**St ANDREW’S CHURCH, STAPLEFORD**

# **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

Charity registration number 1158492

**MINUTES OF THE PCC MEETING** – **Monday 22 November 2021**

Please note that financial statements, notes, diary, sub-committee reports etc, are pre-circulated and filed with the minutes in the official PCC file, with key points recorded. Any discussions or decisions arising from such documents are recorded in the following text.

**Present**: Simon Taylor (chair), Nicky West (secretary), Felicity Cooke (lay vice-chair), Chris Bow (treasurer), Alastair MacGregor, Jackie Nettleton, Jeannie Green, Simon Humphrey, Sue Brown, Valerie Powell, Anand Pillai, Clare Coates, Sarah Kastner

1. Simon Taylor opened the meeting with Psalm 96 verses 1-3 and a prayer.
2. Apologies were received from John Bryden and Lizzie Taylor.
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2021 were approved as an accurate record.
4. Finance  
   Chris Bow reported on the year to date. See accounts on file.  
   There has been only slight movement in the last two months. The small operating surplus at the end of August is now an operating deficit, largely due to expenditure from the Estate Fund. The net deficit is £12,000, and the substantial grants made from the Nachingwea fund were noted.  
     
   Johnson Hall. There has been some hall hire but generally not much movement. The deficit is a little less than budgeted for.  
     
   Estate Fund. Repair costs have been incurred in respect of the boiler room and grille. We are still awaiting an invoice from Cambridge Scaffolding for the ceiling netting. When we have the final figure we can ask the Friends of St Andrew’s for their contribution (half of the cost).  
     
   Charitable funds. Significant grants have been made by the Nachingwea Link, and there has been some movement in the Children’s Society fund. There has been some income and expenditure on the Warden Scheme.  
     
   General fund. The fund is in the same position as at the end of August. Collections and donations are running below budget and last year but regular giving is holding up. Gift Aid is down a little. Funeral and wedding fees are above budget. Expenditure is broadly running a little below budget.

The Messenger has generated a profit of over £5,000, which is in excess of the £3,000 allocated to charitable and other good causes.

Verger’s Cottage. The deficit will continue to grow until some income is generated.  
  
In summary the PCC is in a satisfactory financial position and in broad terms where we expected to be.  
  
Jeannie Green asked if the Messenger profit should be ring-fenced for a specific purpose ie: to benefit the community. Simon Taylor explained the history which led to the present position. Until 2018 the whole surplus from The Messenger went into the General Fund from which the PCC made charitable donations as well as meeting its ordinary expenditure. At that time the PCC set up the Messenger Fund, allocating all the surplus from The Messenger to it, and bringing members of the community into the decision-making process for the allocation of charitable donations and donations to other good causes through a Messenger Fund Committee. When The Messenger profits grew, principally as printing costs were very significantly reduced, and as church finances came under strain, it was decided in 2020 to limit the allocation to the Messenger Fund to £3,000. In addition the PCC makes regular charitable donations from the General Fund to SSYI, the Warden Scheme and YouthInc.

Jackie Nettleton compared the high cost of gas for the Verger’s Cottage with the Johnson Hall. Simon Taylor advised that the Cottage is not on any particular scheme or part of the deal that covers the church and Johnson Hall. It was not clear how that came about, but it will be remedied once prices for fixed rate deals come down.

1. Governance - Succession planning.  
   Romie Ridley was formally commissioned as an ALM on 31 October. Simon Taylor is awaiting news from the diocese about a new curate. Fiona Holliday was licenced as an LLM in Ely on 30 October, and commissioned the following day, Lucinda Howard is here for another year as ordinand and David Tisdall is a good addition to the team as a first year ordinand.

Sue Brown requested ‘bookkeeper’ be added to the succession planning list.

1. Bishop’s Pastoral Order  
   This matter has come up again because of Simon Talbott’s impending move from Shelford and is being pursued with the Archdeacon of Cambridge, Alex Hughes. The course being pursued is for Stapleford once again to have its own incumbent. The item was on the agenda to give the current PCC the opportunity to discuss the issues and say if it did not agree with the course that the wardens and assistant wardens are now pursuing.

Alastair MacGregor reported that a letter has been sent to Alex Hughes. Relations have been good with Shelford but we are vulnerable to a change of heart from the next person there. We would like to take back control and look after the people of Stapleford. Alex Hughes, Alastair MacGregor and Felicity Cooke are meeting to discuss on Thursday 25 November. Feedback from Alex so far has been positive, and Felicity was hopeful a good solution can be reached.

Simon Taylor has suggested a formal resolution (see page 13 of the agenda and documents bundle). If the bishop does not terminate the BPO, and if we have correctly understood the legal position, we have a right to terminate the BPO within 28 days of the vacancy being declared. Simon thought it would be wise to consult an ecclesiastical lawyer on the matter if we were going to go down that route in case there were unexpected consequences to doing so. There was discussion about the likelihood of the bishop agreeing to terminate the BPO. Felicity said this discussion is happening at an interesting point in time when the decision will have to be made in the context of a revised deanery pastoral plan and we could be offering a neat solution to some of the problems. Simon proposed the motion in the following terms:

“Noting the recent resignation of Simon Talbott as incumbent of Stapleford and other benefices held in plurality under a BPO made on 23 May 2019, the PCC of Stapleford:

1. Agrees that the Bishop should be invited to terminate the BPO and to appoint the Associate Priest of Stapleford as Incumbent, and

2. Authorises the wardens acting on behalf of the PCC to commission legal advice on the effect of the PCC terminating the BPO if it appears to them that the Bishop is not minded to do so and if they consider that obtaining legal advice would be helpful.”

The motion was seconded by Alastair MacGregor. The motion was passed unanimously.

1. Opening up  
   We have opened up further since the last meeting by having refreshments after services. Jeannie Green said the issue of choir stalls is ongoing and Simon Taylor reported that the opinion of choir members was currently being sought.

Alastair MacGregor said that Cambridgeshire is now an Enhanced Response Area which suggests now is not the time to be opening up further. No one proposed taking backward steps. In response to an enquiry if the PCC knew of anyone picking up Covid from church, no one did know of any cases. Nicky West was cold in church last Sunday and reported that the Bishop’s recent guidance now says a smaller opening in the church door is adequate in colder weather.

Simon Humphrey asked, in the absence of government guidelines, how we should approach Christmas, bearing in mind there are likely to be larger numbers at Christmas services. It was noted that there will be two Lessons & Carols services and the Christingle service will be outdoors. Simon Humphrey said people need to be reassured that we are thinking about how to keep them safe. Alastair MacGregor suggested that people could register for the Christmas Day service but it was pointed out this might be a problem for those who do not attend church regularly. Jeannie Green suggested opening up the chancel and Lady Chapel to accommodate more people and it was discussed how that might be achieved.

1. Diary  
   The Children’s Society service and Advent Quiet morning are coming up.

Alastair MacGregor proposed recording in advance simple services to go online for those who are unable to come in person. This might be particularly appreciated at Christmas time. Alastair, Zoe Clayton and Clare Coates have offered to help organise this.

Looking ahead to the first part of next year Simon Taylor and John Bryden are trying to find a date for an Iona wholeness and healing communion. There will be Complines in Lent led as usual by various church groups, and Clare Coates will give a series of short talks at the Complines on Julian of Norwich. The Easter day service might be held outdoors again.

1. Safeguarding  
   Rob Needle’s report is on file. Thanks were extended to Rob for his work on safeguarding. The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard directs Rob and Simon Taylor when action needs to be taken.

The PCC considered the issue of known offenders . There are no known offenders in the congregation, and we are aware that policies exist should there be. Simon proposed the PCC endorse and accept the statement “Known offenders, and others who may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, must be effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser”. Sue Brown seconded. All were in favour.

The PCC turned to the second issue raised by Rob, namely that of authorised church activities. Simon Taylor read out the definition of a church activity and discussion took place about which activities fitted the definition and should be included on the Safeguarding Dashboard. Clare Coates confirmed that she and Fiona Holliday plan to re-start the Toddler Group for a party in December and then regularly from January. It needs to be included. JOY should also be considered for inclusion, as it involves caring for vulnerable adults. The PCC discussed which other groups listed should be included. It was not obvious that all the prayer and home groups met the definition, nor that Forest Church, which is primarily a church service rather than a church activity in the normal sense, was appropriately included. It was decided that the issue should be put back for Rob and Simon to reconsider the list, and brought either to PCC or to the Standing Committee if it needed to be dealt with before January.

10. Sub-committee and group reports:

* 1. Youth. Report on file.  
     The difficulties with payment for trips were noted, and that there is a lot of work involved for Zoe Clayton and Sue Brown chasing up people who have not paid. The PCC thanked Zoe for all her hard work in all aspects of running the groups and trips.
  2. Children and Families. Report on file.  
     Sue Brown and Clare Coates were thanked for their hard work.
  3. YouthInc. No report received.
  4. Eco Church. No report received.
  5. Events. No report received.
  6. Prayer/House groups. Report on file.
  7. Mothers’ Union. Report on file  
     The MU Advent service will take place at 10.30 am on Thursday 2 December.
  8. Stapleford-Nachingwea Link. Report on file.  
     Trish Maude had asked Sue Brown to remind the meeting about the Nachingwea Christmas Fair on 4 December.
  9. St Andrew’s Children’s Society Partnership. Report on file.
  10. Fabric. Report on file.

Stephen Brown was thanked for all his hard work on Fabric issues.

* 1. Johnson Hall & Verger’s Cottage. No report received.  
     Clare Coates confirmed the locked cupboards belong to Toddler Groups.
  2. Friends of St Andrew’s. No report received.
  3. Deanery. Report on file
  4. Pastoral care group. No report received.
  5. Community Warden Scheme. No report received.  
     The parish council has contributed £2,500 for the year. The recruitment process is in motion to replace Donna Allsopp, who has resigned as warden.
  6. Messenger. Report on file  
     The issue of subscriptions was raised here. Valerie Powell has been trying to sort out subscriptions. The plan is to gather contact details of subscribers and move to an email list for the collection of subs and eventually move to direct debit payments or standing orders. Sue Brown thought there was a risk of putting our full bank details in the public domain but was happy for them to go on a slip to subscribers. Simon Taylor thanked Valerie for the progress she has made compiling the contact list and gradually getting us into a better position.

1. There were further no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.
2. Any other business  
   Church flowers  
   Jackie Nettleton reported that the number of church flower arrangers is dwindling. There have been flowers (largely donated by arrangers) in the church whenever it is open. Plans are in hand for a Christmas theme. During Advent there are no flowers (apart from the Advent Ring) up until the Lessons & Carols services on 19 December. The congregation will be invited to take part in decorating the church on 18 December. Anyone, not necessarily church goers, who would like to arrange some flowers, something simple is fine, should contact Jackie.
3. Date of next meeting – Monday 24 January at 19.45 hrs by Zoom.  
   We have until the end of May for the APCM. However, Simon Taylor thought that the budget and reports look a bit stale by then and would prefer a meeting at the end of February. Chris Bow has usually completed the accounts by the end of February so early March would work better.

| **Month** | **PCC** |
| --- | --- |
| **2022** | |
| Jan | **24** |
| March | **28** |
| May | **23** |
| July | **25** |
| Sept | **26** |
| Nov | **28** |

1. Alastair MacGregor closed the meeting with a prayer.