

Minutes of a Meeting of the St John's Church Council held on Monday 26th November 2012, in the Schoolrooms

The following council members were present:

Edward Armitstead, Eddie Brooks, John Brookes, Ros Bush, Simon Corner, Ian Croxford, Rob Dean, Roger Fox, Tim Lewis, Iain Maitland, David Matthew, Joy Neville, Helen Peace, David Preston, Paula Rollason, Jenny Salberg, Mike Streatfeild, David Upton, Kath Upton, Anne Wicks
Chairman: James Dudley-Smith

1. Opening worship

James opened with a reading from 1 Thessalonians Ch 5 v4 to 11. Paul is talking about the return of the Lord Jesus. The Thessalonians are doing well but they are anxious about some of their brothers and sisters who have died and what will happen to them as Christ has not returned. Paul says that we must be awake and not asleep or drunk when Christ returns. The one coming to judge is the one who died for us. Paul tells us to encourage each other and build each other up just as we are doing.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Ed Bangay, Gordon Crawford, Phil Juggins, Keith Ovenden, Keith Stevens, Nick Scorer, Martin Warr, Robert Warr,

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 18th September were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

Relaying services to the Schoolrooms

It was doubted that with the noise in the crèche whether one could also listen to a sermon and therefore it was decided not to proceed with this item. Also the evening service now gave an additional opportunity to listen to a sermon.

Church Bookstall

It was agreed that we should have a bookstall especially with the mission coming and Suzanne Warr would be happy to supply books from Keith Jones bookshop.

A Parish Apprentice

Tim said that there is a good web site www.Ninethirtyeight.org which is based upon Jesus' command to send workers out to the harvest field. It gives details of a scheme for people thinking about full time Christian ministry to work in parishes on a voluntary basis for a year or two. We would need to put a parish profile on their web site and detailing what sort of person we are looking for so that interested people could apply.

Group for Mothers with young babies

Joy Neville said that the group will be called Tiny Toes at St. John's and would start on 10th January in the Schoolrooms from 10 am to 11.15 am. There were currently five volunteers but Joy could do with a couple more.

5 Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Guidelines for Parishes

The guidelines issued by the Diocese recommend that all PCC's ratify the statement and display it in a prominent place in our churches. Views expressed were that it was too woolly, it was open to misinterpretation, once put into writing it can be used against us, offence is frequently taken but rarely given, we have managed for 600 years without needing a policy, and our beliefs can cause offence to non Christians. A vote was then

taken as to whether we should adopt the policy and 7 voted for with 8 against and 5 abstentions and therefore the motion was lost.

6. Finance Report

In the absence of Martin John gave a report on the latest position. The accounts for the 10 months ended 31st October showed a surplus of £4,753 due to higher than planned income as expenditure was only £94 more than plan. In view of the surplus Martin planned to transfer £500 to the equipment replacement fund.

7. Fabric Report

a) To discuss the minutes of the Fabric sub committee meeting held on 8th October

The Fabric sub committee recommends that:

The tower refurbishment should be given priority, with a grant re-application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in Spring 2013, aiming at completion by the end of 2014. A re-appraisal will be required if the grant application is unsuccessful. The enhancement of the bells should proceed, with funding already secured, for a Faculty by the end of 2012 and completion by 2014.

The organ refurbishment should be launched when it becomes necessary, with the aim of avoiding any clash with fund-raising for the tower. A temporary instrument should be purchased when required. Low-key fund-raising may start up-front with recitals.

The initial feasibility work and planning should be launched for the removal of the pews. The DAC should be approached for Preliminary Informal Advice. Initial groundwork to start should include a visit from the DAC, technical advice (on heating etc.) and contact with other churches that have done this. In this "Assessment Phase", costs should be kept to a minimum.

After some discussion it was agreed to accept the recommendation of the sub committee.

b) A resolution to approve work on the bells

Regarding the bells Roger Fox explained that it is 80 years since work was last done on the bells and after a lot of preparatory work the DAC has recommended approval and now it is necessary for the PCC to petition the Diocesan Chancellor for the necessary faculty having displayed a public notice for 28 days. The works or proposals are to re-hang the existing ring of ten bells with modern fittings. Add an additional four new bells which will provide a complete ring of twelve bells, together with the facility to have lighter rings of 6, 8 and 10 bells particularly for teaching purposes. This will involve the construction of a new upper frame and modifications to the lower frame to accommodate the new bells and create easier and safer access, ladders and walkways for maintenance. The work is to be carried out under the direction of the church architect.

The following resolution was proposed by Roger Fox and seconded by Rob Dean "that the St John's Church Council at its meeting on 26th November 2012 approve a resolution relating to the works or proposals". The resolution was approved unanimously by the 21 members present.

c) A resolution to purchase a second hand organ as a temporary replacement if the current organ breaks down

Upon the advice of our organist Ray Willis it was resolved that we purchase a second hand electronic organ at a cost of £5,500 and additional costs of about

£2,000 to be met from the organ Fund. This was passed by 20 votes for with 1 against.

d) **Schoolrooms**

Helen thanked those who had help paint the downstairs rooms but there was still a lot to do and she had arranged for a professional painter to finish it off. She hoped that the new flooring would be put down at the beginning of January. It was agreed that Helen would get the painter to do the entrance passageway and foyer. Certain electrical works to the kitchen, toilets and church flood lighting were due to be done later in the week. Helen suggested that we join the toilet twinning scheme with Africa which is administered by CORD and Tearfund and would involve us paying £60 per toilet. This was agreed.

8 Parish Youth Work

Simon thanked those who came to the open evening on Friday when £100 was raised. 50% towards Becky's trip to Ghana and 50% to charity. All other activities are going well but we need to pray for the youth group led service on Sunday and for the Park School Christian Union.

9. Other Church Activities

CAP Report

Ian said that everything had been going very well with 5 clients becoming debt free and 7 committing themselves to the Lord and a group of men coming to the Christianity Explored course. They had also received the largest donation so far. However there had recently been some setback with clients not attending meetings for various reasons and one 28 year old female client with 4 children suffering a fatal heart attack. Ian said that we need to pray more than ever for CAP as the Christmas period is one of the toughest times for CAP clients managing on a tight budget.

18 to 30 Group

Tim said that a good number were attending but one of the problems had been a lack of consistency with some of the group attending which had made it difficult for them to gel.

Kids & Co.

Despite an appeal to the congregation no one had come forward to help with setting up and clearing away or dealing with the administration. If we cannot find anyone then it was likely that the group would have to discontinue. Edward Armitstead said that if we had a church apprentice then this may be something that they could take on. Anne Wicks suggested that we should ask Urban Warriors if they can help.

10. Mission

Nothing further to report at this stage but we will need to start serious planning in the New Year.

11. To discuss the future of the Friends of St John's

John Brookes said that the Friends had raised about £70k since its formation in 1994 however it had not met one of its primary objectives to engage the local community in supporting the building as most support came from members of the congregation. Also over a period of time the numbers on the committee had dwindled and it has proved very difficult to attract new members. It had also proved difficult to sell tickets for fund raising events. One suggestion was that the Friends could front the tower appeal but Rob Dean said that he thought that as the PCC would be the ones receiving any

grant from English Heritage it was more appropriate for the PCC to manage the appeal. Eddy Brooks thought that due to the number of non Yeovil residents in the town they did not have an interest in the heritage of the town. David Matthew asked whether we need an independent organisation to raise money when we should be seeking to increase the congregation. Joy Neville said that we should be very grateful for the amount raised by the Friends. After further discussions it was recommended to keep the Friends going but with a lower level of activity and possibly revive it once the appeal for the tower has been completed.

12. Review Past Events

a) Back to Church Sunday

Iain Maitland said that they brought 4 friends along and they could not get over the friendliness of St John's and they are now coming regularly. James said that there were 180 adults and 30 under 16s and another back to church type Sunday service is planned for the first part of 2013.

b) Remembrance Sunday

There were less attending the 10 am service in the Schoolrooms than last year but probably because it started half an hour earlier but it was agreed to keep to a 10 am start next year. The main service in St. John's went very well.

c) Newcomers Evening

James said that they had recently had a very successful newcomers evening and those attending said that they appreciated how friendly St. John's was. Tim said that quite a few of the Oddments theatre group were coming to the Sunday evening service and suggested that we might invite them back to lunch.

13. Future Events

Christmas

Christmas Services as normal. There is a craft event on 15th December with a preparation evening on the 6th December. Christmas publicity will be available shortly. David Matthew agreed to do a poster.

14. Any Other Business

a) Refreshment at Turning on the Christmas Lights Evening

Helen Peace suggested that we serve mince pies and coffee in the churchyard on the evening when the town lights are switched on. This was agreed as a good suggestion.

b) Youth Minister Management Committee

David Upton said that he was giving up chairing the committee and therefore we need another chairperson and preferably another male member to join the committee.

c) The God Particle

Jam Cary who has recently joined our congregation has written a play called the God Particle which is a romantic play performed by 2 professional actors on the subject of science and religion. They wondered whether we would like to host a production of it in the church next summer at a cost of £800. Tim hoped that we could sell 150 tickets at £6 to £8 each and there is a possibility of them doing two performances at a slightly higher cost. It was agreed that we go ahead and underwrite the cost.

d) Focus Magazine

James said that Elaine was entering the magazine in a competition for black and

white editions with a print run of under 1,200. The competition is run by the Association of Church Editors

e) **Chancel Repair Liability**

Rob Dean raised the issue of Chancel Repair Liability and the Land Registration Act of 2002 which gave PCCs now benefiting from chancel repair rights, 10 years, until midnight on 12 October 2013, to register notices of these rights on titles to affected land or lose the rights forever. As charity trustees, PCC's are regulated by the Charity Commission and are responsible for maximising and protecting the assets of their church. Chancel repair rights are an asset of the church. Any failure on the part of the PCC to safeguard a potential source of funding for church repairs (by registering chancel repair rights against affected properties before the deadline) could be construed as a breach of their duties as charity trustees and result in action by the Charity Commission. Furthermore the policy of English Heritage, the current grant awarding body for repairs to listed buildings, is to refuse grant aid where other sources of financial assistance are available.

Roger Fox said that he had researched this difficult issue and was attending a meeting organised by the Diocese to explain it further. He has asked the Diocesan legal advisors Harris and Harris if they have the records to prove that the liability of the Lay Rector of St. John's has been transferred to the Diocese.

13. Dates of future meetings

St John's Church Council – Wednesday 16th January
PCC on Wednesday 20th March

The meeting finished with prayer at 9.40 pm