

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, WICKEN

Minutes of the PCC meeting held at the church on 24 February 2020 at 7.00pm

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

Apologies for absence: Charlotte Yorke-Long

The meeting opened with prayers.

1/2020 Minutes 9.12.19 Accepted and signed

Agreed: Tish to produce a brief action list for the email sent with the minutes for ease of reference; Tish to produce a draft calendar of reminders for our various services and events, for circulation and additions by all;

Marcus to order a 2020 transfer for the Pascal candle and palm crosses if needed.

2 Matters Arising

War memorial – upkeep – two estimates had been obtained for the work and Neil was checking there were no protected lichens on the stone. Celina was waiting to hear back from a farmer re stone from a local quarry as a direct replacement for the plinth facings. If necessary, an alternative might be considered, though this was likely to be unacceptable to the SNC Conservation Officer for the requisite planning permission. Any stone used would have a matt finish.

3 Correspondence Received

a) Email from Bishop Donald re procedures for Holy Communion – changes in the preparation and administration of HC had been made as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The details were already on display in church as required and measures were in hand to comply.

b) Letter re Ride and Stride

Agreed: to participate again this year (Diane to reply accordingly), leaving the church open with valuables removed.

c) Grave Extension – the Diocesan Registry had informed us that contact had now been lost between the immediate family, responsible for the unacceptable curb stones, and a local relative. However, the latter had agreed that we could remove the stones.

Agreed: to obtain estimates for the work from Mason's in Fenny Stratford (Celina) and Les Finn in Towcester (Celina/Charlotte).

d) Children's Society – letters had been received, one asking about our participation next Christmas and the other thanking us for last year's donation of £111.69.

Agreed: to leave further consideration until a more appropriate time of year.

e) Riding for the Disabled Association – Alison Pocock, chair of the local group, had written to thank us for our donation of £340 collected at the Carol Service.

f) Wall Walkers – we had received advertising from this company which can check tall structures, such as church towers, without the need for expensive scaffolding.

Agreed: to keep these details to hand.

g) Bell Ringing Requests – we had received a number of applications. A full list of agreed dates and times was in the vestry and details would be sent to Henry for information.

4 Rector's Report

Diane reported that an election to the Deanery Synod would be held at this year's APCM. We currently had a vacancy on the PCC but were not compelled to fill it.

The Rural Dean was on sabbatical from April to July and Diane would be acting in that post during his absence. Sue would be working in Whittlewood Benefice for the same period.

We needed to keep the village informed of progress with our various plans.

Agreed: to hold an open meeting immediately after the APCM, with publicity via Wicken News if possible plus the usual media and in the Easter flyer.

5 Worship/Mission

a) Christmas and New Year – the various services had been very well-attended.

b) Lent Activities – Lent would begin on 26 February, with a service of HC and imposition of ashes at 7.30pm at St Nics. On Shrove Tuesday, pancakes would be served before a showing of *Mary Poppins Returns*, the platform for the Lent group discussions. Details of the groups and the Lent lunches would be in *Pew News*. During Lent there would be a sermon series based on *Saying "Yes" to Life* by Ruth Valerio. This year's Church of England's Lent Campaign is *Care for God's Creation*, with a booklet available in church (children's version still awaited).

c) Wicken Praise – Henry had recently suggested we plan something a bit "different" for these services as a means of broadening the congregation. There would be a greater focus on participation and themes might be appropriate to the season, eg Harvest. The most recent WP had fallen very close to St Valentine's Day. Its theme of Love, with an impromptu enactment of the parable of the Good Samaritan, had been great fun. However, there had been very little time for publicity, which would be easier to manage via the usual channels once we had a plan for the rest of the year.

Draft themes for 2020: [PENDING DETAILS FROM HENRY]

15 March – tree planting in churchyard; 22 March Mothering Sunday

19 April – lambs (real ones in churchyard if possible)

17 May – Ascension Day celebration, **11.00am**

21 June – Songs of Praise, ideally with choir to lead. Celina to check if Akeley Wood Juniors might attend, or Henry to approach Stowe School if not.

19 July – bells (liaise with Ruth Stokes)

[August – no WP in holidays]

20 September – pet service

18 October – harvest

15 November – gifts

20 December – Creation

d) Mothering Sunday – 22.3.20. This would be a family-friendly, short HC. Children would be invited to make up small posies as part of the service (Celina to provide flowers and ribbon).

e) Easter – 12.4.20 HC. Henry to ask Karen if she would decorate the church, possibly with Livvy. Celina kindly invited them to use flowers from her garden if needed.

f) Service 12.7.20 – no one is available to conduct a service at Wicken but there will be HC at Cosgrove.

6 Fundraising/Social/Outreach

a) Akeley Wood School Mothering Sunday Service – 17.3.20 at 2pm. Celina would open the church. The school would be visiting shortly to check the details.

b) Gift Day – It was decided to link this to the Ascension Day service at WP on Sunday 17.5.20 at 11.00am (24.5.20 will fall at half term). Henry and Livvy would kindly host the celebrations after the service. Diane and Marcus would liaise re Gift Day envelopes, including a covering letter from Diane and details of church expenses and how to donate, for delivery during the week of 27.4.20. Cash donors would be invited to bring their contribution to the service, to drop it off with Marcus or to request a collection from their home. Diane would check whether John would be available to play the organ, otherwise we would ask Charlotte's friend. Further details to be discussed at the next meeting.

7 Fabric Items

a) Church Path – the manufacturers' description of the surface ("cobble") was misleading as the particles were far smaller than this suggested, thus providing the required smooth, even path. The colour we had seen was not quite accurate, being in fact much closer to that of the church, but this would be rectified for the faculty application. Details of our intention to proceed would be included at the open meeting following the APCM. The original cobbles would be retained and suggestions for alternative use invited. The work would also include laying an electrical cable to supply the lych gate, for which an acceptable quotation had been received from CT Walters.

b) Communion Set – The wine cruet, which appeared to have been mended previously with a substitute base, could not easily be repaired again. We would seek a quotation to replace the base. Meanwhile, we would borrow a set from Potterspury with the kind agreement of the Church Warden.

c) Sound System – Electrical Certificate – Henry would ask the electrician currently working at his house to provide this.

d) Chancel Ceiling – Survey – Diane had contacted a firm about this and would chase.

e) Memorial Plaque – Diane to apply for a faculty for the plaque to go up in the new kitchen area.

f) Trees – now felled. The bill of £1190 had been split between the School House and Charity accounts. We would now have the stumps ground out, to make the mowing easier, with the cost of about £400 shared between the two accounts as before. Henry would make sure we had the new trees (three variegated hollies and a rowan) in time for Wicken Praise in March.

g) Church Heating – Celina and Tish had now turned it up and down successfully for services and were happy to show others how to do it. However, it was crucial to remember to turn each heater down again afterwards, thus timers would be helpful.

8 Church Opening Rota 19.4.20 – 5.7.20

19.4.20	Henry	WP + refreshments
26.4.20	Tish	HC
3.5.20	Celina	MP
10.5.20	Marcus	HC
17.5.20	Celina	11.00am WP + refreshments Ascension Day
24.5.20	Tish	HC
31.5.20	Tish	MP
7.6.20	Celina	MP
14.6.20	Celina	HC
21.6.20	Marcus	WP + refreshments
28.6.20	Tish	HC
5.7.20	Celina	MP

9 Treasurer's Report

The various accounts were tabled and discussed (attached)

a) Accounts YTD 2020 – tabled and discussed.

b) Parish Share – slightly less than expected (£10,773.00) as the Benefice had received a Hardship discount. This was awarded because of Yardley Gobion's designation as a priority area based on levels of poverty. Marcus and Henry would meet soon to discuss the option of making a regular, affordable monthly payment and then topping up as funds might become available.

c) Average Sunday Attendances (ASA) and Collections – collections still down. It was noted that this might partly be because some people make weekly cash donations only when attending. Regular standing order payments would avoid this.

d) School House – no accounts available but balance subsequently confirmed as £20,971.58. Recently the tenant had asked us to pay the bill for clearing an airlock in the oil feed to the boiler, ie the fuel had run out. The oil monitor had ceased to work. It was decided to pay for a replacement monitor (£186.00) but not the work on the airlock.

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

10 Safeguarding – Diane had recently undertaken a safeguarding review with Jane. We would probably have to repeat the safeguarding training next year (rolling 3 yearly requirement). It might become necessary for all PCC members to undergo DBS checking but this was not currently relevant to us.

11 AOB

Electoral roll – displayed on church notice board. Noted that the board is in a poor condition. It leaks and the cork backing is falling off. The board is too small for purpose anyway, so we would consider getting a larger one. Further noted that some items are required to be displayed inside the church, which currently can be done only in the vestry which is not readily accessible to the general public. We will obtain a suitable board to go in the new kitchen/meeting area, preferably something either demountable or freestanding/mobile.

Meetings and Events

20.4.20 APCM/Open meeting/PCC 7pm at the church.

22.6.20 PCC meeting 7pm at the church.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 8.55pm.

Signed:..... Date:.....