

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting

Held on Tuesday 24th September 2024 at the Duchy Barn

Present: Peter Wilson (PW), Sharon Sarson (SS), John Reed (JR), Helen Sims (HS), Lynne Al-Sad (LAS), Gabbie Watson (GW), Roger Berry (RB), Adrian Beckingsale (AB)

In Attendance: Rev Phillip Young (PY) and John Saxon (JS)

PY opened the meeting with a reading from Colossians and a prayer.

1. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd July 2024 were approved without amendment.

Matters Arising:

- (i) PW had written to Piers Baker, at the Sun Hotel with regard to the nocturnal clock chimes.
 - (ii) The portrait of King Charles had been received and was currently in the Parish Office.
 - (iii) Signage had been set up in the Churchyard regarding garden waste disposal.
2. Safeguarding: There was hope expressed that a Safeguarding Officer could be appointed in the not too distant future.
 3. Finance:

JR drew attention to the Quarter 2 Half year Report & Accounts that had been circulated to members on the 10th September. The first six months of 2024 had generated a modest surplus, with Giving income up by 0.7% on last year, and separately a net £3,600 surplus from Fund raising had been greater than expected. Church expenses excluding Parish Share were held down to an increase of 0.6% on last year, and the Parish Share continued to be paid at the “hard target” level of 5.4% more than in 2023.

All this General Fund activity had increased the monies held to just over £30,000 at 30th June.

So far, Quarter 3 appeared to show reasonable income, but expenses were beginning to rise, as various seasonal servicing costs and renewals began to kick-in. The final Quarter 4 is always a very busy time for income and expenses, and JR indicated that there was no guarantee that funds will be sufficient to meet the higher “Aspirational Parish Share target” which is £3,000 higher than the current level being paid.

3/ Finance Cont'd

There was very little activity in the Other Church Asset Funds, except for the continued fall in the Organ Fund, which has paid out for a number of contracted charges to Nicholson & Co including Stage Payments, the console, and a new seat. All the outstanding VAT, totalling £23,881, had been recouped via the LPWGS Government scheme in September, and the Fund currently now holds £105,649 as of today, sufficient to meet ongoing costs.

Once the Quarter 3 Accounts have been completed, work will start on the 2025 Budget.

The Diocese/Deanery had circulated the 2025 Parish Share allocation and it has invited Dedham to pay a Share of £52,215, which is basically a flat rate of increase on the 2024 Aspirational (£52,159), but represents a 6.25% increase on what we are “actually” paying on account at present.

4. Fabric :

- (i) Organ-PW confirmed that the installation of the rebuilt organ would commence in early October, and the impact on Church opening times and areas of access had been communicated widely. Outstanding issues had largely been resolved, and there were just some decisions on electrical connectivity to be finalised. GW asked about the security of the on-site equipment etc, particularly at the weekend, and it was felt that some extra stewarding from the Organ Committee might be prudent. Additionally, it was agreed that the opening hours at the weekend should be shortened to limit some of the risk. It was also agreed that the encroachment of scaffolding etc around the Vestry area would prohibit the use of Livestream for Services, but that an audio transmission might well be operable.
- (ii) Windows- PW had heard that the Diocese had declared a 45-day Consultation period, between unknown dates, which would cause more delays. There was now a plan in principle covering a period from early 2025 to Spring 2026 costed at £150,000. Auravision, the glazing contractor had a capacity problem, which results in four Phases of work having to take place, and co-ordination with the masonry contractor. Funding sources are being co-ordinated.

4/ii- Trees-PW confirmed that JF Trees had carried out a full survey on Churchyard trees.

5. Organ Recital and Dedication:

Whilst the Organ installation was expected to be completed in time for Christmas, the official Dedication had been set for the weekend of 11th/12th May. It was felt that to combine the Recital and the Dedication made operational sense, and it was proposed by SS and seconded by HS that the evening of Saturday 11th May would be a suitable date, with a dedication of the organ by Bishop Roger prior to a Doxology to precede the Recital. The proposal was approved and all parties would be advised.

6. Children and Family Worker:

Claire Arculus had circulated a comprehensive report to the PCC and the DELT, outlining the various activities that she had covered since her appointment, particularly the re-commencement of Open the Book. The PCC was pleased to see the early progress, and there was a recognition that some of the initiatives such as the Youth Group and the Youth Club (the latter outside the responsibility of the PCC) are likely to be long-term projects gradually improving in strength.

Separate to the Dedham activities, JR reminded the meeting that the Church assets still contained a Grant of £10,000 from the Mission Opportunities Fund received in Autumn 2023 for use within the Rural areas. JS and PY were of the opinion that whilst there were some low level funds needed, it was quite possible that if not spent, it would be recalled, and JR confirmed that this ring-fenced Designated fund would remain on the Church books until such an issue arose.

7. Eco Church:

PW confirmed that we still needed a volunteer to take over from Sara Marshall. AB stated that he had today, met Janet Titterton who explained to him the five criteria for our Church to move from Bronze to Silver. We met most of these, with the exception of the Carbon Footprint element, and this was unlikely to be achieved whilst we had the recently installed Gas boiler. PW explained how surveys for solar panels had been undertaken in 2022 which showed that they were unsuitable, and that the Diocesan Chancellor supported the Gas boiler project as our only alternative.

It was proposed and seconded, and then agreed, that a family connected member of the PCC who was willing to carry out a free of charge survey regarding solar panels could undertake this task and report back to the PCC.

8. Correspondence:

PW reported a number of items needing the attention of the PCC:

- (i) Katrina Ablett had written a letter of thanks for the flowers from the PCC and the kindness shown to her during a recent health problem, and also said how much she had enjoyed being able to view the weekly Services on stream. JR commented that she was now recovered enough to take on light finance duties.
- (ii) A request for a Churchyard bench with a plaque from a member on the Electoral Roll, had been received, and the PCC Standing Committee had agreed to the application on 9th September, subject to the further approval of the PCC at it's next meeting under a List B Faculty. The PCC approved this unanimously.
- (iii) Dawn Rees had sent a request in writing and requested that a Church pew that incorporates a memorial to Maurice Clements could be altered to incorporate the name of his wife, Peggy Clements. The PCC supported this request, and a resolution to carry out the amendment was carried unanimously.
- (iv) A letter from Ruth Emeny to PY had requested that an existing Ashes headstone be removed and replaced with a larger one to accommodate further family ashes in the future. This needed a Faculty and it was proposed by Sharon Sarson and seconded by Helen Sims that this be carried out, and the meeting unanimously agreed.

9. School Governor:

Richard Hopkin had written to PW to ask if he could become the PCC's nominated Dedham School Governor, having been ex-officio for some time. It was proposed by JR and seconded by AB, and carried unanimously. This enabled PY to become the ex-officio School Governor in Richard's place.

10. LLF Paper:

PY had circulated two papers to the PCC prior to the meeting, and PW thanked him for presenting his thoughts and views. It was agreed by all PCC members that they should take these papers and reflect on the content before holding a discussion amongst themselves. Both PY and JS gave their views on this challenging subject, and JS offered to put a similar paper forward to PY's with his own position. PY agreed to circulate the PCC with details of an online general group meeting that was upcoming from the CEEC.

11. Any Other Business:

- (i) Christmas Market: PY confirmed that this was to be held on the 30th November, and the Church would be offering hospitality. LAS, HS and Ruth Higginson were volunteering, but needed more support on what is a busy day. GW also requested help with post-market cleaning. There were also discussions about the possibility of refreshments after the Crib Service, but this will be reviewed,
- (ii) Antony Watson: It was unanimously agreed that to recognise Antony's 25 year's of service to the Music of our Church, it would be appropriate to spend £100 on a suitable gift. GW to advise.
- (iii) Kristen and Julian Crisp in Guatemala had written to PY with an update on their Charity work with the Feeding Faith Mission. PW recommended that we repeat the donation from the General Fund that we made in 2023 of £1,000, and this was agreed, and the Treasurer will action the payment.
- (iv) PW had previously circulated a list of points arising from the recent Fire officer's Report. Most issues had been covered, but a full electrical survey would be undertaken shortly, which would deal with the point raised regarding emergency lighting.

The meeting ended with a prayer from JS

