

## St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

### Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting Held on Thursday 22 May 2014

**Present:** Ven David Meara (Priest-in-Charge & Chairman – items 1 to 9), Peter Silver (Vice-Chairman – items 10 to 19), Gerald Bowey, Geoffrey Burgess, Chris Cottrill, Eric Davies, Helen Fraser, Clive Hill-Archer, Ian Locks, Valerie Locks, Peter Longland, Ashley Painter, Ingrid Slaughter, Janet Smith, John Smith, Terence Smith, Grace Stedman, Mary Walker, Jerry Wright

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

1. **Opening prayers**  
The meeting opened with prayers.
2. **Apologies for absence**  
These were received from Rachel Corp, Paul Dyson, Janet Kitchen, Beverly Leach and David Lowish.
3. **Business matters**
  - a. **Conflicts of interest.** There were no reported conflicts of interest.
  - b. **Non members in attendance.** Christopher Betterton (Secretary), James Irving and Claire Seaton were in attendance.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2014**  
The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
5. **Matters arising not on the agenda**
  - a. **Guild assistance at weekday services.** It was asked what progress had been made arranging a rota for Guild assistance at weekday services. It was noted that the Guild Court had discussed the tightening up of expectations of Guild membership, in particular in relation to Sunday services. Guild members would also be asked to advise whether they could be available for liturgical weekday services during the year, and the dates would be provided at the start of each year. It was acknowledged that many Guild members would not be available for weekday services due to work and other commitments.
  - b. It was also noted that Clive Hill Archer had been accepted by the Bishop as a lay chalice assistant.
  - c. It was reported that Ray Barnes Harman, a Guild member, had recently died. Terence Smith would represent the Guild at the funeral.

6. **Appointment of Treasurer and Secretary and co-opted of members**  
 Mary Walker proposed and Valerie Locks seconded that Beverly Leach be appointed Treasurer.  
 Peter Silver proposed and Ian Locks seconded that Christopher Betterton be appointed Secretary.  
 Ashley Painter proposed and Clive Hill-Archer seconded that John Smith (Architect) and Katharine Wilkinson (Children's Champion) be co-opted onto the Council.  
 These appointments and co-options were unanimously approved.
7. **Confirmation of appointment of Vice-Chairman**  
 Clive Hill-archer proposed and Gerald Bowey seconded that Peter Silver be confirmed as Vice-Chairman of the council. This was unanimously agreed.
8. **Statements of Non-disqualification and Conflicts of Interest**  
 It was noted that the statement had been sent to members in their meeting pack and that all members were required to sign the disclosure statement.
9. **Report by the Priest-in-Charge**
- a. The Priest-in-Charge reported that it is barely three weeks since the APCM but a lot has happened since then. The process of appointing my successor is moving forward, and no doubt the Churchwardens will be reporting on that later on. But the life of the Church goes on and we are experiencing a very busy period at the moment, including the launch of Phase II of the Inspire! Appeal.  
 We are entering the busy wedding season, and we have a steady flow of memorial services coming through, together with Baptisms on most Sundays between now and the end of July. We have also had three adult baptisms during the weekday period. Just to give you an idea of the pastoral opportunities, and the income stream they generate – here is a breakdown of last week's events:-

Sunday morning service	£508
Baptisms	£500+
Sunday evening service	£100
Memorial Service	£381
Recital	£57
Patronal Livery Service	£453
Memorial Service	£684
Recital	£50
Wedding	£100

Think of the sheer number of people who come through our doors, the personal contacts made, and a total income stream of nearly £3,000 just in that one week. This of course does not take account planned giving or the surplus we make from weddings and memorials. These statistics show that we are a seven day a week

church, and I want to pay tribute to the staff team who work incredibly hard to deliver a professional and pastoral service, and also our congregational members and Guild members who do such a splendid job of stewarding these occasions. This bodes well for the future and for my successor.

- b. On behalf of the Council Ian locks was warmly thanked for his work during his time as churchwarden and Chris Cottrill and Paul Dyson were welcomed to the Council.
- c. It was noted that the Beating the Bounds ceremony had been cancelled as there had been insufficient time to properly organise the event.
- d. **Licensed Lay Chalice assistants.** The Council was asked that women chalice assistants should also be asked to fill casual vacancies at Sunday and other services. It was noted by Terence Smith (Guild Marshal) that this was the responsibility of the duty vergers and not the Guild.

The Priest-in-Charge left the meeting and the Chair was taken by the Vice-Chairman

10. **Minutes of the 'Section 11' meetings held on 30 April and 11 May 2014**

These were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

11. **Succession planning / Interregnum arrangements**

- a. There had been a number of enquiries for the post and it was hoped that some of these would result in formal applications. A meeting would be held at the Abbey on 27 May to discuss the shortlisting process, with the interviews taking place on 9 June.
- b. Ven. David Meara would continue until the second Sunday in August. Rev'd Bill Wilson, currently Priest-in-Charge of St Michael Cornhill, had been identified as a possible cover from mid-August to November. A fee of £30 per service plus travel expenses was being negotiated, and Mr Wilson would cover Saturday weddings, Sunday services and three days during the week when required. Rev'd Bill Christianson had also offered assistance, as had Rev'd Wallace Boulton, although he would not be in a position to cover full service duties. All fees paid during the interregnum would be recovered from the sequestration fund.

12. **Financial Report**

On behalf of the Treasurer, James Irving reported to the Council.

- a. The first quarter accounts and budget had been sent to Council members. It was noted that, due to the December income skew, the Q1 deficit was not unusual. Some additional costs had been reported in Q1, in particular relating to the production of the Parish Profile. £3,000 had been spent on improving the flat and access into Bride Lane. A tenant was expected to be in situ in June, on a twelve month tenancy with various break clauses. The rent would be £2,000 per month.

- b. It was reported that Ven. David Meara had continued to work with Goldman Sachs regarding the 2013 Voluntary Church Rate. It was looking less likely that the firm would pay the 2013 amount. The Council was advised that in future the rates would be levied through the Church office and not the Archdeacon's office.
- c. **Common Fund contribution.** The Council discussed the continued payment of the additional voluntary contribution (AVC), which meant that the parish was effectively funding the stipend costs of the Archdeacon. Although it was also noted that the Council had committed to pay the AVC for 2014, a number of Council members felt that it was difficult to continue to justify the additional expense. The AVC amounted to £16,000 p.a., increasing the Common Fund payment from £58,000 to £74,000. Suspending the AVC from 1 June would save in the region of £9,000. The following proposal was put to the Council:

"This Council directs the Treasurer to advise the Diocese that St Bride's will suspend the additional voluntary contribution as from 1 June"

With 1 vote against and 1 abstention the motion was passed. James Irving would liaise with the Treasurer.

13. **Safeguarding report**

- a. Ashley Painter reported that no safeguarding issues had been raised since the previous meeting.
- b. **Diocesan Safeguarding policy.** The Council voted to adopt the policy, which was displayed in the Church.

14. **Architect's Report**

- a. The Architect reported that we were half way through the steeple renovation contract rectification process, whereby any remedial work to be done was assessed. A number of minor issues had been identified. The Rectory would require some redecoration work during the interregnum, and it was hoped that the new incumbent would have an input into the work.
- b. The Council discussed the merits of separating the Rectory and the flat heating from the Church heating system. Although this would be an ideal, it was likely the cost would outweigh any benefit in the short term. A service charge would be levied on the flat tenant to recoup heating costs. The Architect agreed to further review the position regarding the Rectory.

15. **Inspire! Appeal report**

- a. Gerald Bowey report that the project had now moved from the Appeal stage to the Legacy stage and that a launch had been held at Marlborough House to garner the support of the newspaper proprietors and the publishing industry. The Committee was looking to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and it was noted that this would only succeed if the Church could match the funding. It was also noted that neither HLF nor the press industry would fund building work and it had been decided that it would be prudent to combine the next phase of works with the Wren Centre project to create an educational

project. Some members noted that the Council had not been provided with detailed costings or a business plan and questioned the sustainability of the project. It was noted that the only additional factor was the joining of the stages of the project, and that approval would be sought at the July meeting of the Council.

- b. Ian Locks noted that the auction had raised around £28,000 for the congregational appeal.

16. **Database update**

Ashley Painter reported on the progress of the database project. The project was delayed by two to three weeks and a soft launch would take place in June. The social media group would also meet.

17. **Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll Officer it was reported that the roll stood at 312, with two deletions since the previous meeting.

18. **Any other business**

The Vice-Chairman reported to the meeting that plans had been drawn up to invite contributions to a leaving present for David and Rosemary, and letters would shortly be sent to members of the Electoral Roll, Guild and other interested parties. A dinner to be held at Stationers' Hall on 21st October was also in the planning stage.

19. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.