

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST,
MALDEN Registered Charity No. 1145155
Minutes of the 733th meeting of the Parochial Church
Council held on Tuesday, 3rd November 2020 by
Googlemmeet, with members joining from their homes.

Present: The Vicar in the chair, Pauline Armour, Franklin Barrington, Margaret Barrington, Brian Bowers, Jane Bransgrove, Mike Broome, Milly Broome, Marilyn Burkett, Richard Burkett, Lisa Down, Sally Josolyne, Marie McGuire, Anthony Pullen, and Lynn Sanger.

In attendance: Alastair Harris (treasurer), Faith Bowers (clerk).

The Vicar opened with prayer.

7321 **1 - Apologies for absence** were received from Deborah Harris and Liz Pullen.

7322 **2 - Notice of Essential AOB**

Richard added Security and Lighting, Alastair an update on Outreach donations on Deborah's behalf.

7323 **3 - Minutes of the October PCC Meeting**

Franklin suggested three minor amendments. With these noted, the Vicar signed the minutes which were approved for publication.

CWs/Amy

7324 **4 - Safeguarding**

Marie requested that this item be brought forward as she needed to leave early. She was not aware of any issues, and courses were on hold at present. The Vicar would forward to her the link for these. The list of those who should be trained was ready. Marie would contact Vanessa and Amy.

Marie/Fr M

7325 **5 - Finance**

a) *September figures* Alastair reported on September, on a cash basis only. It had been a good month, helped by receiving the Gift Aid for April-June, the resumption of services bringing more of the planned giving by envelope, and some donations, making this the best month of the year for income. Expenditure had been largely as expected, plus some maintenance costs.

There had been quite a good response to the school leavers' Bibles appeal, but the sum had to be made up from Mission Giving. There would be costs for livestreaming services to come.

Current prediction for end of year deficit was £14,000.

b) *Outreach donations* On Deborah's behalf, Alastair brought the Outreach Committee's suggestions for Mission Giving in 2020. They suggested Young Minds, Re-engage (older people), Care International, KCAH, Fircroft, Southwark MU's AFIA appeal, and the Phoenix Project (which collects and redirects surplus foods). This was in line with the budget. The commitments were for the one year. Richard observed that, while he

supported the current plan, this was giving away a significant proportion of the church's income and might need to be reconsidered in future years.

The PCC agreed the current proposals unanimously.

c) 2021 Budget

Richard brought the proposed budget. This included £72,000 for the Parish Support Fund. Giving for the year was estimated at £75,000. The Finance Committee recommended an increase of 1.1% on the music honoraria and for the administrator. They were grateful for savings made by the Maintenance Committee, and wished to maintain the mission giving for this year. This left relatively little for general purposes.

There had been a good response to the Harvest Appeal, including gifts from local people beyond the usual congregation. Appeals like that and the Bishop's Lent Appeal do were separate from the church's own accounts.

They would review the percentage to Mission Giving six months into the year.

There would be further costs relating to security and the building.

It would be necessary to draw on reserves to cover the deficit.

Alastair added that the budget did not include two unpredictable elements: the level of donations, which this year had been significant, and unbudgeted expenses, which are always liable to arise. One coming now was a licence to livestream music, which would cost £100 in the coming year. Mike thought it was possible that the Diocese might help with that.

Richard recommended the proposed budget to the PCC. Jane seconded this.

The budget was carried unanimously.

7326 **6 - St John's Hall**

a) *Terms of lease to the preschool playgroup*

Mike said Beth had also raised the matter of the lease to the pre-school, which was so long-standing there was a question of tenants' rights, so correct legal documents were required. Emma Marlow, who is a solicitor although this is not her field, had looked at it, but it had seemed wise to get expert advice. Emma added something on safeguarding. Mike was seeing Winkworth Sherwood later in the week.

b) *Scout Hall lease renewal*

This will involve some legal costs but it is important to protect St John's interests. The surveyor says his work is proceeding, but slowly. The Scouts were expecting to pay costs and had budgeted for this (this is not left to the local troop). The 1973 agreement had been a Licence, now the term was Agreement, and this needs clarification.

7327 **7 - Vicar's Report**

With the renewed lockdown until early December, the Wednesday service would be the last for the time being. Harvey would continue to livestream the Vicar conducting Sunday worship.

The Bishops and Archbishops were complaining about the lack of consultation and having churches closed again after their efforts to make them safe spaces.

For Remembrance Harvey will film the Vicar laying the wreath. It is hoped that a Carol Service can be filmed in early December as that would be the main Christmas celebration.

Private prayer was permitted by the Government, but the Vicar was reluctant to open the church for this, at least without knowing how bad the local situation was. Two hours would be long enough to let infection spread.

People were, however, viewing livestreamed worship and it seemed likely that this would be a way forward longterm. It was encouraging to receive Harvest donations for the Food Bank from the community beyond the regular worshippers.

The Vicar observed that some churches were simply hibernating, some large ones were doing lots on-line, and St John's falls somewhere in the middle.

He was still wondering what might be done for Christmas. He and Graham were hoping it might be possible to mount a giant star on the tower without letting water in. Perhaps people might like to decorate the yew trees, perhaps on themes like Love, Hope, Peace, Healing.

No questions were raised.

7328 **8 - Building Repair Project**

The recommended work would cost up to £800,000 over time, but was important to ensure the church was and remained accessible. It was not impossible and could be done in stages. The architect, who is proving very helpful, was preparing a schedule.

Richard wished the church could find some suitable anniversary to focus community interest and will to support preservation of the building.

7329 **9 - APCM**

Presenting the reports online in an empty church had felt very odd, but the necessary business had been done. This was followed by the elections, none of which were contested. Mike and Lynn had agreed to stand again as Church Wardens and, in the absence of other volunteers, Anthony, Liz and Deborah were willing to continue their service on the Deanery Synod. *These were all elected.*

There were no nominations for the four vacancies on the PCC. so it would remain under strength.

Sally had not intended to stand again for the PCC, but was willing to be co-opted for her technical skills which are so needed at present.

The PCC needed to appoint officers. Milly said the Vicar normally took the chair, and this was agreed, with the Church Wardens as deputies. The Vicar nominated Alastair Harris as treasurer, with Mike seconding.

These appointments were all carried unanimously.

7330 **10 - St John's Website**

Sally reported 6000 views in 28 days. She thought the Google panel option for calling the church was probably not reaching the office. Following an enquiry, Mailchimp was being added to the site as an alternative to Facebook. The site was being used increasingly, and the bounce rate had fallen, so more were exploring the site. In September the most popular pages were livestreaming, the harvest appeal, and on-line shop. Demographics showed a range of age groups among the visitors. October livestreaming figures were down a little,

probably because more were able to attend services in person. About 10 to 14 were watching services live, and nearly 70 later. The APCM drew 27 viewers.

The Vicar thanked Sally for this information.

7331 **11 - Any other business**

a) *Co-op Scheme*

Richard thanked the Vicar, treasurer and Debra Barrett, who had drawn attention to the Co-op seeking worthy local causes to support. Three causes are chosen each year and Co-op members are asked to link to one, then 2% on their purchases goes to that cause. A case had been made for the proposed Bereavement Café. This had been quite detailed and taken time so it was good to see it had all been used by the Co-op. Becoming a Co-op member only costs £1 and is simple, so people should be encouraged to shop there. Money from this would be a restricted fund. Chris Beales had been asked for some art work relating to this.

b) *Church Security and Lighting*

Richard had been pursuing this in the hope of getting a Government grant under the Places of Worship Grant Scheme. The application had got through the first stage and there had been a survey, which recommended a lighting scheme, CCTV, and a gate on the porch entrance - three items were required. The initial estimate had been £15,000, but the detailed scheme had come out at £28,000. There was a dual intention: assurance for visitors, especially on dark evenings, and to deter vandals and drug dealers.

If a grant were obtained, the church would only have to pay 20% so it was well worth pursuing, but there was time pressure. The security firm wanted a response by 16 November and the application had to be made to the Home Office by mid December. Esotech wanted a response by 16 November.

The proposal for lighting was to illuminate the whole way round brightly. This was felt to be unnecessary and not kind to the ambience of the old building. Lighting the path from lychgate to main door, and the doors to vestry and extension was important. The gate seemed unnecessary.

It was agreed that cameras would help, especially at the doors so that people could see anyone outside before opening, but 13 cameras seemed excessive. Two of the present lights were not working and another faint so they needed replacing anyway. The proposed system would use all LED lamps which have a long life and cost very little to run. Richard needed to ask about equipment life and maintenance costs, and also about storage of recorded data. They would be motion-activated. The police might have done more about recent vandalism if the church could have shown the perpetrators, and that could have proved a useful community service.

Margaret said experience suggests that some cameras do not give a sharp enough image to be much help, and lighting intended to deter can actually help some mischief makers. It could be better to have less equipment but that of good quality. Tony wondered how far the lighting would expose drug dealers who hide among the tombs, using the churchyard as somewhere where they could not be seen.

Richard would talk to the firm again, proposing to drop the gate, keep the 12 lights, but reduce the cameras to 4 or 5 focusing on the entrances. The police judged that drug dealers would be uncomfortable with lights and cameras. Lighting would encourage more people into the churchyard and that in itself could increase security.

If using CCTV there would need to be signs about that. He would ask about storage times and costs, and about running costs and maintenance support, and life span of CCTV equipment. Lighting would affect the immediate neighbours so they should be considered in the planning.

The PCC agreed that Richard should proceed in that way. He could email outcome to PCC, and a special meeting might be convened if necessary. **RB**

c) Malden Parochial School governors

Mike said that Alastair Daniel was also stepping down so two new Foundation Governors were now needed.

The meeting ended at 10 p.m.

The next PCC meeting will be on Tuesday, 1 December 2020, 7.45 for 8 p.m.