



Minutes of the Zoom meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

22nd September 2020

Present: Jonathan Ward, Rector
Sybil Andrew
Marc Bassot
Bill Derham
Lenka Ellmann
Richard Ford
Dan Leeves
Sarah Morgan
Sally Munns
Martin Pinnell
Jeff Seabrook
Penny Seabrook
Karen Williams`

2. **Prayer** – Jon read from Psalm 27 and led us in prayer

3. **Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 11th August** – these Minutes were approved subject to an alteration on page 2 – “will be decided at the next APCM” – this should read “at the next PCC”.

4. **Safeguarding Report** – Sarah Fletcher, one of our Safeguarding officers, was welcomed to the meeting and a full transcript of her report is attached to these Minutes. In spite of curtailed face to face activities due to lockdown, usual safeguarding procedures have continued. Their training is up to date, there is ongoing communication with the Diocese.

In response to a question re more safeguarding training for us as a church, Sarah said that because of Covid 19 they had not been able to organise their usual courses but there are some good ones on line – she will send a link of those available from in or outside the diocese.

There was an important discussion concerning risk assessments for zoom meetings and online activities, also for smaller group meetings outside. Informed consent from both parent and child is essential when the child appears on the internet.

It was agreed that the following action should be taken to cover both past and future activities in this area. Thanks were expressed to Sarah and Michele for their ongoing hard work.

Action – previous services featuring names of children to be edited; Jonny Faint to be advised to delete copies of the services he edits from the computer as soon as is possible after production. The Family Worker will provide a hard copy of the consent form (found in “A Safe Church” folder) to parents, as appropriate.

5. Finance & Review

a. Discussion with the Diocese.

Jon reported on the wide-ranging discussion he had last Monday with our new Archdeacon and with Gabby Parikh, the diocese Head of Giving. Jon set out our current financial situation including our lighting project and work to be done under the quinquennial review. Gabby pointed out possibilities of grants for the lighting project, also for our family worker. The diocese appreciated our position. For guidance, they reiterated the global cost of a stipendiary post at £80,300, suggesting that it would raise eyebrows if our pledge fell below this level as we are one of the wealthier parishes in the diocese. We do expect at St. John's to support some of the poorer parishes.

A discussion ensued to enable the PCC to decide the level at which we should pitch our pledge. A suggested figure of £84,000 as from next year was proposed by Jon and Christine. This would mean that we would be better off by £10,000. We would still need to increase our income to avoid a deficit. It was noted that this decision was made with a degree of reluctance, as we want to be a supportive and generous church, and recognised that we could increase our share at a later stage if our situation improved.

We have not lost any income from lettings (we have none!) but there was some loss on plate giving. A certain amount has been saved on heating and water, tea/coffee etc.

It was agreed to set our pledge at £84,000 as from next year, proposed by Bill, seconded by Lenka.

b. Learning Leadership & Families Worker Reviews

Copies of Dan's Review on his Learning Leadership and the YPFE Review had been circulated to the PCC.

The PCC had a question and answer session with Dan following his interesting report on the range of issues covered over the past year, also what might be concentrated on over the next 6 months. It was recognised that face-to-face elements had been curtailed due to Covid19. There was discussion around the detail of what Dan has been involved with and what limitations there were both because of the situation with Covid and the scheme being one day a week.

The PCC recalled that this was as much about an investment in future leaders, rather than what 'benefit' St John's was deriving – although of course these were not mutually exclusive. There was discussion around areas Dan could press into in the coming 6 months if the PCC were to approve the continuation of the scheme for him.

We then looked at the YPFE report. Thanks were expressed to Marc and Karen who pointed out that their report followed a discussion with Jon and Amber based on reports they had received from them both. It was recognised that 2 factors had a limiting effect of Amber's work – Covid19 and shortage of volunteers. It was pointed out that the first 18 months were largely sizing up the current situation and that it takes time to decide on how to approach various issues. It was felt that Amber is making a great contribution to the church.

It was noted that an assessment of the volunteer position is an ongoing action point. Analysis is required as to:

- i) Whether we are not fully harnessing the volunteer capacity that is there, and if so develop a strategy for doing so; or
- ii) There isn't any further capacity and we might need to adapt our approach to engagement with young people.

It was recognised that encouraging initiatives such as the Parenting for Faith were curtailed in their impact due to the lockdown. It was agreed that this role is going to become even more important in the next 6 months, not least of all in the unseen pastoral care that Amber is undertaking. It was felt that the role needed to be in place for further development to happen in the 3 areas outlined in the report.

Around discussions of financing it was recognised that many at St John's give to other causes, and the missional nature of a role such as this could be underestimated.

Decisions taken –

Learning Leadership – Jon proposed that we should extend the scheme for Dan for a further 6 months, and then review the situation again.

This was agreed – proposed by Sally, seconded by Penny.

YPFE Role – It was agreed that the role should be considered as an intrinsic part of our regular annual expenses for mission, rather than be a separate area for funding. This should continue for as long as we feel the post serves our missional aims.

It was noted that Amber is widely considered to be doing a good job and still is on a positive personal development curve. There was, ostensibly, some economic prudence in offering an extension of Amber's contract by just one year. However, the PCC recognised that the mixed message of saying we are going to fund the post for as long as we can, but only extend the contract by a year, would understandably be demotivating for Amber, make it trickier for her to plan/strategize and wouldn't reflect the positive perspective the majority have on her undertaking of the role.

It was unanimously agreed to offer Amber a second 3 year contract (with the usual break clauses).

Consideration is to be given as to the nature of the 'performance' reviews of the post, not least of all that some of the elements of a 'job well done' are difficult to measure. At this point it should be noted that Amber has not indicated whether she wished to extend her contract beyond her first three year term.

c. Communication strategy

- i. Jon would circulate a letter of thanks to the congregation adding that more financial details would follow
- ii. Information would then be circulated setting out our financial position and the need to examine our giving.
- iii. We would need to examine how this should be done, also the questions to be asked.

Action – follow-up to the above by Jon and others

6. Wardens' Report – lighting project

- * Faculty application has been submitted to the Diocese
- * Luke Tatum raised a question about removal of the wooden candelabras. We have provided photos of these in situ and evidence that they are not longstanding fixtures. Sherry Bates our architect has provided support that they are not of architectural significance. Ryan from CES also commented that their removal would improve the lighting and sight lines to items being picked out by the new lighting scheme.
- * Sherry has to submit a 'Statement of Significance' on the lighting scheme, which he supports having been involved with the design process.

- * The 'fundraising team' – Agata, Angela Waters and Joanna Bega met with the wardens on Friday the 18th. A constructive meeting was had and duties identified and allocated. This will include grant applications and local fundraising initiatives from the congregation and the community.
- * We have provided verbal confirmation of acceptance to CES, following the email approval that was obtained by Jon. We cannot formalise this until the faculty has been approved.
- * A further update will be provided at the next PCC.

Action – follow-up to this report

7. APCM 2020

How this will happen is still to be decided. Jon will look at a date mid-November.

8. Autumn Season & Mission

- * **Light the Night alternative** – Amber will explain one Sunday how this initiative might be used to reach out to the community.
- * **Christmas** – a meeting will be held with the Music team and to plan how to poise these celebrations towards the community.
- * **Impact on Wellbeing** – a mini series is being considered perhaps on video – can we identify a Christian with expertise in this area of mental health?
- * **Harvest** – needs are currently even greater e.g. Moldova crisis. Jon will look at materials. Please email Jon with suggestions.

Action – Amber to flag up Light the Night alternative; Identify Christian with expertise in mental health for mini series; email to Jon with Harvest celebration suggestions.

9. Inclusion/Diversity Team update

Penny's report is attached to these Minutes

10. SJs Report – this had been circulated to the PCC.

How SJs can be used is dependent on new regulations from the government. Amber CPC was hoping to start meeting clients there again. Some church groups had been meeting outside using the good weather and as autumn approaches plans will have to be made as to how small groups might keep in touch. Careers Café – Barbara is available on line. There have been 2 referrals in the past 2 weeks from people in the church. This will be reported at a Sunday am service.

12. Date/style of next meeting

Jon will communicate details to the PCC – the Saturday meeting planned for 4th October will not take place – Jon has wedding to conduct.

To conclude the meeting Jon read the Prayer that ends the Evening Prayer service.

Signed

Date