

## St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

### Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting Held on Tuesday 26 January 2016

#### Present:

Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce (Rector and Chair), Revd Dr Jeff Lake (Assistant Curate), Peter Silver (Vice Chair), Emmanuel Adeniji, Gerald Bowey, Lucy Bowsher, Julie Christie-Webb, Chris Cottrill, Eric Davies, Paul Dyson, Helen Fraser, Clive Hill-Archer, Ashley Painter, Everarda Slabbekoorn, Ingrid Slaughter, Terence Smith

#### 1. Opening prayers

The meeting opened with prayers.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

These were received from Guy Black, Geoffrey Burgess, Rachel Corp, Carole Cox, Janet Kitchen, Valerie Locks, Peter Longland, David Lowish, Grace Stedman, Katharine Wilkinson, Jerry Wright

#### 3. Business matters

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

3.2. **Non-members in attendance.** Christopher Betterton, Claire Seaton, David Smith and John Smith were in attendance for the meeting.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015

4.1. Clive Hill-Archer proposed and Lucy Bowsher seconded that the minutes be accepted.

4.2. The Rector signed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

4.3. Peter Silver proposed and Helen Fraser seconded that the minute for item 15 be accepted.

4.4. The Rector signed the minute as an accurate record of the item.

4.5. Update on action points:

AP 1. Internal works questions – was deferred

AP 2. Fundraising Group – was yet to meet

AP 3. Appeal Fund Trustees – have agreed to underwrite internal decorations up to £275,000

AP 4. Information in Advent service sheets – completed

AP 5. Thompson Trust – further clarification would be required before an application was made.

AP 6. Spear – completed

AP 7. St James' School Zongoro – James Irving had made contact with the school; a request for additional funds had been made. Peter Silver proposed and Everarda Slabbekoorn seconded that £1,500 be paid in accordance with the PCC decision in 2013. This was unanimously agreed. It was suggested that photos be requested from the school to update the church display (acknowledging previous issues with such communications).

#### **ACTION POINT 1:**

#### **JAMES IRVING TO PAY £1,500 to ST JAMES' SCHOOL AND REQUEST PHOTOS FOR DISPLAY**

AP 8. Social outreach – Ven Luke Miller is reviewing the work carried out by St Andrew Holborn and this was deferred

AP 9. Legacy giving – Ben Alonso happy to attend a PCC meeting; a Fund Raising training day would be held at St Matthew Westminster on 24 February, which the Rector and several PCC members agreed to attend.

AP 10. Trustee information – completed

AP 11. Heating – completed; some concern was expressed that manual intervention was still required; problems with the Rectory underfloor heating had been resolved when it was discovered that the thermostat controlling it was located in the tropical climes of the church boiler room. (Appropriate adjustments in the basic temperature settings have now been made to take account of this, with successful results). However, the heating control panel had not yet been attended to.

**ACTION POINT 2:**

**JOHN SMITH TO FOLLOW UP ON HEATING CONTROL PANEL**

AP 12. Fire Alarm – see Architect’s report

AP 13. Communications Group – see St Bride’s and Communications below

AP 14. Visitation – awaiting confirmation of the date

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

There were none.

Items 8.2 and 11 on the agenda were taken at this point.

**8.2 Interior works update**

John Smith (Architect) spoke to his report, which had been circulated.

8.2.1 It was proposed to carry out the interior redecoration during a 15 week period post Easter. Some preparatory work had been carried out but the costs and specification were being firmed up with the contractor. It was hoped that a faculty would not be required. The vault would be redecorated, and it was noted that the pattern from the steel ribs in the plasterwork would re-appear over time. An application would be required to the Diocese by the following Wednesday (3 February) and the contractor was aware of this deadline.

8.2.2 In response to a question, it was noted that the architect had met with an organ specialist and that organ console and the pipes in the west chambers would be covered and protected as much as possible.

**11. Architect’s report**

The Architect spoke to his report, which had been circulated.

11.1 Fire alarm proposal. It was requested that an additional quote be sought for the work. Peter Silver proposed and Everarda Slabbekoorn seconded the proposal that:

‘subject to a second quote coming in and a decision made by the PCC by electronic means where possible money be made available for the fire alarm replacement’

The proposal was unanimously agreed.

**ACTION POINT 3:**

**JOHN SMITH TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE DIOCESE RE AUTHORISED FIRMS IN THIS AREA**

11.2 It was noted that the bolts on the West Doors were not functioning properly and that this was being remedied.

11.3 The Quinquennial Inspection was ongoing and further reports were awaited.

11.4 The works to the roof would begin in February. One condition from the grant making body was that the work would be advertised and it was agreed to do this.

**ACTION POINT 4:**

**THE OFFICE TO PREPARE INFORMATION FOR THE WEBSITE AND FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY TO ADVERTISE THE WORKS**

## 6. Financial report

Ashley Painter (Treasurer) spoke to his report, which had been circulated.

6.1 It was noted that the 2015 outturn was in line with the forecast deficit of £5,000, although may show a small surplus. Analysis on the church rate would be required.

6.2 It was noted that St Bride's now fell under the income threshold for a full audit requirement. The Treasurer recommended and Clive Hill-Archer proposed and Paul Dyson seconded that St Bride's continued to have its accounts fully audited and requested that the Trusts continue to do so. This was unanimously agreed.

6.3 It was noted that the assets of the Media Trust had been transferred to the Appeal Fund in 2015 and that it was proposed to transfer the assets of the HJC Stevens Organ Fund to the Appeal Fund.

6.3.1 In discussion it was noted that this proposed transfer would save some administration fees. It was confirmed that the assets would be ring-fenced in the Appeal Fund for their original purpose.

6.3.2 Gerald Bowey proposed and Peter Silver seconded the proposal that the assets of the St Bride Organ Fund should be transferred as designated funds to the Appeal Fund. This was unanimously agreed.

6.4 The Council noted that the 2016 PCC budget was subject to additional qualifications: the £1,500 agreed donation to St James' School, the expected loss of £20,000 income due to the interior refurbishment and the costs of the proposed IT audit and HR review.

6.5 A discussion on staff costs was deferred to agenda item 15.

## 7. Rector's report

The Rector spoke to her report, which had been circulated.

7.1 It was noted that the Diocese had paid for all the major work undertaken on the Rectory over Christmas and the New Year, for which it is legally and financially responsible. It is not a parish responsibility.

7.2 The Rector would consult the Diocese regarding carrying out work to the Rectory heating.

<b>ACTION POINT 5:</b>
<b>RECTOR TO CONSULT DIOCESE REGARDING RECTORY HEATING</b>

## 8. St Bride's – Looking ahead

8.1 The Rector spoke to the **Vision & Priorities** extract, which had been circulated.

8.1.1 The document was intended to present a core understanding of St Bride's mission and had been largely drawn from the 2014 Parish Profile document. It identified the church's core constituents, including those who visited the church virtually (by the web site and other media) as well as physical attendees and visitors. The document could also be drawn upon when producing the church's Annual Report.

8.1.2 Helen Fraser proposed and Lucy Bowsher seconded that the document be adopted and reviewed in early 2017. This was unanimously agreed.

8.2 Gerald Bowey reported on **fund raising for the exterior work**.

8.2.1 Gerald Bowey reported that the church was working towards an April 2016 initiative to focus on external sources of funding for the work to the exterior.

9. **St Bride's and Communications**

Julie Christie-Webb spoke to her paper, which had been circulated.

9.1 The Communications Working Group (CWG) had met and agreed its strategy.

9.2 **Database.** Concern was expressed that the database was not yet operational. It was noted that although the bulk of the data as it exists had been inputted, the system contained some bugs and glitches, which had not yet been resolved, and that Phase 1 had not yet been signed off as the database did not yield the results required of it. Members of the CWG felt that the Phase 1 work had been completed, but that additional training was required to better utilise the system which would need to take place before Phase 2 was implemented.

9.2.1 Chris Cottrill proposed that Steve Rumbles, who is a database expert, carry out an independent test of the system with a view to understanding what the issues were and how best to resolve them. The Council welcomed this suggestion.

**ACTION POINT 6:**

**CHRIS COTTRILL TO LIAISE WITH STEVE RUMBLES AND THE CHURCH OFFICE**

9.3 **IT audit.** It was requested that the office staff, as end users of the IT, should be included in the proposed IT audit. The CWG had identified two potential service providers for the IT audit. The Council felt that one (the Database designers) had a potential conflict of interest and should not be invited to tender for the audit work, which would include a review *inter alia* of the hardware, software, servers and broadband speed. It was felt that the CWG should consult the Diocese to ascertain other potential providers and the cost-effectiveness of the quotes received.

9.3.1 Lucy Bowsher proposed and Gerald Bowey seconded that the Council agreed to spend up to £500 on an IT Audit subject to advice being sought from the Diocese. This was unanimously agreed.

9.4 It was noted that the Rector would be writing to donors to the INSPIRING! Appeal (rather than the INSPIRE! Appeal).

9.5 **Branding.** It was reported that this was ongoing and subject to other factors, including the outcome of the CWG's work.

10. **Great Fire anniversary**

The Rector spoke to her report, which had been circulated.

10.1 It was noted that the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary fell at the beginning of September 2016 and that the Rector had made contact with a number of external organisations.

10.2 It was reported that the 2016 Wren Talk would be on the Great Fire and given by Adrian Tinniswood. It was suggested that Mr Tinniswood's book should be sold on the bookstall.

**ACTION POINT 7:**

**SHOP TEAM TO SOURCE AND STOCK 'BY PERMISSION OF HEAVEN ....'**

10.3 A number of events were noted, including producing an education pack, moving the Summer Party to the weekend of the anniversary and a lumière of the Great Fire on the tower. Paul Dyson noted that he could provide display insurance grade cabinets for any artefacts to be displayed in the church.

12. **Bishop's Lent Appeal**

12.1 Details of the Appeal were circulated. It was proposed to utilise retiring collections and/or refreshments donations during Lent to raise funds for the Appeal.

12.2 It was also proposed to appeal for items for the Hackney Food bank during Lent, with a list of acceptable items being published in the Sunday service booklets and on the web site.

12.3 It was further proposed to adopt a dry Lent at Sunday service refreshments.

13. **Q&A on items for deemed approval or for information**

13.1 The Secretary noted that some reports to the Council were provided for information or regarded as being for deemed approval, but that an agenda item would be given over to questions on these items before non-members left the meeting. It was noted that if the reports contained issues which required discussion (such as safeguarding) they would be included as full agenda items.

13.2 It was noted that the Diocese provided an eLearning module on safeguarding, and that Sunday Club leaders and the Guild Almoner must complete the course. It was also suggested that the vergers, office staff, churchwardens and tour guides should complete the course. A link to the module would be forwarded to the individuals concerned.

**ACTION POINT 8:**

**ASHLEY PAINTER / SECRETARY TO SEND eLEARNING MODULE URL TO RELEVANT INDIVIDUALS**

14. **Any other business**

14.1 A revised list of meeting dates had been provided with the agenda, including a single agenda item meeting on Palm Sunday to approve the Annual Accounts.

14.2 In response to a question regarding churchwarden succession planning it was noted that the churchwardens were elected each year by the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and although there were some legal eligibility requirements it was not a pre-requisite that potential churchwardens should be PCC members. It was also noted that although the usual period of service was six terms of office, the meeting could agree to extend the period of service. It was further noted that an incumbent could, in extremis, reject a proposed candidate where it appeared the nomination could cause difficulties. It was suggested that the current churchwardens produce a brief paper summarizing their duties to be distributed in the church and to other parishioners. A notice would also be placed in the Sunday service booklet.

**ACTION POINT 9:**

**RECTOR AND CHURCHWARDENS TO PRODUCE PUBLICITY RE THE CW ROLE**

14.3 It was also noted that the term of office of some members of the Council would end at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. A notice would be placed in the Sunday service booklet about elections to the Council.

14.4 A request was made to structure the Council meetings so as to have a fully separate meeting for confidential business. It was conjectured that, operational issues aside, Council meetings were public, and that the minutes of the meeting should reflect that. It was, however, agreed that matters relating to individuals (eg HR and staffing issues) would be recorded in a confidential note.

15. **Trustee only matters**

15.1 **HR audit.**

15.1.1 It had been proposed to carry out an HR audit, and recommendations had been sought or received from the Diocese and a member of the Council. Three potential organisations had been suggested: Croner Reward (used by the Diocese and the National Church Institutions), which was agreed to be too large for the church's purposes; Reward Connected, who appeared to be financially insolvent, and Gill Taylor, an HR consultant.

15.1.2 In discussion it was agreed that Gill Taylor could be flexible enough to deal with the church's requirements. The cost would be in the region of £500 per day. The Council would be sent details of Gill Taylor with a view to deciding whether to appoint her.

**ACTION POINT 10:**

**SECRETARY TO SEND DETAILS OF GILL TAYLOR AND REQUEST RESPONSE BY NOON ON 9 FEBRUARY**

15.1.3 It was proposed to form an HR working group, to include the Rector, the Head of Operations, one churchwarden and Gerald Bowey. The group would aim to report to the March Council meeting.

**15.2 Architect's terms and conditions.**

15.2.1 The Architect had proposed some terms and conditions to be adopted, to bring the church in line with Diocesan best practice. It was noted that some of the current work undertaken by the architect would be carried out by others, including work on the Rectory (by the Diocese), general maintenance work (by the vergers) and some general inspection work (by the Head of Operations).

15.2.2 In discussion it was noted that the church was on the English Heritage 'At Risk' register, and there was some concern that this may not be the most prudent time to scale back the work undertaken by the Architect. In response, it was noted that the T&C issue had arisen because of the retainer and the Architect would continue to oversee the works and would be asked to attend any serious issues as they arose.

15.2.3 Gerald Bowey proposed and Peter Silver seconded that the Architect be asked to carry out an inspection bi-monthly (every other month); that he be paid for this inspection at an agreed hourly rate, and that this should be reviewed in the summer. This was unanimously agreed.

**15.3 Post service organ music.**

15.3.1 An observation was made that, on occasion, the music after services was uncomfortably loud. It was agreed that the music during and after the service was a subjective matter but that the Rector would raise this with the music team.

<b>ACTION POINT 11: RECTOR TO LIAISE WITH THE MUSIC TEAM</b>
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**15.4 Staff costs.**

15.4.1 A discussion on staffing costs was deferred to the next meeting.

15.4.2 A request was made that, given the level of remuneration, the Head of Operations should be expected to attend all meetings of the Council going forward.

**16. Closing prayers**

The meeting ended with the Grace.

**Next meeting:**

Tuesday 15 March 2016 starting at 6.05pm