

## St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

### Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting Held on Thursday 25 September 2014

**Present:** Peter Silver (Chairman), Guy Black, Geoffrey Burgess, Rachel Corp, Chris Cottrill, Eric Davies, Paul Dyson, Clive Hill-Archer, Janet Kitchen, Valerie Locks, Peter Longland, Ingrid Slaughter, John Smith, Terence Smith, Mary Walker, Jerry Wright

**Also attending:** Christopher Betterton (Secretary), James Irving (Head of Operations), Claire Seaton (Administrator), David Smith (Verger and Lay Minister)

1. **Opening prayers**

The meeting opened with prayers.

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Emmanuel Adeniji, Gerald Bowey, Helen Fraser, David Lowish, Ashley Painter, Grace Stedman and Katharine Wilkinson.

3. **Business matters**

- a. **Conflicts of interest.** There were no reported conflicts of interest.
- b. **Statements of Non-disqualification and Conflicts of Interest.** Council members were again reminded that they were required to complete the form and return to the Head of Operations.
- c. **Non members in attendance.** Christopher Betterton, James Irving, Claire Seaton and David Smith were in attendance.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2014**

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

5. **Matters arising not on the agenda**

The Council was reminded that the subject of Vestments had been raised at the previous meeting. It was noted that the new Rector had some copes and did not expect the church vestments to be altered for her use. It was agreed to review the situation early in 2015.

6. **Succession planning / Interregnum arrangements**

It was reported that the interregnum was going well. The Rev'd Bill Wilson had slotted in well, both with the Sunday congregations and also the wedding couples he had met. He had also continued the mid week communion service. Weddings and other special services were continuing during the interregnum.

7. **Financial Report**

- a. **Appointment of Treasurer.** Ashley Painter had offered to fill the post until the 2015 Annual Meetings. The day to day accounting work would continue to be carried out by the Head of Operations. The appointment was proposed by Clive Hill-Archer and seconded by Mary Walker. The Council agreed the appointment.
- b. **Common Fund contribution.** It was reported by the Head of Operations that the church was facing a projected 2014 deficit of £46,000 (budget deficit was £40,000), based *inter alia* on receiving £50,000 in Church Rate during the year. Although there was no overwhelming case for reducing the 2014 Common Fund contribution, it was noted that the church had been

generous over the past few years, including paying the full stipend costs of a non full time incumbent and also making an additional voluntary contribution each year. The diocesan response to the PCC's letter was limited to an offer to meet and discuss the Common Fund. It was suggested that the church ratified its original decision to withdraw a proportion of the voluntary contribution (in respect of David Meara's time as Archdeacon of London), equal to £9,570. It was noted that this figure was merely 10% of the donations made by St Bride's, above its commitment to meet full parish costs, over the previous five years. It was agreed that the church should make an offer of £75,000 for 2015. The Council directed the Head of Operations to write to the diocese informing it of the Council's decision.

- c. In responses to questions it was reported that the reserves policy target may not be reached in 2014 and may need to be reviewed, and that it was not clear whether the diocese were attempting to get their finances under control.

8. **Inspire! Appeal report and Wren Legacy update**

The Council had a report from Gerald Bowey which thanked a number of individuals for their work on the Appeal and Legacy project. It was noted that the HLF application had been submitted. The Council was reminded that the success depended partly on achieving matched funding. A number of organisations had been approached and the response had been encouraging. If the application was successful the building would be removed from the English Heritage 'at risk' register. The council was also advised that the congregational appeal had raised £125,000 of its £200,000 target.

9. **Architect's report**

The Architect reported that the remaining work to the tower was almost completed; the Rectory had been redecorated and the sound system was undergoing some work, including provision for a hard wired microphone at the eagle.

10. **Safeguarding report**

- a. On behalf of Ashley Painter (Evidence Checker), it was reported that no safeguarding issues had been raised since the previous meeting.
- b. **Proposed resolutions.** The Council had two resolutions before it which acknowledged that Janet Smith and Nicola Smith had stood down from the Sunday School and that Janet Smith had also ceased to be a Safeguarding Officer. The Council thanked both Janet and Nicola for their work over a number of years.
- c. **Appointment of safeguarding officer.** It was noted that an officer was required to replace Janet Smith, and an advert would be placed in the Sunday service sheet from 5 October, detailing the responsibilities of the post. Although it was noted that Sue Anne James was currently a safeguarding officer it was thought that an individual with a higher profile, in particular with the children in the church, would be welcome. It was agreed to have photographs of safeguarding officers as well as members of staff on a noticeboard at the back of the church. It was again noted that the new Rector may have views on how the programme for children and vulnerable adults would progress going forward.
- d. **Sunday School.** It was reported that Katharine Wilkinson had agreed to manage a rota of prospective Sunday School providers, but that a request for there to be two individuals on duty each Sunday, although both practical and sensible, was making the provision of a regular Sunday School more difficult. Eight individuals had agreed to be involved and a meeting would be held on 5 October.

- e. **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.** Ashley Painter would continue to deal with ensuring the checks were carried out. Those requiring DBS checks was still being agreed (and a number of volunteer 'areas' had been ruled out). It was noted that the church could not be a registering agent in its own right, but would fall under the auspices of the diocese.

The resolutions were proposed by Peter Silver, seconded by Chris Cottrill, and agreed by the Council.

11. **Database update**

- a. The Council had a number of resolutions before it, designed to ensure that the church, its charitable trusts and the Guild were Data Protection Act compliant. It was noted that the principles enshrined in the resolutions were mandatory and that the Council was legally liable under the Act. It was noted that discussions were taking place with the Guild Treasurer to ensure that body was complying with the Act. In response to a question regarding whose remit the resolutions fell under, Jerry Wright (Data Compliance Officer) advised that he had been part of the discussion around, and was fully supportive of, the proposed resolutions.
- b. It was noted that the database was fully password protected and that the data loading exercise would be complete by the end of September and fully operational by October.

The resolutions, having been proposed by Ashley Painter, were seconded by Jerry Wright and agreed by the Council, with one member abstaining.

12. **Electoral Roll**

- a. **Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer.** Claire Seaton was appointed Electoral Roll Officer until the 2015 Annual Meetings. There had been other expressions of interest in the role, which would be followed up in the intervening period.
- b. The Council had received an Electoral Roll update. The roll stood at 328.

13. **Any other business**

- a. It was noted that Open House weekend had been a success with approximately 700 people visiting the church. The Foundation had also been open to the public.
- b. The MacMillan coffee morning was due to take place the following day.
- c. The Installation of the new Rector would take place on 3 November during a service of Evensong. A number of City dignitaries had been invited and around 60 congregants from Old Edgbaston were expected to attend. It was envisaged there would be space for about 200 parishioners.

14. **Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.