

MINUTES FOR A JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE PARISH OF ST MICHAEL'S PLAS NEWTON, CHESTER AND ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH MISSION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th September 2021 at St Michael's Church, Plas Newton

Present	Peter Rugen (Chair) (PCC & MC)	Fiona Prichard (Secretary)
	Steve McKew (PCC & MC)	
	Anne Stockdale (PCC & MC)	Apologies
	Anne de Reybekill (PCC & MC)	Martin Smith (PCC & MC)
	David Blackmore (PCC)	Magdy Fahmy (PCC)
	Andrew Evans (PCC)	Ruth McKew (PCC)
	Peter Webster (PCC)	Phil Roberts (PCC)
	Steve Powell (PCC)	Andy Thorne (PCC)
	Stu Davies (PCC)	John Stockdale (PCC)
	Sarah Batchelor (PCC)	Ali Gibbons (PCC)
	John Allan (PCC)	Jenny Davies (MC)
	Peter Caldwell (PCC)	
	Alison Pantony (MC)	
	Mary Webster (MC)	

Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
	Welcome and Prayer	Pete opened the meeting with a reading from Psalm 63 and said a prayer. He welcomed everyone and said he wanted to extend a special welcome to the members of the Mission Committee.		
	Minutes from July PCC Meeting	The minutes from the July PCC meeting had been approved by email prior to the meeting. Approval was proposed by Steve McKew and seconded by Steve Powell.		
	Matters Arising	Garden and Doors: It was agreed that both these matters would be deferred to the October PCC Meeting to allow more time for discussion of the Mission strategy.		
2101	Staffing	<p>Jenny Davies – Increase in hours from 4 to 6 and combining the role of Lettings Coordinator and Cleaner. These changes were approved by the PCC by email prior to the meeting (12 members responded and all were in favour).</p> <p>Ruth Davies – Increase in hours up to 35 and back payment of extra hours worked. The increase was approved by the PCC by email prior to the meeting (12 members of the PCC responded and all were in favour of the increase). Pete said he had asked Ruth to calculate how many extra hours she had worked up</p>		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		until the agreed increase and he would submit these extra hours for approval by the PCC once he had heard back from Ruth.		
2102	Mission Strategy	<p>Pete invited Andrew Evans to take the chair. Andrew explained that he was relatively new to St Michael's Church so he was looking at the church's approach to Mission with fresh eyes. He had looked at the Mission strategy of many other churches as part of his job.</p> <p>He went on to explain that he was there to facilitate discussion rather than to express his views. He added that the reason for the meeting was to have a discussion and that that might mean that it was a difficult conversation with some less than positive views expressed. However, Andrew said it was OK for Christians to have difficult conversations as he felt that if you did not have those difficult discussions, you could not do anything worthwhile. He urged people to be respectful, kind, honest and thoughtful and if this could be achieved then in the end decisions could be made.</p> <p>He outlined his 5 aims of the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To clarify the responsibilities of the PCC and the Mission Committee (MC); 2. To understand the MC's concerns regarding ongoing support; 3. To agree the principles for Mission giving over the next period (3 years); 4. To hear the PCC feedback on current Mission; 5. To agree principles for Mission giving and time lines on Missions for 2022 and 2023. <p>He explained that 2 of the aims would involve listening so the PCC would need to listen to the MC's concerns in item 2 and the MC would need to listen to the PCC's views in item 4.</p> <p>Andrew went on to say that all churches had now become charities and so were regulated by the Charities Commission which meant that the Trustees (ie the PCC) were legally accountable for the church's money. It was a requirement that a policy was set and maintained by the PCC and the PCC needed to approve all spending unless a clearly set delegation had been agreed. Sub groups needed to report to the PCC and the PCC needed to decide on areas of Mission as it was</p>		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>responsible for its policies. Decisions regarding Mission should happen in conversation with the MC. It was the role of the MC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend people to support; • Ensure those people supported were fulfilling any requirements (eg sending regular news updates). <p>Andrew asked that any cares and concerns of those at the meeting were expressed through him. He asked that people only spoke when it was their turn to speak and that only one person spoke at a time. He also asked that people did not make assertions without backing them up first and that people did not presume to know other people's motivations.</p> <p>He opened the discussion by asking members of the MC to express their concerns. The following views were expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorrow was expressed that the meeting had been arranged when not all MC members could be present. Pete said that he had invited members of the MC not present to express their views by email prior to the meeting; • Members of the MC asked for clarification of the purpose of the meeting. <p>In answer to the query regarding the purpose the following outline of the meeting's purpose was given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting was to find a way of how MC could make decisions in the future; • It was to strengthen the link between the MC and the PCC; • It was to find a way of getting Mission partners to be more aligned to the PCC and the church as a whole; • It was to find a way to reassess partners we had supported for a long time and decided how to go forward in the event we no longer wished to support them; • It was to set some rules for the future about how we supported Mission partners. <p>A member of the MC expressed concern at the lack of communication between the PCC and the MC and said they felt there did not seem to be much interest by the PCC in the work of the MC. She expressed her sorrow that there had not been</p>		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>more gentle discussions leading up to this point and felt that, if there had been, both parties could have arrived at the meeting excited by its Mission rather than feeling that the meeting was a confrontation.</p> <p>A member of the PCC and also the MC asked how we could go forward and bring the enthusiasm back as St Michael's had a great history of doing Mission well.</p> <p>A discussion ensued and the following views were expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needed to be more visits as without visits from Mission partners the church members did not engage with the support. Pete said that prior to the Covid crisis there had been 3 visits a year from Mission partners and this would continue; • Previously, St Michael's had been a sending church and there had been several members of St Michael's who had gone on Missions. Prior to Covid, there had been a very good meeting when many previous Mission Partners from St Michael's came back to visit. This had enthused many church members. • In recent years St Michael's had become a supporting church. If we wanted to become a sending church again, we should talk more about Mission and encourage people to go. • It would be helpful to have a talk with the Youth about Mission work. • In the past some young people had been introduced to Mission by going abroad as a group. This had given them confidence and some of them had gone on to do things in this country. A trip had been arranged for Andy McConville, when he was the Youth Worker, to go to Malawi but this had been cancelled. Perhaps something similar could be arranged. • We needed people to support the Youth Group with regard to Mission and show them how to live out their faith. It had had an impact on them if they had been led by adults. • Mission work need not involve going abroad and could be done in this country. Previously a group had 		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>gone to housing estates in London and had had a great experience.</p> <p>Andrew then went on to ask members of the meeting to consider what our principles should be for Mission giving over the next 3 years (eg a percentage of budget or a fixed amount).</p> <p>A member of the MC clarified the existing principle which was that 10% of all giving to the General Fund (in the previous year) plus all money specifically given to Mission Fund be allocated to Mission. There was a general consensus of approval regarding this principle.</p> <p>It was suggested that, going forward, clarification was needed on what we understand to be Mission. A discussion developed and the following views were expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changing world has had a big impact on people’s needs and a fixed budget may exclude needs which would comply with the criteria; • It needed to be decided whether Mission would include the relief of poverty; • A request was made that “cross cultural” be included in the definition of who qualified for Mission support. This could mean abroad or in this country. <p>Pete was asked what he saw as Mission. He replied that Jesus said go out into all the world and so he would support a very broad sense of Mission. He agreed with the inclusion of the words cross cultural but did not think it should say uniquely cross cultural as if the support was limited by those words, it would not sit right with him.</p> <p>It was suggested that there could be a focus (for example, for the next five years) on cross cultural. This might help to attract interest from the Youth.</p> <p>Andrew said that if St Michael’s was considering sending people abroad to do Mission, then they should consider the carbon impact of the flights etc alongside our ambition to become carbon neutral.</p> <p>He asked members of the meeting to consider what kind of people we should be supporting and what time frame should be considered for that support.</p>		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>The following views were among those expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the time frame was too short there was not enough time to see the bigger picture and to build a relationship; • There was a dilemma in that if we built a relationship over many years, it made it difficult to remain impartial and to scrutinise whether support should be continued; • It would be easier to have a clearly defined principle by which we decided whether Mission support was provided and if the principle no longer applied that support was withdrawn; • It was argued that we would lose something by applying a rigid principle; • Andrew asked whether people sent from St Michael's had been treated differently from those who were not and it was agreed that it had made a difference to their treatment; • People who were supported needed to be treated properly and as a person and not a budget item; • Support for the MC was expressed as it was felt that they were the right group to provide intelligent, careful and loving support and to get to know the support partners. <p>Support was echoed for the MC and the view was expressed that the MC had not, in recent years, had a clear remit of principles and responsibility and the onus for that lay with the PCC.</p> <p>Andrew outlined the following principles which had come out of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support would be primarily aimed at cross cultural needs; • Support of Mission partners would be for a minimum of 3 years; • 12 months' notice would be required for any change from either party. <p>Andrew then went on to discuss what the PCC should be able to expect from the MC.</p>		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>1. <u>Communication</u>: Andrew said it was reasonable to expect regular updates from Mission partners. It was explained that it was only recently (since Covid) that it had been possible to email everyone in the church so this had led to better lines of communication. However, it was stated that some cases the work of the Mission partner was so sensitive that they were not able to share details of their work. Andrew said it was reasonable for every Mission partner to give an update on their work that could be shared. It was suggested that there was also potential for video diaries to be produced and used as a way of engaging with people, especially the Youth.</p> <p>2. <u>Visits</u>: Members of the MC said that those Mission partners who resided in this country will come and visit. It was agreed that, the best way to get church members involved, was to arrange a lunch with the Mission partner as speaker.</p> <p>Andrew went on to ask how the PCC could help the MC to connect with the church.</p> <p>A discussion ensued and the following views were amongst those expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uncertainty over whether support could continue to be provided for certain Mission partners had not been helpful; • In the event that support was to be withdrawn from a Mission partner, it was suggested that the PCC should write that letter; • Continued enclosure of updates from Mission partners with the weekly church newsletter would be very helpful; • It was felt that the PCC should talk more than once a year about Mission and should be able to add matters regarding Mission to the PCC agenda. To this end, a member of the PCC and the MC agreed to be more proactive in adding Mission matters to the PCC agenda. • It was suggested that Zoom meetings might be a way of involving the Youth. 		



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>Andrew then went through the list of the Mission partners and the members of the MC outlined the support and budget for each partner.</p> <p>The following points were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That where there had been a change of Mission partners and the scope of the support changed, that a letter should be written to the partner telling them that support was ending but inviting them to submit a request for further support; • That where the Mission partner had passed on the role to a local person that a letter should be sent asking if they wished for support to continue or whether they would prefer to become independent. It was suggested that, if continuation of support was required, that the situation was reviewed again after a year or support was tapered over 5 years; • That where the work of the Mission partner was not clearly understood, that clarification should be sought; • That where the work and location of the Mission partner had changed that clarification of the new work needed to be sought; • That where there had been little contact with the Mission partner that that relationship was looked at again and possibly terminated. <p>A member of the MC suggested that, in the event support was to be terminated, a Zoom call conversation might be better than a letter.</p> <p>Andrew suggested that the overall Mission support was quite UK heavy but it was argued that this was only in terms of where the Mission partners lived and not their work. Andrew queried whether someone who did not live where they worked could be as effective as someone who lived in the country.</p> <p>He also suggested that CSCW be moved outside the MC's area of responsibility and became part of the Children and Youth Worker's responsibilities. A comment was made that the PCC would need to be involved in assisting Rob and Sas to coordinate support of CSCW.</p>	<p>MC to communicate with Mission Partners to seek clarification</p>	



Ref	Item	Notes	Action (what)	Who and by when
		<p>The list of smaller donations was briefly reviewed but Andrew proposed that gifts of less than £500 do not make a significant impact and it would, therefore, be better to reduce the number of donations and make a targeted larger gift to a few specific organisations. A different set of charities could be selected each year and this approach may well help to motivate the congregation to top up the donation and may encourage the Youth to get involved. There was a general consensus of approval of this proposal.</p> <p>Pete thanked Andrew for chairing the meeting.</p>		
2103	AOB	There was no further business.		
	Prayer	Pete thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed with saying the Grace.		
	Next Meeting	PCC Meeting on Monday, 1 st November 2021 at 8.00 pm.		

