

Minutes of St. Giles PCC, 18th July 2017

Present:

Fr. Benedict Mark Crowther-Alwyn (Rector) in the chair. Allan Preston, Angela Neale, Brian Legood, Bridget Caudle, Emily Brailsford, Jackie Steele, Jane Pomphrey, Jean Haines, Fr. John Drackley, Martin Smith, Michael Amos, Peter Steele and Sarah Higgs.

Welcome.

The Rector welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Fr. Duncan Ballard, the Area Dean for the new Carsington Deanery. He recounted a recent incident where he had inadvertently left his diary on the train at Derby. Having reported it to the station staff he then went to his meeting and on his way back inquired if it had been handed in. To his surprise and delight, it had (having been all the way to Newark and back). He asked what the charge was for its recovery and was told there was no charge, but 'Please pray for us'. The PCC meeting then commenced with the collect for the previous Sunday.

57/17. Apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from; Claire Drabble, Helen Legood, Joan Link and Sue Grant-Nicholas

58/17. Area Dean, Fr. Duncan Ballard

In welcoming Fr. Ballard, the Rector reminded us that his grandfather and father had each been priest of the CoE commencing with his grandfather's ordination in 1907. British society has changed out of all recognition since then, but Fr. Mark still found the work of a priest invigorating and exciting. The changes in the diocese are one example of this and he looked forward to hearing from Fr. Ballard and the views of the PCC.

Fr. Ballard explained that he had only recently become the parish priest at Ashbourne and had taken on the new role as Area Dean for the new Carsington Deanery. As a result of a family tragedy, he had come to realise that life is short and one needs to 'pick up the ball and run with it'. He considered himself an optimistic person, whose heart was with parish ministry and he hoped to reflect this in his work as Area Dean.

Fr. Ballard referred to a diocesan study. The new Carsington deanery is the largest in the diocese, but has the smallest population (45 thousand). This equates to 4% of the diocesan population, but we have 15% of the clergy. If the clergy numbers were to follow the population there would only be 3 or 4 in the new deanery. This drastic change is not being suggested, though the Bishop would like to have more clergy in the major population centres of the diocese rather than in the countryside. *(It was pointed out that although the statistics might indicate that there should be a redistribution of clergy from rural to urban areas, it needed to be borne in mind that the provision of any type of service/facility in a rural area almost invariably cost more per head of population than the equivalent in a town and that the CoE is a national church and so should be providing its rural adherents with as good a level of ministry as those in urban areas).*

The deanery contributes £0.5 million to diocesan funds per year and is the most generous per head in the diocese. Nationally, the last 20 years has seen a 1% year on year decline in attendance and a loss of 30% in children attending. *(NB Figures of attendance at St. Giles since May 2003 to May 2017 indicate that we have increased attendance over that period by around 18%, but the average number of communicants has declined by about 10%).* The Deanery is likely to see a growth in population of 3-5000 over the next few years because of new housing developments, however, the demographics of the deanery will remain heavily skewed towards older age groups.

Fr. Ballard referred to a letter from Bishop Alistair in which he sets out a proposal to restructure the stipendiary clergy arrangements. The proposition is to have 60% of the clergy retained as parish priests and the remaining 40% engaged in 'missionary' work, with new initiatives for church. *(There was some discussion about this, particularly a feeling that parish priests were already involved in 'missionary' work and were already introducing new initiatives).*

Fr. Ballard quoted an interesting statistic. In 4-5 years' time, around 50% of the existing clergy will be a retirement age, meaning that clergy numbers will decline from around 7600 to 5000 nationally. There would then be a period of about 20-25 years, during which time clergy numbers would gradually recover to around 7500. The reason for this was that from about 40 years ago there was a reluctance to admit trainees for the ministry unless they had 'sufficient life experience'. The result was a lost generation of younger priests. This policy has now been reversed, but too late to stop the dip in clergy numbers. *(Fr. Mark remarked that attempts had been made to dissuade him from training for the ministry because of his 'lack of life experience'. He had not been dissuaded and wryly remarked that, as a priest one very rapidly gained that 'life experience' when ministering to the sick*

and dying. He also pointed out that there was nothing to stop a priest carrying on beyond what was regarded as 'normal' retirement age).

Fr. Ballard concluded by saying that now is the time to think radically, but be realistic and plan ahead. There followed an interesting discussion where a number of points were raised;

- The most successful growth in church attendance seemed to be in the charismatic churches, but these also seemed to have a high turnover of attendees. There is the intention to 'plant' a charismatic church in Derby, following a successful experiment in Southwell diocese.
- There was felt to be an opening for a 'catholic' version of 'fresh expression' based on the traditional liturgy of the church.
- There is room for both such ideas in the same church and the same town.
- The church needs to diversify, be braver in its outlook and not become insular.
- There was a view that many people are apprehensive, even frightened, about going into a church and attending a service and that when people who are not regular church goers attend a service, e.g. a funeral or a wedding, they are not made sufficiently welcome and are not given any information about the church's other services.
- If there was to be a redistribution of clergy from rural to urban areas there might be some merit in looking at the idea of a 'minster' church with subsidiary parishes, rather similar to that in the Wirksworth area.
- There was a serious suggestion that the clergy would be able to do more ministry and outreach if they had administrative support.

In conclusion, Fr. Ballard said he'd like to come back later in the year, certainly before Christmas, for a further discussion.

Fr. Mark thanked Fr. Ballard for attending and this was warmly echoed by the members of the PCC.

59/17. Minutes of PCC and Standing Committee

The minutes of the Previous PCC and Standing Committee meetings had been circulated. They were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Rector.

60/17. Correspondence

The only correspondence was a letter from the Bishop entitled '*Developing our Deaneries*' which had been circulated and the contents of which had been covered in Fr. Ballard's earlier presentation.

61/17. Financial Report

The Treasurer circulated the latest figures. He noted that total income had gone up, but this was largely due to the Findon legacy of £3000. Covenanted giving is stable. The diocesan quota (Common Fund) is the biggest single item of expenditure and although we are currently on a reduced rate, our contribution will go up in 2018. He noted an overall reduction in utility charges, though water charges had gone up. Electricity charges were about the same, but with some distortion due to floodlighting costs during the roof repair period. Gas charges were less than in 2016, but again there is some distortion because we have received a rebate on the VAT following a decision that we should be only paying 5% not 20%. The cost of insurance has gone up by £1000, as it now covers both the church and the Barn. The additional sum relating to the Barn should really be set against any income arising from use of the Barn, but at present, that is insufficient to cover the outgoings.

Looking at the various Funds, the main expenditure was from the roof fund. We have now paid 97.5% of the cost of the scheme, the remaining 2.5% being held over for a year in case of any problems with the work. The 2nd instalment of the grant claim is imminent and the Treasurer hoped we may even get additional grant to cover the cost of the railings round the French drain.

In accordance with the Standing Committee's decision, the Findon legacy is to be paid into a separate deposit account and not into the General Fund.

The Treasurer remarked that he had started the transfer of the bank accounts from Nat West to RBS and that, despite the two banks being part of the same group, it was a 'fiendishly complicated process'. Also, RBS have indicated that, as our transactions are greater than £100k p.a. we will be subject to bank charges. After some discussion it was agreed that we should examine the idea of having two banks and splitting the transactions so that we came below the £100k threshold. We also should ascertain whether all banks charge charities.

In conclusion the Treasurer reminded members that he wished to resign at the next APCM as he had health problems and preferred dealing with project finance rather than the day to day financial affairs of the parish.

Resolved:

- To approve the Finance report
- To ask the Treasurer to examine the idea of having two banks and splitting the transaction so that we came below the £100k threshold.
- To ascertain whether all banks charge charities.
- To note the Treasurer's intention to resign at the next APCM

Action: Treasurer to examine the idea of having two banks and splitting the transactions so that we came below the £100k threshold.

62/17. Parish Giving Scheme Report

The Secretary had circulated the draft letter relating to the proposed adoption of the Parish Giving scheme. There were no questions on this and it was agreed without a vote.

63/17. Budget and Cash Flow

The Treasurer reported that, although the production of a cash flow report was desirable it was extremely complicated to extract the information from the SAGE programme which he was using for the parish finances. It was agreed that he would provide Angela and Fr. Mark with the necessary information and they would work on it. It was also noted that the diocese was suggesting a new (simpler/easier) method of monitoring and controlling parish finances and there is to be a meeting on this on 27th July. The current system is far too complicated for church accounting and needs a complete overhaul.

Action: Fr Mark, Treasurer and Churchwardens

64/17. Meeting Space Committee

The Rector stated that a meeting had been held, but that no consensus had been reached so another meeting is to take place, when hopefully all members of the committee can attend.

Action: The Rector to call another meeting.

65/17. Admission of Children to Holy Communion

The principle of this was approved by the Standing Committee and Fr. Benedict is to meet Sarah Brown soon in order to progress the application to the Bishop. **Action: Fr. Benedict.**

66/17. Safeguarding

Joan's report had been circulated. It didn't require any formal decisions to be made, so the report was noted.

67/17. Sanctuary Lamp

Work on the replacement lamp will commence when Lee is back from his holidays. The final cost depends on whether the colour of the light needs to be altered as a result of the possible aumbrey change. **Action: Emily Brailsford**

68/17. TV in Barn

The new TV is in the Barn and has been paid for.

69/17. Garden Party Feedback

The Garden Party was a wonderful day and raised £1513 before expenses. It was very hard work, and attendance was slightly down on last year, possibly because there was no school dancing group only the school choir. Jackie Steele circulated the details of the taking and expenses. Two issues were noted;

- The children's area was not entirely satisfactory and still needed further consideration
- Car parking was an issue now that the landlord of the Duke William had closed the car park to church users. An alternative parking arrangement needs to be sought (and not just for the Garden party).

Resolved: To hold a further meeting of the Garden Party team at the earliest opportunity to consider these matters.

70/17. September Street Party

This will take place on 3rd September. Angela and Bridget are arranging the event. A poster is being prepared and parishioners are encouraged to provide food and drink. We noted that at the previous street party the sandwiches turned up late after a lot of the other food had been eaten. **Action:**

Angela and Bridget

71/17. Barn Access

Bridget has received a quote of £250 from Keith Evans for repair of the barn access. This was unanimously approved. Martin referred to the need to repair the fence adjacent to the barn access as the uprights are rotten. Also the boundary fence overlooking the Old Rectory grounds is inadequate, having only two horizontal bars. Bridget agreed to ask for a quote from Keith to do this work as well.

Resolved:

- **To approve Keith Evans' quote of £250 to repair the barn access**
- **To obtain a quote from Keith Evans for repairing the fence adjacent to the barn access and improving the boundary fence overlooking the Old Rectory grounds.**

Action: Bridget

72/17. Aumbrey.

Angela has spoken to Nigel (DAC) about relocating the aumbrey from the Lady Chapel to the Sanctuary and no problem is anticipated. If the aumbrey is to be a locked cabinet, then metal would be preferred to wood. **Action: Angela to progress the project.**

73/17. Handrail along main footpath

Smith and Roper have estimated between £8000 and £12000 for the proposed handrail. There was incredulity at these figures, despite S&R's noted propensity to estimate on the high side. After some discussion it was agreed that the Churchwardens should seek alternative quotes, with a target cost of no more than £5000. **Action: Churchwardens to seek alternative quotes.**

74/17. Model Railway Event

Michael reported that the event had now been advertised in the railway enthusiast press and the dates and times were 23rd September 10:00 'til 17:00, 24th September 11:30 'til 17:00. A plan had been drawn up showing the locations of the 6 layouts, all of which will be in the N. Aisle. The Lumsdale Model club will need to gain access to the church on the Friday to set up the event. Refreshments are being provided by the model club and all proceeds are to go to the church. Emily agreed to help coordinate refreshments and Michael agreed to e.mail Emily a poster for distribution.

Action: Emily and Michael

75/17. Grave Talk

Bearing in mind the difficulties people have when talking about death and bereavement, the CoE had come up with the idea of a 'death café', or 'grave talk' where people who had been bereaved or who were caring for a dying relative/friend could come and talk/share experiences etc over a cup of coffee or tea. This would be run jointly with All Saints and may take place in Costa in Crown Square. The facilitators would need training and the CoE has prepared a facilitators' handbook. This costs £25.

Resolved: To approve the purchase of the facilitators' handbook for a 'death café'/grave talk'

Action: Emily Brailsford

76/17. Quiet Day

Emily suggested that we could organise a 'quiet day' in church. This would be akin to an extended version of our current Breathing Space, with extensive periods of silence, interspersed with talk, prayer and sacred music. In effect this would be a mini version of a retreat. The concept was unanimously agreed and Jean offered to assist. The date has yet to be fixed, but is likely to be in the Autumn. Refreshments would also be needed.

Resolved: To approve the concept of a Quiet Day at St. Giles, sometime in the Autumn

Action: Fr. Benedict, Emily and Jean.

77/17. Twitter

Emily informed us that she'd set up a Twitter account to distribute church information and that there would be an item in the parish magazine about this shortly. This was warmly welcomed, *(even by those who didn't know what a Twitter account was and had certainly never used one. The PCC Secretary being a case in point).*

Emily left at this point as she had a personal interest in the next item.

78/17. Books for Emily

Fr. Benedict explained that although the PCC has recompensed Emily for the books she needed for her studies, she has refused to claim travel expenses and she is now doing a funeral course as part of her training and arranging Messy Church sessions at the school. He felt that the PCC should agree to pay her out of pocket expenses, including any books she requires for the various courses. In response to a query about the possible payment of an honorarium, rather than expenses, Fr. Ballard pointed out that HMRC regarded honoraria as income and subject to tax or, if the person concerned was in receipt of any benefits an honorarium might affect these. It was agreed unanimously that Emily should be entitled to reclaim her out of pocket expenses, including any books she requires for the various courses.

Resolved: To inform Emily that the PCC approves her claiming out of pocket expenses, including any books she requires for the various courses.

Action: Fr. Benedict to inform Emily.

79/17. Dates of next meetings.

- PCC 19th September
- Standing Committee, 3rd October
- PCC 7th November