

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, WICKEN

Minutes of the meeting of the PCC held at Wicken House on 3 June 2019 at 7.00pm

Present: Rev Diane Whittaker (Chair), Rev Sue Stanley, Marcus Rixon, Celina Francklin, Margaret Williams, Henry Syrett, Charlotte Yorke-Long and Tish Gordon-Lee.

Apologies for absence: none

The meeting opened with reflection and prayers from the Canterbury 2019 Novena

Minutes 8.4.19 Accepted and signed

Matters Arising

Grave Extension – there had still been no progress. A letter from the Registrar had been forwarded via another family member, whose opinion was that the requirement to remove the unauthorised extension would be ignored, despite many requests over a considerable period. In this event, and in fairness to others who complied with the regulations, we would have the extension removed as a last resort.

Agreed: await action/advice from the Chancellor.

Correspondence Received

a) We had received a standard consultation document from South Northants Council regarding an application for interior alterations to a neighbouring property. They would have no impact upon the church or churchyard so we would raise no objection.

Agreed: noted

b) British Gas had informed Marcus that we would receive monthly (not quarterly) bills from 27.6.19. This would help with accounting.

c) We had been notified by John Marchant that his consultation fee from 1.4.19 would be £80/hour with no charge for travel expenses.

Curate's Report

a) The **Ascension Day** service had been well-attended and the service much enjoyed.

Agreed: to thank Sue for conducting the service, Henry and Olivia for hosting the celebrations and Rufus for his cake; and

Tish to write to thank Mary for her cake and kind additional donation.

b) **Harvest Supper/Festival** – we needed to set a date for the festival (provisionally 13.10.19) and to decide if there were enough helpers available to hold a Supper this year (provisionally 12.10.19). We would need to approach the Sports Club's new committee about using the club for the supper. Usual attendance for the meal was around 40. Charlotte kindly offered to prepare a main dish; apple desserts were donated. Various ideas were suggested, including the possibility of combining the festival and the supper into a single evening event.

Agreed: Tish to liaise with the Sports Club; and

all to give the events more thought and to confirm the details at the next meeting.

Diane's Sabbatical

Cover - Mary had recently done a magnificent job in compiling *Who is doing What, Where and When*, leaving some gaps where it had not been possible to find a priest. On 28.7.19 Diane could cover HC at Wicken if absolutely necessary. On 4.8.19 John Marchant would be holding his annual Field Service with Katy (no service at Wicken). On 11.4.19 there would be a Benefice HC, 11.00am at Cosgrove. With many on holiday, there was likely to be only a very small congregation at Wicken so it was not worth arranging cover here. Tish would give lifts to Cosgrove if required. 27.10.19 no

cover as those invited thought it too early to commit. If necessary we could host a Benefice HC that day.

Ride and Stride Sat 14.9.19 – Celina would remove the valuable items from the church so that it could remain open 11.00am – 4.00pm. Henry might organise a ride from the village.

Sabbatical Itinerary – Diane would be on a training course during the last week of July. She would then go to Northumberland for a month in early August. After that she would be spending time in Fiji and New Zealand on placement with the USPG and then Australia for some holiday. She would be back in the UK in the first week of November.

Arrangements – a reduced *Pew News* (no readings, simply their reference) would be emailed to Marcus. We could borrow a Lectionary from St Nic's (or buy one!). Sue would choose the hymns. Fees – Mark would be Benefice Secretary with payment details sent to Marcus as appropriate. Jon would be around to give access to Diane's office with the key available when he was away himself. Diane would update the website to make sure everything was accurate.

Worship/Mission

a) **Wicken Praise** – numbers were still down. The latest one had a congregation of only 6, but this had enabled an interesting and enjoyable conversation as part of Sue's address.

Agreed: to re-launch with a leaflet drop in time for September's WP; and to hold a Pet Service on 15.9.19 (Monty) to which pets (and their humans) could be invited. Charlotte would bring her Shetland pony. Advertise at the Dog Show and on the village website.

b) **Easter Treasure Hunt** – Sue had set up a stall outside the church with a miniature treasure hunt (stick a pin in the map), eggs and Easter leaflets. Tish also attended and said it had been very well-received. All the participants had been happy to talk to us with many treasure hunt entries and cheerful acceptance of both eggs and leaflets.

c) **Ascension Day** – already covered but agreed that attendance had definitely been better than it would have been on a Thursday in half term week.

Fundraising/Social/Outreach

Some good ideas for future events had already been discussed and were being planned.

Treasurer's Report

The various accounts were tabled and discussed (attached)

a) **Accounts YTD 2019** – the Parish council had kindly made a contribution towards the churchyard maintenance. The schedule for grass-cutting was now two cuts in May, June and July and one in August, September, October and November.

b) **Collections and Attendance** – the recent improvement in collections continued.

c) **Fabric and Organ Funds** – under the Listed Places of Worship scheme we would now apply for a VAT refund for the heating and lighting, which would then be paid into the Fabric fund.

The organ had not been affected by dust but by the higher temperature in the church; the heating would be turned down urgently and more of us shown how this is done.

d) **School House** – the account still had a healthy balance, though the windows needed repainting to the outside. This would cost £1600 + materials as needed. The plan to close the trefoil detail in the roof had been abandoned. The very high cost would be disproportionate (scaffolding etc) and the work not guaranteed completely to eliminate access by pests, which could be dealt with as the need arose.

The lease would be renewed shortly. It was noted that local rents remained fairly static.

Agreed: to have the painting done in September; and to enclose the roof wiring in metal trunking to prevent rodent damage; and to renew the lease at the current rental cost.

Agreed: to thank Marcus for his continuing work as treasurer.

e) Parish Share. Agreed to pay £2000 towards the parish share from the school house account.

Fabric

a) **Lighting** – the work was due to be completed shortly. We had obtained the information needed to go on the memorial plaque, which would be A4 size engraved brass.

Agreed: Charlotte to draft and email round the proposed wording for the plaque. When ready, to apply for a faculty to wall-mount the plaque in the bell tower. To be paid from the Fabric fund.

b) **Church Path** – noted that we couldn't proceed with the path until definite plans for the kitchen (which would require a pipe to be laid underneath the path) had also been agreed. The proposed path would be of aged York stone with edging either side using the original cobbles. This would be much safer and easier for use by pedestrians with or without buggies and wheelchairs, while working in the existing environment and preserving the important, valued heritage of the path. The likely (inclusive) cost parameters for the stone (54m²) were £110/ m² (£9768.00) - £130/ m² (£11,544) with other work and materials (including the pipe work) at £11,058, giving a total cost of up to £25,000. The cost of this can be covered by the Charity account. We now needed a proper specification with drawings and the details of the companies involved for the DAC. The work would have to be done either up to the end of October or next spring as it could not be started while there was any threat of frost.

Given the amount of work we are currently planning, it was decided to hold an open meeting for the village at which we could explain our vision for the path, kitchen and toilet and have plans/pictures available for what we propose.

Agreed: Diane to prepare and send the paperwork for the path to the DAC with a reminder about the necessary timing; and

to hold the meeting after the service on 14.7.19 and to publicise it with a leaflet drop, on the notice board, on the village website, in the *Pew News* and at preceding services.

c) **Kitchen and Toilet** – the original plans for the kitchen (sited more appropriately in the Lady Chapel) had been found and would be used, although more information and costings would be needed. The work to link the necessary drainage to the pipe beneath the path might cross ancient, unmarked burials. We needed advice from other churches where similar projects had been undertaken and about the project generally, before we would be able to submit the requisite precise, detailed plans to the Diocese.

New requirements concerning foul drainage meant that the composting toilet might be essential, as it would be self-sufficient. These units were designed for infrequent use in remote areas where no mains services were available. Antibacterial hand gel could be provided and wiring for anti-frost electric heating and lighting could be run from the back of the church.

Agreed: Diane to ask the Architect for advice about the kitchen drainage; and

Tish to contact the toilet company for further information and a site visit if feasible at no cost.

d) **Guttering** – it was possible that the team laying the path could also re-route the guttering so as to drain more efficiently.

Agreed: Diane to ask for agreement from DAC

e) **Chancel Ceiling** – Diane had contact details for a suitable firm to survey the ceiling. There may be grants available

Agreed: Celina to arrange the survey

f) **Trees** – we had now received permission from the Council to remove the trees and would apply for the required faculty. The trees in question were

i) a self-seeded ash very close to a holly bush

ii) a Scots pine which had been overwhelmed by ivy and was consequently bare except at the top

iii) a holly bush which leaned severely

iv) a yew at the back of the church which overhung the roof of the building next to it and the roots of which intruded underneath it, with potential for damage.

The work would have to be done in the autumn, after the nesting season. Although the removal of these trees will benefit some of those remaining, we wanted to improve the wildlife habitat in a way which would also screen off part of the churchyard. The proposal was, in keeping with the existing planting, to plant a stand of three variegated native holly bushes beside the long wall in November.

Agreed: to obtain quotes for the work; and

to provide pictures and site details at the open meeting. Diane to request faculty from DAC for tree removal.

g) **Oil lamps** – it was noted that the lamps on the back wall of the church had been placed in accordance the Archdeacon’s advice. Permission to re-site them with other pair in the bell tower would probably not be granted without a compelling reason. In view of this and all the other projects currently in hand

Agreed: to reconsider in a year’s time.

Safeguarding – nothing to report

Opening Rota Aug 4-18

There would now be no services at Wicken on 4 or 11 Aug. Henry to cover 18 Aug if available.

AOB

a) **WhatsApp** - Henry proposed setting up a group for ease of communication between PCC members instead of email. It would be used only for items not needing to be formally discussed at meetings (eg not for faculty work etc).

Agreed

b) **Door Curtain** – Charlotte explained that the stone where a wooden curtain pole would need to be placed had previously been filled and could not be re-used. Additionally, the reveals were on a slope which made it very difficult to hang the curtain effectively. She suggested that a smaller, metal pole could be used instead. Although the curtain would run less smoothly, it would still prevent much of the strong draught currently felt from the door, which cannot itself be draught-proofed because of expansion and contraction.

Agreed: all to take another look so as to decide finally at the next meeting.

Meetings and Events

12.8.19 PCC 7pm at the church (Lady Chapel with pew turned around)

21.10.19 PCC 7pm, venue TBA

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.35pm

Signed:

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Date:

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