

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

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 via Zoom

<b>Present</b>	Peter Rugen (Chair)	Martin Smith
	David Blackmore	Andy Thorne
	John Allan	Rob Kophamel
	Steve Powell	Fiona Prichard (Secretary)
	Steve McKew	
	Ruth McKew	
	Ali Gibbons	
	Peter Webster	
	Phil Roberts	
	John Stockdale	<b>Apologies</b>
	Stu Davies	Andrew Evans
	Sarah Batchelor	Anne Stockdale
	Magdy Fahmy	Peter Caldwell
	Anne de Reybekill	

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	<b>Welcome and Prayer</b>	Pete welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened the meeting with a prayer.		
	<b>Minutes from June PCC Meeting</b>	Pete asked members of the meeting if there were any amendments required to the minutes for June. No revisions were requested and so approval of the minutes was proposed by John Stockdale and seconded by Magdy Fahmy. The minutes were approved by all present.		
	<b>Matters Arising</b>	<p><b>Trees</b> – Sarah Batchelor said that she had researched the sizes/heights of the three types of trees which the Woodland Trust would provide (free). The three types were Crab Apple, Rowan (the highest of the three and could grow to 15m but this would take 200 years!) and Hazel. There would be five trees provided of each type. A short discussion ensued and the following views were amongst those expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 was too many although Sarah said that some could be donated to other churches;</li> <li>• The trees could be planted in tubs which could be moved around but the drawback with this was that the tubs would need a lot more watering and if they failed it would defeat the purpose of having them;</li> <li>• Thought needed to be given to the care the trees would need in the future for subsequent vicars;</li> </ul>		



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trees could be planted around the periphery although it was pointed out that trees had been planted round the periphery in the past and had been taken down as they obscured the view of the church;</li> </ul> <p>It was suggested that the PCC was not the best forum to make a decision on this particular issue and that it should be left to a smaller group such as the Building Group. Sarah said that she would take it back to the Climate Action Group and they would think whether there was a better solution with possibly fewer trees (possibly fruit trees). Pete thanked Sarah.</p> <p><b>Hong Kong Refugees</b> – Pete gave a brief update on the situation. He said that he had registered with the group involved in linking up with refugees but there had been no further developments. He added that he understood, through Chester Link Up, that the initiative was gaining momentum and that the Council was now on board. He thanked those involved with facilitating signing up to the scheme and asked the members of the PCC to await further developments.</p> <p><b>Living in Love and Faith</b> – Pete reiterated that this is likely to be a contentious issue. Following the last PCC Meeting, he had attended a Deanery Chapter meeting where the matter had been discussed. There, members of the Clergy expressed the view that the timing could not be worse as we were just coming out of a pandemic and they were now were being asked to rush this issue through. Bishop Mark had responded by telling the Clergy not to worry about the time frame. Consequently, Pete had decided to delay making the discussion a Stream Group topic until after October half term. Therefore, Stream Groups would now start from 13<sup>th</sup> September (some online and some in person) on a variety of topics up to half term when there would be five weeks of Stream Groups on Living in Love and Faith and this would be followed by a five week Advent Course which would include two Sunday services and three mid-week sessions. Pete said he would speak to the Stream Group Leaders and this would give them time to prepare for the Living in Love and Faith sessions. Pete asked if everyone was happy and no objections were raised.</p>		



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		<b>Doors-</b> A question was asked as to whether there was any progress on replacing the doors but Steve Powell said he was still awaiting quotes.		
2194	<b>Finance Report</b>	<p>The Finance Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Phil said he was prepared to take questions. He was asked what the situation was regarding giving and whether, if income was not enough, whether we could consider approaching the congregation.</p> <p>Phil answered that increases in giving had been very small. In the last 6 months there had been four or five increases but this had resulted in only a £35 a month increase in overall giving.</p> <p>Phil added that it was the responsibility of the Fundraising/Giving Group to go to the congregation and that he would prefer the congregation to be approached in September/October so that the increases would start in January rather than waiting for the new year before raising the issue.</p> <p>Pete confirmed that the Funding Group's purpose was to decide how to involve the congregation and then how to utilise any increased giving. A member of the Funding Group said that the Group had met once so far when concepts had been introduced and they were meeting the following week when the issue of giving would be on the agenda.</p> <p>Phil said that, looking ahead to 2022, we should consider that a certain part of the church's costs was a base line (ie costs which have to be incurred) but that the rest is over and above (eg £10k of repairs) and, therefore could be postponed or avoided. The budget should be set according to income rather than the other way round.</p> <p>A discussion ensued about giving and the following views were expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should not fall into the trap of a finance led giving initiative as it should be mission led and the plans for mission should be shared with the congregation;</li> <li>• There was still so much uncertainty and Pete urged members of the PCC not to beat themselves up too much for not being able to be prepared;</li> </ul>		



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A period of recovery may be called for and it might be better to wait a while before launching a giving initiative;</li> <li>• It was suggested that people were most likely to give when they had had an increase themselves so a giving initiative to coincide with that would be preferable if that were possible;</li> <li>• People needed to be urged to review their giving on an annual basis as many had not changed their giving for many years;</li> <li>• We needed to think about what might make people give. Not everyone, particularly younger people, were likely to review their giving on an annual basis and we needed to think about how to attract donations. For example, we still have reserves and so other charities may appear to be in greater need of money.</li> </ul> <p>Pete concluded the discussion by saying that there were likely to be those in the church who do review their giving annually and there were those who would respond to a giving initiative and we possibly needed a mixed mode of schemes to increase giving.</p> <p>Pete thanked Phil for all his work, both in compiling the Report and answering questions.</p>		
2195	<b>Reports</b>	<p><b>Musical Worship Group</b> – The minutes of the Worship Subgroup had been circulated prior to the meeting. Pete said that these had been sent so that the PCC were aware that the group had been meeting and so that the PCC could think about how we could continue the excellent provision of musical worship.</p> <p>Rob asked how members of the PCC would like to proceed now that the guidelines on social distancing had been relaxed. Pete said that there were no clear guidelines from the Church of England but caution seemed to be urged. No decision needed to be made until September as services were to be online in August so for the moment, we should not make any changes. In September we could look at the situation again and if any decisions were needed prior to the next PCC meeting then the Standing Committee could be consulted. Rob asked for a clear indication from September. He suggested that the</p>		



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		<p>band could be expanded as a first step and then congregational singing could happen after that.</p> <p>Rob was asked if there was any liaison between the preacher and the music group and Pete said that there was as a detailed schedule was sent out to all concerned with the themes etc on it.</p> <p>Rob asked if the PCC members felt that the whole church were able to connect through the music. The responses were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were three or four worship leaders so there was a great variety of worship;</li> <li>• There was room for improving the connection with the music;</li> <li>• Pete said that he felt that the worship group did a fantastic job of getting the balance right and he felt we were all “singing from the same hymn sheet” in engaging with each other and connecting with God. He added that it was a privilege to work with the group.</li> </ul> <p>Rob asked if there was anything which distracted from worship. No one responded and Pete said that far from feeling anything distracted from the worship, he felt there was a sense of humility about the group.</p> <p>The view was expressed that the music group provided an incredible model and kept those on the edges involved and it should be celebrated.</p> <p>Pete thanked Rob and asked him to pass on the gratitude of the PCC to all the musicians. Rob expressed his thanks to all those involved.</p> <p>Stu said that a new laptop was needed as, at present, Rob’s laptop was being used. Stu offered to donate the finances for a new laptop and set it up. Gratitude was expressed to Stu for his offer.</p> <p><b>Café</b> – Pete said that the Café was now fully open and numbers were gradually increasing. He went on to say that Ruth (Richards) had maintained her enthusiasm over the Covid time</p>		



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		<p>and had really made her mark on the Café. There were now T shirts for all those working in there and a real sense of purpose. The management committee met a few days ago and were going to see how things went over the next few weeks. Pete added that volunteers were still needed.</p> <p>Pete was asked the reason for getting rid of the computers. He replied that they were very old (they would only run Windows XP) and were being used only very occasionally. In addition, there were certain security risks.</p> <p>Phil said that he believed that Ruth felt responsibility that the Café was running at a deficit. He had reassured her that the Café was part of the church's mission and that was the prime aim not the financial performance. Phil asked if other PCC members could reinforce this message to Ruth.</p>		
2196	<b>Online Provision</b>	<p>A document regarding Live Streaming had been circulated prior to the meeting. In it, Rob had set out the options for moving forward which ranged from streaming every service down to stopping streaming altogether. He wanted to know what should happen from September. A discussion ensued and some of the views expressed were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The live streaming was not just for the benefit of the congregation but had a wider missional impact;</li> <li>• Some members of the congregation preferred to stay online and there were some people outside the congregation who liked to access the services;</li> <li>• Live streaming provided a bridge with the community;</li> <li>• New families had joined the church having seen the services online;</li> <li>• Rob and Em had done an incredible job of managing the live streaming but we needed more than one team;</li> <li>• It was hard to train people as there was a lot to learn but we needed to allay people's fears and encourage them;</li> <li>• It was important not to spread ourselves too thin as we did not want to risk the quality of the streaming;</li> <li>• It was questioned whether we needed to live stream the evening services although Rob said that it would be good to train people to live stream the evening</li> </ul>		



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		<p>service as it was more straight forward than the morning service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding issues needed to be considered if livestreaming continued. Rob said that we did have blur filters but that could be a further difficulty for someone learning the job.</li> </ul> <p>Pete concluded by saying that the online provision had been fantastic and that it had made St Michael's feel more contemporary. However, he felt it was necessary to streamline things a bit and he did not feel it was necessary to put the evening service online (although it could be done occasionally to train someone). With regard to the morning services, he said that only the more straight forward services should be streamed so the All Age services would not be streamed.</p> <p>Pete asked if everyone was happy with his proposal and all agreed.</p> <p>Pete said that he wanted to express a massive big thank you to Rob for the last eighteen months and all he had done. He added that Rob would be off for all of August and he asked PCC members not to email Rob during that time.</p>		
2197	<b>Church Weekend</b>	<p>Andy T said that he had been emailed by Cloverley Hall asking if we wanted to keep the May Bank Holiday Weekend booking for 2022. If we did, a deposit of £300 was required to be paid. There was a very brief discussion about whether to go ahead with the House Party. It was suggested that some people might not want to come because of Covid or because they might feel less connected with the church although it was argued that the opposite might happen and people would be keen to do something with the church family. One drawback might be that if fewer people did go, it would increase the church subsidy. Pete asked those present if they were happy for the booking to go ahead and all agreed. Pete thanked Andy.</p>	Deposit to be paid	Andy to organise
2198	<b>Missionary Update</b>	<p>Steve M suggested that, by way of getting an update on the Mission Committee's strategy and how our mission partners can best be supported, he was proposing that the Mission Committee members be invited to the next PCC meeting so that a wider discussion could take place. He suggested that the meeting be held in church or somewhere similar where there was plenty of room. He added that it would be good to pull in the youth so it would be preferable if Rob could be there too.</p>		



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		<p>The meeting would merely involve a discussion following which a document could be drafted for ratification by the PCC at a later date.</p> <p>All agreed with Steve's proposal.</p>		
2199	<b>Autumn Schedule</b>	<p>Pete said that we would be looking at Romans in the Autumn. Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas services were all being planned. He said that Boxing Day would fall on a Sunday and he was wondering about whether it was necessary to hold a service on that day. It might be that, as for the 27<sup>th</sup> December last year, there was a directive from the Bishop allowing services not be held on that day but he was raising the matter with the PCC for their views. No one expressed any opinions and Pete said he would leave the matter until the nearer the time.</p>		
2100	<b>AOB</b>	<p>Les Ellison had sent an email saying that he was stepping down as gardener at the end of the year. The email included some suggestions on how to proceed with the maintenance of the garden. Pete asked Fiona to circulate the email and said that it would be added to the agenda of a future PCC meeting for discussion (either September or October).</p>	Les Ellison's email to be circulated	Fiona
	<b>Prayer</b>	<p>Pete thanked everyone and said that he felt as if there was cause for encouragement as things seemed to be levelling out (although there may be a few uphill bits yet). He urged the PCC members to fix their eyes on Jesus. The meeting closed with saying the Grace.</p>		
	<b>Next Meeting</b>	<p>PCC Meeting on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 8.00 pm via Zoom</p>		

