of occasions it was not thought necessary to request a Section 12 meeting.
- e. **Statement from the Bishop.** As the churchwardens had met with the Bishop to discuss the vacancy it was not thought necessary to request a formal statement. The Bishop had written, unusually, a forward for the Parish Profile.
- f. **Resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure.** The Council was advised of the two resolutions to be discussed, which relate to the acceptance (or otherwise) of (A) a female priest taking services in the church and (B) whether the parish would accept a female incumbent.

Helen Fraser noted that of 65 returned questionnaires only three respondents had opposed appointing a female incumbent. It was also noted that during discussions with the parish's media contacts it was suggested that formally restricting the appointment to a male priest would not be seen as productive. In discussion, two Council members stated that the appointment of a woman would not be acceptable to them personally. Other Council members felt that the post should not be gender specific and that there were more important factors to take into account when selecting the next incumbent.

There being no votes in favour of requesting a formal resolution be put to a future PCC meeting, the Council therefore voted unanimously not to do so.

## 5. **Any other business**

- a. **Interregnum plans.** It was noted that David Meara had resigned as Rector on Easter Day, and that he had been appointed priest in charge of the parish until the middle of August. The Dean of Westminster and the Bishop had been offered the possibility of taking some services during the interregnum. A possible candidate had also been sourced to cover both Sunday services and some weekday ministry.
- b. In response to a question as to why the Guild College of Chaplains had not been approached it was noted that they had been, but that the response had not been resounding, although Canon Bill Christianson had offered some assistance.
- c. The Council thanked the churchwardens and the office staff for the work they had done to date.

## 6. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.