

PCC MINUTES FOR THE PARISH OF ST MICHAEL'S PLAS NEWTON, CHESTER

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th March 2021 via Zoom

Present	Peter Rugen (Chair)	Stu Davies
	Ruth McKew	Andrew Evans
	Steve McKew	Anne Stockdale
	David Blackmore	Ken Ball
	John Allan	Sarah Batchelor
	Martin Smith	Fiona Prichard (Secretary)
	Magdy Fahmy	
	Steve Powell	
	Ali Gibbons	
	Peter Webster	
	Anne de Reybekill	Apologies
	Phil Roberts	Andy Thorne (joined meeting at 7.30 pm)
	John Stockdale	
	Gill Miller	

Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
	Welcome and Prayer	Pete welcomed everyone to the meeting. David Blackmore then said a prayer.		
	Minutes from February Meeting	<p>Pete said that a minor amendment was required as he had told the previous meeting that Chris Jones, the new self-supporting Curate, was interested in being a Prison Chaplain but he had meant to say Police Chaplain.</p> <p>A member of the PCC pointed out that she had not been present at the previous meeting but that monies had not yet been returned to those who had paid to go to the House Party (as discussed at the January meeting).</p> <p>Pete also pointed out that some official wording (which was read out) would be inserted into the minutes, as directed by the Diocese, confirming that due to the Covid crisis, the PCC agreed to not holding in person services but that the situation would be reviewed each month.</p> <p>Approval of the minutes, as amended, was proposed by Andrew Evans and seconded by David Blackmore and the minutes were approved by all present.</p>	Pete to talk to Andy T. Arrangements to be made to make refunds	Pete/ Andy
	Matters Arising	Building Update: Pete explained that, as discussed at the February PCC Meeting, it was not prudent to pursue a major building project but that the Building Project Group had been asked instead to put together a programme of improvements		



		<p>which would not need to be undone should a major building project be embarked upon in the future. Following the meeting he had discussed the matter with Ruth McKew who was leading the Building Group.</p> <p>Virtual House Party: At the previous meeting, Pete had asked for someone to volunteer to lead the virtual House Party but, as no one had come forward, he assumed that the virtual House Party was not a priority for the PCC and so it would not be taken forward. It was suggested that a House Party might be possible once restrictions were eased, possibly at the end of August.</p>		
2171	Finance Update	<p>The Finance Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Auditor: Phil confirmed that, as stated in his Report, a qualified accountant was required to audit the accounts. He had acquired three quotes, the cheapest of which was Joanna Price of JM Price & Co and he was proposing that her named be put forward at the APCM to audit the 2020-2021 accounts. Gill Miller seconded Phil's proposal and all were in favour.</p> <p>Salary Review: Phil explained that Chester Diocese had decided not to increase any salaries this year for its staff. This is because their income is down due to loss of fees. He said that pay rises at St Michael's are usually based on what the Diocese decides. Phil proposed that for our staff, those on the RLW (Real Living Wage) be given a 20p an hour increase but that all other staff are not given an increase in line with the Dicoese.</p> <p>A discussion ensued and the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phil was asked how much it would cost to give an increase to those staff who are paid above the RLW in line with inflation (which is currently about 2%). Phil estimated it would be about £2,000. ● It was suggested that St Michael's were in an invidious position if the salaries were increased there whilst other churches could not afford to do so. ● It was suggested that as there is no evidence that we could not afford to increase salaries and we should do so. Phil said that the inflation rate in November when the Diocese would normally set its rate for pay increases, was .5% and to increase salaries on this rate would mean a cost of about £500. 		



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was suggested that we should treat staff fairly and that we had a duty of care towards them. ● It was suggested that if the salaries for the staff were to be increased, we should also compensate Pete who would not be getting an increase as he was paid by the Diocese. Pete asked that the discussion relate only to the staff as he would feel awkward to receive an enhancement from St Michael's as he is not paid by them. <p>Following the discussion, Phil proposed that all staff should receive a pay rise. He would look at what the inflation rate was in November as that was what the Diocese would normally do to set the rate. He did not know if the Diocese used the RPI where the inflation rate in November was at .9% or the CPI where the inflation rate in November was at .3%. He would find out which rate the Diocese normally used and apply it to the increase for the non RLW staff. Steve McKew seconded Phil's proposal and all were in favour.</p> <p>Annual Accounts: A member of the PCC commented that Phil's Report was excellent and very clear. Phil proposed that the Annual Accounts be accepted on the proviso that the Auditor, who would be auditing the accounts imminently, did not find any discrepancies and, if he did so, Phil would email PCC Members to approve any changes. John Stockdale seconded the proposal and all were in favour.</p> <p>2021 Update: Phil said that there was still a lot of uncertainty regarding financial planning but that he would continue to look at savings in order to try and reduce the predicted deficit (of around £20,000). He would give the next financial update in June.</p> <p>Pete thanked Phil for his very succinct report and for all his efforts in making savings.</p>		
2172	Climate Action Group	<p>Pete welcomed Sarah Batchelor to the meeting. Sarah said that she was requesting the PCC's approval of a Climate Emergency Declaration which she proposed to put on the website. She explained that the Climate Action Group (CAG) had just started a web page and that she believed that St Michael's was the only church in the area who had done this. She added that she believed it was a good mission point, allowing us to reach out to other churches.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the Climate Emergency Declaration (which had been circulated prior to the meeting). The following comments/queries were made:</p>		



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was asked whether the Declaration was on behalf of the church or the CAG. Pete said that the whole church was behind it and the Declaration should reflect that. ● It was suggested that the St Michael's as a church must be completely behind the Declaration if it were to accept it and it was not enough to just have the Declaration on the website. This would have financial implications as we adapt the church to meet green credentials. ● It was suggested that the church is in the middle of a socially deprived area where the Climate Emergency is not top of the concerns of the local people and it was queried whether we should be focussing more on those people's concerns and needs. ● It was argued that the local people's needs should not stop this initiative but that sensitivity would be required. ● It was suggested that one way to embrace local people's needs as well is to publicise all the work being done, eg Food Bank. ● It was an opportunity to educate people. ● Climate change will affect everyone and those on lower incomes will be especially affected as they cannot afford to mitigate against the effects of climate change. ● The concern with the climate was something which would resonate with young people and might attract them to the church. ● Stewardship of the planet is encouraged in the Bible, starting in Genesis and caring for the environment is a missionary action. ● Some moves have already been made towards the church being greener. <p>Sarah proposed that the Declaration was reworded to say "Climate Actions Group, on behalf of the PCC".</p> <p>Ali Gibbons proposed that the Declaration be amended and the proposal was seconded by Gill Miller. All were in favour except for two abstentions.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Declaration should be presented at the APCM as it would encourage people to get on board with it. Sarah said she would contact the Diocese to let them know</p>	<p>Declaration to be reworded and presented at the APCM and posted on web page</p> <p>Diocese contact name to be given to Sarah</p>	<p>Sarah</p> <p>Martin S</p>
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		<p>about the Declaration. A member of the PCC offered to give Sarah the name of the person whom she should contact.</p> <p>Pete thanked Sarah for all her work so far and said there would be a lot of work ahead.</p>		
2173	Health and Safety Report	<p>The Health and Safety Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Peter Webster asked if there were any queries concerning the Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He was asked if it covered the garden area as concerns had been raised about the play area. Peter said that it had always been the responsibility of parents to ensure safety of their children but that he and Rod Pirie would assess the situation in the next fortnight. ● Under clause 3.1 the box had been ticked “no” to whether there were adequate measures to prevent fire in the church building. Peter said that this had been ticked “no” in error and he would amend it. ● One of the clauses ticked “no” related to emergency lighting. Peter explained that the emergency lighting had not worked since the building was modified thirty years ago but that he would try and repair it. ● He was asked what the status was of the repair to the carpark to prevent the manhole cover being a tripping hazard. Peter said that he had had a quote and had been waiting for the company to get back to him about carrying out the repair. He would speak to Steve Powell about getting the work done. <p>Pete thanked Peter and Rod for all their work in completing the Reports and said it represented a huge amount of work not just in completing the Report but carrying out the repairs and maintenance (especially as additional work had been required to make the building comply with Covid restrictions).</p>	<p>Emergency Lighting to be looked at</p> <p>Repair of car park to be arranged</p>	<p>Peter W</p> <p>Peter W/Steve P</p>
2174	APCM/ Reports	<p>The Annual Report and Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting. Pete invited any comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was suggested that the Report could be shorter as at present it was longer than the Annual Report for most other churches. ● It was suggested that the Vicar’s Report be included with the other reports. ● It was suggested that in future the Report could be split in two so that the Report with the Accounts was 	<p>Vicar’s Report to be included in Annual Report</p>	<p>Fiona</p>



		<p>much shorter but there could be another document containing all the separate reports.</p> <p>Pete said that he thought that we need a clearer idea of what is to be achieved at the APCM. If people are coming to find things out at the APCM then the PCC has not done its job at communicating properly. He felt that the APCM was a chance to present the Report but also to say what the aims of the church are in the future. It was suggested that presentations could be much shorter.</p> <p>Pete proposed that the APCM would remain in the same format this year but that at the May PCC a discussion should take place as to what form it should take in the future and what changes needed to be made to the meeting and documentation.</p>		
2175	Sub-Groups Update	<p>Some of the groups are carrying on in the same form as they were before the reorganisation. The new groups are deciding on their aims and objectives. Pete will check that he has spoken to all groups to ensure that this is under way and that a chair person has been appointed. There will be a plug at Easter to try and encourage members of the church to join the groups.</p> <p>Pete was asked if he could prepare a sheet showing the configuration of all the groups. He said he would do so once they were all up and running.</p>	Check Small Groups are up and running	Pete
2176	Survey Results	<p>The survey results had been circulated prior to the February PCC Meeting. Ruth M said she had not received the results. Pete said he would send them to her.</p> <p>No very significant trends had been shown in the survey results. A lot of people had not responded. A large percentage of people admitted that they had not got involved in many of the online church services/events.</p> <p>It was suggested that, although the children and youth work was undeniably fantastic at St Michael's and very important for the future, this only served a relatively small percentage of the church family and little was done specifically for the older generation (ie the over 65s) which formed a much larger percentage (43%).</p>	Survey results to be sent to Ruth	Pete
2177	Vicar's Report	<p>Covid-19 Update: The situation regarding Covid was looking increasingly better with the vaccine programme being rolled out so quickly. Pete said that the decision not to hold in person services needed to be revisited in the light of this. Pete proposed to hold a service on Easter Sunday as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The children and families would go straight to the garden. 		



2. The older congregation members would go through the church building to the garden and there would be one song played outside (no singing would be allowed).
3. The children and families would remain outside whilst there would then be a service for the older people in church who would then leave the building.
4. After that the children and families would go in to the church for a service.

The plan would be subject to the weather.

Pete invited comments on his planned service and on starting services again from Easter:

- It was suggested that it might be too early to start in person services.
- It was suggested that if services did start again, we would have to be prepared to pause again if circumstances dictated.
- It was suggested that if an Easter Service was held then services should resume as either it was safe to hold services or it was not.
- The health of the people supporting the services needed to be considered and whether they had been vaccinated.
- Social distancing would still be in place as it had been when in person services had been held previously.
- Pete was asked if he was happy to hold services as it was essential he was there whilst others had a choice. Pete confirmed that he was as previous in person services had been so well organised.
- There would be a booking system so numbers could be limited.
- It was confirmed that the online service would continue so those not wishing to attend could still access the service.
- It was suggested that not many people would have had their second vaccination by Easter. However, it was argued that the first vaccination gives significant protection.
- It was pointed out that children are still at high risk of spreading the virus and it might be better not to mix the generations.

Pete thanked everyone for their comments and said that in the light of the comments he proposed to go ahead with an in-person service in the church building (not outside). He



would speak to Rob and Sas about the young people and what it was prudent to provide for them. The normal social distancing restrictions would apply. The situation could be reviewed after Easter and the in-person services paused if required. The online services would run in parallel. Therefore, the Resolution not to hold in person services as agreed at the February Meeting would be revoked from Sunday, 4th April. All were happy with Pete's proposal.

Easter: Pete said that details of the plans for Easter were set out on the Notice Sheet and he urged members of the PCC to look at that for information.

Stream Groups after Easter: Pete said that about seven new Stream Groups were starting after Easter and details would appear in the next Notice Sheet.

Internship: Pete said that he had talked in theory with Rob about the possibility of having an Intern some time ago. The idea would be to have a young person, perhaps who had just done A'Levels and so was about 18, to shadow Rob and possibly Pete. The idea had not gone any further due to Covid but Pete had recently been contacted by someone who was at the church where he had served as a curate, offering £5,000 as a donation for purposes such as this. He had asked Liz Geddes' advice on Interns and she had said that an Intern could either be employed or taken on as a volunteer, in which case, only their board and lodging needed to be paid for. He said that although he would have overall managerial responsibility for the Intern, Rob would have responsibility too which he believed would be a beneficial experience for him.

Pete asked members of the meeting for their views on taking on an Intern which would be at no financial cost to the church. The following views were expressed:

- It was suggested that this was an amazing opportunity and the church would also gain much from it.
- Pete was asked when the Intern would start. Pete said possibly in August if Rob attended any youth camps but it might be September.
- It was queried whether it would be too much to have a new Curate (who was starting in July) and a new Intern.
- It was confirmed that Sas would be full time again by then.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was queried where the person might live but Pete said he hoped the person would be local. ● It was suggested that Chester University, who run a Christian Leadership Degree Course, might be a useful link. <p>Pete said that he does have someone in mind who might be interested so he would update the PCC Members when he could.</p> <p>Café: Pete said that Ruth Richards was intending to put tables outside from 12th April when regulations permitted and then she would watch the situation to see about opening up further.</p> <p>Dee Miller: Pete said that a flyer had been issued by the Hub stating that the Dee Miller was to be split in two so that half of it was a shop and the rest was given over for community use. A request has been made for people with relevant experience to volunteer as trustees. Pete said he felt it was a great opportunity and urged PCC Members to get involved. He added that he would send a copy of the notice round and put it on the Agenda for the next meeting.</p>	Notice to be sent round	Pete
2178	AOB	<p>An email had been received from Dave Ash saying he was very disappointed with the PCC's decision to no longer support the OCC Charity and asking the PCC to reverse their decision. A brief discussion followed. It was acknowledged that Dave works extremely hard for the charity and he is a much valued member of St Michael's but the PCC did not wish to reverse their decision. Pete said he would write to Dave informing him of this.</p> <p>It was urged that a new charity initiative be decided upon. Another shoe box charity was suggested but Pete said that it would be better to have a further discussion about which charity to support and this would be at a future meeting.</p>	Discussion about which charity to support	PCC Members
	Prayer	The meeting closed with saying the Grace.		
	Next Meeting	APCM on Monday, 26 th April 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom followed immediately after by a PCC Meeting.		

