

Minutes of a Meeting of the St John's Church Council held on Tuesday 1st May 2012, in the Schoolrooms

The following council members were present:

Edward Armitstead, Ed Bangay, Eddie Brooks, John Brookes, Ros Bush, Simon Corner, Gordon Crawford, Ian Croxford, Rob Dean, Roger Fox, Phil Juggins, Tim Lewis, Iain Maitland, David Matthew, Joy Neville, Keith Ovenden, Helen Peace, David Preston, Nick Scorer, David Upton, Kath Upton, Martin Warr, Robert Warr, Anne Wicks,
Chairman: James Dudley-Smith

1. Opening worship

James opened with a reading from 2 Corinthians 5 v16-21 in which St. Paul says that if we are in Christ then we are a new creation and therefore Christ's ambassadors. James mentioned a lady who he had met at a CAP Pastors conference who was black and had had many personal issues. He said that she could not have been more unlike him but they were reconciled in Christ as his ambassadors. As a Church Council we need to plan, pray and organise because we are a new creation in Christ. This was followed by a hymn and prayer.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Keith Stevens, Paula Rollason, Jenny Salberg and Mike Streetfeild,

3. Report by Ray Willis on the state of the Organ

James welcomed Ray to the meeting and paid tribute to him being the best organist in Somerset and how grateful we are for everything that he does for us. Ray opened his report by saying that the organ was nearly 100 years old having been installed in 1919. It was built by Arthur Harrison and is one of only 4 Harrison and Harrison organs of this type still in existence in this country. However it is showing its age, was difficult to repair and could breakdown at any time. The main problems were with the pneumatic actuators which are made of wood and leather and of which there are several thousand. Some of the accessible ones have been repaired but most are completely inaccessible and cannot be repaired. In addition some of the pipes which have softened have crumbled and where possible been straitened and in addition one of the 6 large air bellows had failed last year. Although it had been repaired there was a possibility that any of the others which are inaccessible could fail at any time. Last year Harrison and Harrison carried out a detailed survey of the organ and their recommendation is that it is completely rebuilt which would require its complete removal to their workshop. The pipes would be recast and all the actuators replaced with solid state electronics. At today's prices the estimated cost is £263,470 plus VAT. Although Harrison and Harrison are probably the most expensive organ builders the view taken by the Diocesan organ advisers is that we should use them. Ray put forward 2 proposals. Under A we launch an appeal and when we have raised 50% we can apply to other Organ charities who are likely to support us. Under B we continue to maintain the organ for as long as possible and when this is no longer possible we mothball it until we have raised sufficient money for the refurbishment. We would use whatever money there was in the organ fund, currently £8k, to purchase an electronic organ to use until the organ has been refurbished. Ray said that he realises that as we have to raise some £300k for the tower he was looking at a 15 year project to refurbish the organ. He answered various questions about the project and he thought that the cost of a suitable

electronic organ would be between £12k and £15k and have a life of about 30 years. The general view was that plan B would be the preferred option. James thanked Ray for his presentation.

4. Co-opting members

It was agreed that Martin Warr, John Brookes, Kath Upton and Simon Corner be co-opted on to the committee.

5 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meetings held on 17th January were approved without amendment.

6. Matters Arising

Relaying services to the Schoolrooms

David Matthew said that this should be possible now that the internet connection has been installed and he agreed to look into it and report back to the next meeting.

7. Correspondence

Letter to David Laws re Marriage

James said that he had received 3 replies from David Laws. David said that he did not agree with us as he believed that each church should decide whether they would bless or allow same sex marriages. He said that the most important part of Christian teaching is that we should love each other as ourselves. In the second letter he attached a letter from The Minister for Equalities, Lyn Featherstone who said that the proposal was that there should be a civil marriage and a religious marriage and no church would face a legal challenge for failing to perform a marriage of same sex couples. We are encouraged to respond to the formal consultation at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equal-civil-marriage. The third letter was a handwritten letter in which David offered to come and meet with the PCC to discuss the matter. It was agreed that there would be little point in meeting him. James encouraged us to respond to the consultation.

8. Finance

Martin said that he had produced accounts up to the end of March which were more or less in accordance with the budget and showed a breakeven position. He asked Phil to let him have the BYG recommendation for charitable giving so that they could be paid out during the year. David Upton said that he had been handed a cheque for £2,000 from the estate of Mrs S Roussell. Martin said that although this was good news his budget included an allowance for legacies. He said that we had also received £5k from the Diocese for the CAP fund.

9. Fabric Reports

Quinquennial Survey

Rob Dean said that the survey had been carried out but the report had not been received yet.

Tower

Nothing further to report

Schoolrooms

Helen reported that a small amount of painting still needs to be done in the downstairs rooms. She passed round some samples of suggested floor covering for the downstairs rooms and entrance hall. She said that in view of the problems with carpets getting stained she was proposing a vinyl/hard wood effect anti slip covering. The cost would

be nearly £3,000. There had however been a couple of water leaks recently and we would need to be sure that these had been repaired properly. Some concern was expressed about the sound aspect of the flooring and whether this would be suitable for the crèche but it was pointed out that we could have a rug and St. Andrew's hall have a wooden floor which was OK.

10. Parish Youth Work

Simon Corner said that the new term has started very well.

11. Other Church Activities

CAP Report

Ian Croxford said that they are starting 4 new clients every month and there was a need for befrienders for men from 18 to 30. James mentioned the Pastors Conference that he and David had attended. He had met John Kirkby and CAP celebrated their 15th anniversary last year. There was a CAP Sunday planned for 15th May and James would talk more about it then.

18 to 30 Group

Tim Lewis said that this was trying to recruit befrienders from the group.

12. Staffing at St. John's

James said that this was the first of three items on his wish list that he had raised at the AGM and wished to get our reactions. He said that taking on more staff is a means by which many churches seem to grow. This would not be paying people to do work already done by volunteers but to take on people to increase and make more effective our volunteer base, resource their work, to raise the level and draw out the gifts of the volunteers. Examples of possible areas for a paid worker are pastoral work, women's ministry, children and families' worker including marriage preparation and parenting, evangelism and empowering others, ministry for older people. Eddy Brooks said that we need to tread very carefully and not try and do too much at once. Tim suggested having an apprentice such as a graduate who may spend 2 years in the parish as this could be cheaper. However some thought that such a person would require high supervision and may not stay for long. Do we want to look for someone within the church or recruit outside? Ed Bangay asked if we should consider sharing someone with other parishes. David Upton referred to Acts where there were two instances when Christians faced with important decisions prayed about them. James said that he did not have a timescale in mind but asked us to think about it.

13. Removal of the Pews

James wondered whether there was a mood to consider removing the pews and making the church more adaptable. Martin expressed some reservations about removing the pews. David Matthew thought that we had a mandate to use the building in the most appropriate way and in most cases the chairs would face eastwards but it would enable us to be more flexible and more culturally acceptable to outsiders. The pews were uncomfortable and some were in need of repair. It was also pointed out that no cathedral has pews and you cannot always see what is going on in the front. Ian Croxford thought that pews were very difficult for disabled people in wheelchairs. Phil Juggins thought that we had benefited greatly from the removal of the rear pews. Joy Neville thought that most of the churches that are vibrant and alive don't have pews any more and chairs would be much more welcoming to non church people and more flexible for children's' activities. The matter was left for further consideration.

14. Parish Mission

James said that this was probably less controversial than the other 2 items as most people accepted that we would at some time have a parish mission. Tim handed out 2 sheets, one giving his thoughts about how we might approach a mission and another written by Roger Carswell who ran missions for churches and may possibly run one for us. Martin said that we have had 2 missions in the past, one a Yeovil wide one with David Watson and then later one centred upon St. John's run by students from Trinity College Bristol. It was agreed to set up a small working group to consider the matter and anyone interested should give their names to Tim. David Upton said that the David Watson mission took 2 years to plan.

15. To Review past events

AGM

It was agreed that this was a very good meeting and particularly James's report being interspersed between agenda items.

16. Forthcoming Events

Tim's Ordination in Wells Cathedral on 30th June at 4.30pm

Tim would find out if tickets were required.

Parish Weekend Away on 7th to 9th September

Helen asked those who were volunteering to run workshops to let her know.

Christmas Meal in the Schoolrooms

Ian said that he would like to organise one this year as there was quite a demand particularly from CAP clients. He asked if the church would underwrite the cost as some people would find it difficult to pay the £5 which is normally asked for. It was agreed that the church would underwrite the cost estimated at £150 from the general fund.

17. Any Other Business

Kids and Co

The Kids and Co group meeting at St. Andrew's at 1.30pm on a Monday has been very successful and is almost full and the Kids and Co committee have suggested that we start another Kid's and Co group based in the Schoolrooms. This would be part of our outreach and particularly with a focus on mothers with babies from 0 to 2 and may be more convenient particularly if we want to encourage parents with small children to come to St. John's on Sunday mornings. Joy said that the committee are stepping out in faith in suggesting this and the proposal was warmly supported by the church council.

Parish Placement

James said that he had been approached by Kenneth Lamb's son-in-law, who is training for ordination at Wycliffe Theological College to do a placement with us during the summer. This was agreed.

Bells

Roger said that he was writing an article for the magazine on his proposals to enhance the bells.

Clavinova

Keith Ovenden said that the clavinova in the church was falling apart and he would like to source a replacement. The old one could be transferred to the Schoolrooms. It was agreed that he would do some research and bring a proposition to the next meeting.

18. Dates of future meetings

CC on Tuesday 18th September

PCC on Tuesday 2nd October

The meeting finished with prayer at 9.40pm

Unapproved