

Dedham Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at Dedham Vicarage at 7.30

Present: Peter Wilson (PW) (Chair), Vee Druitt (VD), John Reed (JR), Paul Brebner (PB), Richard Hopkins (RH), Liz Reed (LR), Linda Redlich (LDR), Sharon Sarson (SS), Gabbie Watson (GW), Lynne-al-Sad (LAS)

Apologies received from Helen Sims

1. Minutes of Meeting held on September 20th 2021 were approved without amendment and there were no matters arising.

2. Reflections on Christmas

There were a number of compliments paid regarding the Christmas tree and the decorations as well as the flowers. It was disappointing that the Crib Services had to be cancelled because of Covid, but it was hoped that next year we could celebrate fully, and have a decorated Christmas tree outside as well as inside, with Carols sung outside, weather permitting.

3. Finance update

(a) Accounts 2021-JR had circulated a Finance Report outlining the preliminary final figures for the end of 2021, and the final version would be completed later this month. Overall income (excluding Grants and legacies) was c.£7k up on 2020, mostly due to Parish Magazine advertising and some fund raising (Big Breakfast). The actual "Giving" element was up around £1k versus 2020. JR said that the one-off donations in both 2020 and 2021 had helped keep the total Giving from a sources at around £79k including Gift Aid of £14.7k. Church Expenses including people costs, were largely unchanged overall on 2020.

- (b) Parish Share-This financial performance gave rise to a higher than expected surplus in the General Fund at the end of the year, and it had been agreed by the Finance Committee to recommend that a further £3,000 should be paid towards the 2021 Parish Share. This, together with the extra £5,000 paid over in November, brought the total paid for the year to £55,928, or 80% of the Diocesan assessment. This payment was £3,350 more than 2020. At the same time this performance enabled us to raise the carry forward in the General Fund to £20,000 from £15,000, to give an increased provision for potential unexpected costs in 2022 as we are likely to be in an Interregnum for some time yet.
- (c) 2022 Budget-JR had circulated a final version of the 2022 Budget, which had also been reviewed in Draft at our November meeting. Some changes to the draft version had been made, the only significant one being an increase to the Parish Magazine printing costs of £3,150. With the extra Opening Reserve at £20,000, the Parish Share budgeted now stands at £50,548.
- (d) Other-It was agreed that the Sum Up card machine (with a fee of 1.69%) should be reinstalled, and PB agreed, with others, to look into ways whereby the cash collection methods, and the Resource Centre sales could be modified to improve our Income.

4. Interregnum Update

PW/VD had circulated the Harwich Deanery Vision and Strategy Plan, adopted by the Deanery Synod on 10th January, outlining the plans for future ministry across the area. The Outline Plan for the 9 Rural Parishes (RP) would be served by two "Missioners" (M) in a joint capacity, each one concentrating on particular roles within the RP. Their work role had been described as "Enablers", so returning to a normal incumbent vicar was very unlikely.

One M will be a Rural Dean, and both will be licensed to service all RP churches. No Job Description is yet in place, and the procedure for interviewing and appointment had still not been decided. VD indicated that it was most probable that one M would be based in the Dedham Vicarage and the other in Great Oakley. The Churchwardens were working on reducing the Parish Profile to one page.

5. Fabric Update

PW gave an update on the Heating project, and Notices were now up regarding the upcoming installation of a new Gas boiler.

The 3 month Cadent gas supplier provisional application had now expired, and a new application was being submitted to enable a trench to be dug to the High Street gas connection. PW felt that, as the current oil boiler was just about serviceable at present, that the project should be deferred until April, when hopefully no Church heating would be needed. This was unanimously agreed by the PCC.

6. Organ update

Antony Watson (AW) joined the meeting and gave a state of play report on the problems he faced, keeping the current pipe organ working effectively. Organ stop problems had caused recent breakdowns, and can be rectified at £150 per stop. To prevent this, a 2 day thorough contact and keyboard clean would possibly help to prevent or at least reduce a repetition.

Discussion was held on the alternative options, should the current organ, completely fail. This is particularly pertinent, now that the information from Nicholson's, the prospective organ builder to be used for the Glasgow organ confirms their order book stretches to 2028.

AW detailed the pros and cons for a piano replacement, in the interim. AW also gave an indication that there were surplus organs to be had, and one particular stand alone pipe organ in the Isle of Wight was available for c £10,000, as well as a Digital organ for £1,250. It was agreed that AW should visit both of these options, and be reimbursed for any costs. Action now would buy us some time until a new organ can be installed at a much later date.

Longer term, it seemed that the Glasgow organ was still the best candidate.

6/cont'd

In summary, PW indicated that we had to cover the short term need of being able to continue with music and a choir, but that we also needed to plan and explore the future of having a proper pipe organ, whilst acknowledging that this would be a long, expensive and disruptive project.

To this end, the immediate need was:

1. Set up a Fund-raising group reporting to the PCC.
2. Appoint a Chairman of the Group
3. Identify up to three people to make an initial substantial donation
4. Establish a new Organ Appeal Fund
5. Encourage far and wide, sources of finance

All members of the PCC had received a paper on the aspects of exposure to liability as a Trustee. Generally, it would appear that if acting together, and acting with duty and care according to the rules, the risks to a Trustee being in breach was very low. It was confirmed that the PCC insurances included indemnity cover.

Despite the Bishop having already urged caution, before a Missioner was appointed, work above would be carried out to get us to the point where the Churchwardens can take a case to the Bishop, to proceed along the lines agreed.

This was formalised by a proposal from LAS seconded by LR, and carried unanimously.

PW wanted to explore the progression of establishing an Organ Fund to turn the pledges already known about into donations.

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JR confirmed that we did already have the remnants of an Organ Appeal Fund as a Restricted Fund, and that could be the vehicle for ring fencing any sums donated. JR felt that any donor should be made fully aware of the uses that could be made of this money, and that there was no guarantee the donation would be refunded, if preliminary costs had been spent out of this fund. Gift Aid was also an issue that would need to be managed.

7. Staff

Deb Turner was finding it difficult to undertake her duties as Parishes Administrator on the hours allotted, and the PCC all agreed it was a difficult task, and agreed to increase her paid hours from 12 to 16 per week.

8. Fund Raising

This topic would await Helen Sims at the next Meeting

9. AOB:

- a) PW reminded everyone of the Zoom meetings at the Vicarage on 28th/29th /30th January covering a course on Church leadership.
- b) LR was representing the PCC at a meeting of the Friends of Dedham 9th February, and their Trustees needed to know what Fabric projects were upcoming in 2022. The Quinquennial survey would determine the priorities, but support for some minor items may be helpful.

The Meeting closed at 9.30

The Next Meeting date: to be confirmed.