**St ANDREW’S CHURCH, STAPLEFORD**

# **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

Charity registration number 1158492

**MINUTES OF THE PCC MEETING** – **Monday 26 September 2022**

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), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice-Chair), Nicky West (Secretary), Chris Bow (Treasurer), Sue Brown, John Bryden, Kirsty Campbell, Clare Coates, Martin Ginger, Jeannie Green, Lucinda Howard, Alastair MacGregor Valerie Powell, Romie Ridley, Lizzie Taylor

1. The meeting opened with a reading from Psalm 27 and a prayer.
2. **Apologies**Apologies were received from Sarah Hackett.
[Sarah Kastner sent her apologies after the meeting – she was unexpectedly unable to attend.]

The PCC congratulated Clare Coates on her appointment as Team Vicar in the Lordsbridge Team.

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**
There was no formal meeting on 25 July 2022 as it was a PCC Social. Papers were circulated prior to the social, and the following decisions were made without objection:
	1. Approval of minutes of meeting of 23 May 2022
	2. Approval of minutes of extraordinary meeting of 27 June 2022
	3. Re-appointment of Alastair MacGregor as an occasional preacher for a further period of three years until July 2025

Thanks were recorded to Sarah Hackett for hosting the July social event.

1. **Finance**
Chris Bow reported. See accounts on file

Year to date. The 8 months to August show a continuation of the situation in the 6 months to June. The operating surplus on funds directly controlled by PCC has risen to £2,473. The overall surplus is £8,037 of which approximately £4,500 is The Messenger profit. After setting aside £3,000 to be distributed by the Messenger committee, a surplus of about £1,500 has been added to the Church funds. Most of the assets are in savings accounts. Total assets controlled by the PCC are £194,000 approximately.

There has been little change to the Johnson Hall Fund; the surplus is in line with budget.

There has been no movement on the Estate Fund since June.

There has been little change to the Nachingwea Fund, Children’s Society and Warden Scheme.

In relation to the General Fund:

Kirsty Campbell asked if the church would benefit from Government help with energy costs. The Church and Hall contract expires at the end of 2023; therefore next winter could be a problem. The Cottage is not protected by a fixed contract like the church and hall. Cottage energy and water bills have gone up considerably in recent months. Sue Brown said that it would be very expensive to install a water meter and it would take several years to recoup the cost. It was suggested Cambridge Water is contacted to investigate the reason for the increase in bills.

The costs of upkeep of services saw a substantial increase due to the purchase of equipment for video services. Although in excess of £1,400 in total, the costs of the individual items are below the capitalisation threshold, so the whole amount has been charged against income

The General Fund is in deficit by just under £7,500, which is a slightly smaller deficit than anticipated.

As regards the Messenger Fund, income is ahead of budget and ahead of last year and costs are on budget. There is a higher surplus than expected.

As regards the Verger’s Cottage, the Magog Trust now occupy a room there. Costs, apart from decorating etc for the new tenant, are in line with expectation. The Cottage should be in surplus by the end of the year.

The PCC recorded its thanks to regular givers and to Chris Bow, Sue Brown and Clare Kerr for their hard work with the finances and accounts.

1. **Governance**
Succession planning was considered. See report on file.
We need to think about succession planning for the clock and bell chimes. Someone needs to be trained to help Chris Cooper.
Jackie Nettleton had reported that a couple of volunteers had come forward for the flower rota but more would be appreciated.
In relation to Home Communion Assistants the PCC is required to review the team. Joan King will not be continuing, but Jeannie Green and Romie Ridley wish to continue, Jeannie said it is a privilege to be part of the team. The duration of the approval was considered. Simon Taylor proposed Jeannie and Romie would continue in post for two years in the first instance rather than five. Seconded by Alastair MacGregor. All in favour.
Nachingwea succession is under consideration. Simon noted that it was desirable for the leader to be an active member of the church.
We have been asked to take a second ordinand for a two-year period.
Clare Coates reported that she is giving Lucinda Howard some training in our social media function.
Simon Taylor and Kirsty Campbell will discuss her taking on the Communications Officer post after November.
2. **Living in Love & Faith**
See report on file.
Alastair MacGregor reported orally that the course was helpful to focus on our attitudes to different relationships. The congregation was asked whether it was in favour of same sex blessings and marriages; most were in favour. We are grateful to people for participating. The review group recommended that the findings should be fed back to the congregation and to our bishops, and an addition to be made to the church website to the effect that same sex marriages and blessings will be carried out when we are allowed.
For clarity, Nicky West suggested using the term Church Council rather than PCC. Lizzie Taylor said that our two bishops are supportive so our feedback should encourage them. Felicity Cooke said that the College of Bishops is considering this matter ahead of the General Synod in February so anything we can do to encourage them is positive. The Scottish Episcopal Church conducts same sex marriages and blessings of marriages and civil partnerships and the Church of Wales conducts blessings of same sex marriages and civil partnerships. The Church of Scotland permits ministers to apply to carry out same sex marriages.
The review group recommended to the PCC:
1. sharing the numerical results with the whole congregation and thanking them for their contributions
2. sharing the results including comments with Bishops Stephen and Dagmar to inform their
policy deliberations
3. adding a note to the church website in the following terms:

*The Church Council decided in 2022 that it would like to offer services of blessing for those same sex couples who are already in civil partnerships or married, and weddings for same sex couples, as soon as this is allowed by the Church of England.*
Alastair MacGregor proposed the three recommendations made as a result of the survey. Lizzie Taylor seconded. All were in favour.

Simon Taylor asked how this should be communicated to the Bishops. It was decided a letter should come from Simon and Alastair. Alastair will draft something for consideration.

1. **Winter help**
Simon Taylor has received no response from his appeal in the newsletter. He asked the meeting if anyone is interested in doing this.
Simon Taylor explained that he had raised this after an approach from the Parish Council, who in principle were willing to consider partnering with us.
Felicity Cooke reported that she has looked at the Warm Hubs Project website but doubts it would be practicable for us to use the Johnson Hall. A rota of people on the premises providing refreshments etc would necessary and we may not have the capacity.
Valerie Powell suggested the Cox’s Close community room would be a more suitable location as it is always heated. [Note: Valerie has contacted the Cox’s Close administrator. The local council have considered offering their venues as Warm Hubs, but their policy is to leave them unheated when not in use, and they are not planning to heat them as community Warm Hubs.]
Alastair MacGregor thought we could direct people via the church website to Feoffees for financial assistance and other sources of help. [Note: done.]
2. **Deanery Development Planning**
See report on file.
Felicity Cooke reported orally. The Deanery Lay Chair and Rural Dean have put together a process through which every benefice is invited to nominate a lay representative to take through the deanery process to ensure that every parish has a voice. Views are to be collected by means of a questionnaire. This process is easier for Stapleford as a single benefice parish.
The questionnaire has been completed in draft (in the papers). The PCC needs to decide if we are happy with it.
Romie Ridley questioned the use of the word “should” in the section “serving the common good” and proposed “might” instead. That correction aside, the PCC had no comments. Romie Ridley and Alastair MacGregor were thanked for completing the questionnaire.
Felicity continued to report that there are nine lay reps in the deanery, and they will go through the completed questionnaire with representatives from another benefice, acting as a critical friend. Then all the feedback will go back to the lay reps group to be combined into a collective document. The timescale is that all questionnaire responses from all benefices have to be in by 24 October ahead of the lay reps group meeting on 31 October.
The PCC considered who, along with Felicity, will meet with the external lay rep, and when. The meeting could be held on Zoom. Alastair MacGregor, Romie Ridley, Martin Ginger and Lucinda Howard volunteered to take part, and were thanked by the PCC.
3. **Fire safety policy**
See notes and draft Church Fire Risk Assessment on file.
Stephen Brown had led the Fabric Committee in writing a Church Fire Risk Assessment which needs consideration and approval by the PCC.
Martin Ginger, who has professional expertise in this area, had not had time to consider it in detail.
Simon Taylor suggested we provisionally approve and asked Martin Ginger to come back with any detailed comments. Simon Taylor proposed provisional approval pending further comments. Romie Ridley seconded. All were in favour.
Sue Brown asked that Stephen Brown be included in the circulation for any comments made by Martin.
4. **Messenger price**
See report on file.
Martin Ginger reported. The price has been £6 per year for several years. In anticipation of a price increase from the printers, the Messenger Committee have proposed increasing the cost from £6 to £10 per year. The print run costs about £12,500 per year.
Jeannie Green questioned whether now is the right time to instigate a price rise. Valerie Powell thought that those who receive the Messenger by post should pay more; they currently pay £16 per annum which does not cover the cost of postage. Felicity Cooke said that, as the Messenger benefits good causes in the village, the price could increase to £9 to cover increased printing costs. Valerie Powell needs a decision before the end of October when subscriptions will be going out.
Whilst the matter was for the Messenger Production Group to decide, the PCC consensus was broadly in favour of an increase to £9 a year from January 2023.
An article will be put in the Messenger explaining the reason for the price increase.
5. **Diary**
There has been a lot of rescheduling in September and October.
There will be one single service at 10.30 am on Sunday 16 October (as well as a 9 am service) – “Sunday Worship with Messy Elements”. This will be Clare’s last service.
Sunday 23 October was going to be an All Age service but this is now the previous week.
Sunday 30 October will be a communion for All Saints’ Day.
Bishop Dagmar is coming on Sunday 20 November.
Ideas are welcomed for a St Andrew’s Day celebration on 30 November – possibly some sort of entertainment after evening prayer.
The Toy Service will be on the first Sunday in December.
Lizzie Taylor would prefer to be inside for Christmas Messy Church on 18 December and suggested it moves to the Johnson Hall. Sue Brown will talk to parents to ask if they are happy to continue outside services or would prefer to move to the Johnson Hall.
Sue Brown suggested a Forest Church re-launch, and Sue, Lucinda Howard, Fiona Holliday and Simon Taylor will be looking ahead at Forest Church arrangements.
Simon Taylor said the afternoon of 18 December would be the natural Sunday for Lessons & Carols but that afternoon is the World Cup Final. Simon said there are good reasons both for having only one Lessons & Carols service and for having two (last year we had two).
On Christmas Eve the services will be a Christingle, and Midnight in Bethlehem Communion. Simon proposed just one 10.30 am service on Christmas Day, which would be in addition to the 9 am that day.
In addition to the diary provided, it was noted that on 29 January 2023 Alex Hughes is coming to install Simon as vicar.
6. **Safeguarding**
The meeting had received Rob Needle’s report. There were no comments from the meeting. The PCC expressed its thanks to Rob for his continuing work.
7. **Sub-committee and group reports**
	1. Youth. Report on file.
	2. Children. Report on file.
	3. YouthInc. A new youth worker has been appointed.
	4. Eco Church. Nothing to report.
	5. Prayer/House groups. Reports on file.
	6. Pastoral care group. Report on file.
	7. Community Warden Scheme. Report on file. There are a couple more users but Simon Taylor looks forward to hearing more about finances.
	8. MU. Report on file.
	9. Stapleford-Nachingwea Link. Sue Brown reported news from Link – 8-10 places on the scheme are already covered.
	10. St Andrew’s Children’s Society Partnership. Report on file.
	11. Fabric. Report on file.
	The church heating system needs replacement. Boiler repairs are becoming difficult. Alastair MacGregor reported that the Friends of St Andrew’s are willing to help with a grant and fundraising.
	Simon Taylor said that a lot of money will need to be spent on the plasterwork. It was noted that here have been no plaster falls this year despite the very hot weather. It may be possible to have the period allowed by the faculty for the netting to remain in place to be extended.
	12. Johnson Hall & Verger’s Cottage.
	Simon Taylor asked for a volunteer to be chair of the Johnson Hall Committee.
	13. Deanery. See Item 6
	14. Messenger. See Item 8

Alastair MacGregor suggested a Men’s Group report could be included next time.

1. **Matters arising**There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.
2. **Date** **of next meeting**Date of next meeting Monday 28 November at 19.45 hrs – by Zoom.

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| **Month** | **PCC** |
| Nov | 28 |
| Jan 2023 | 23 |
| March | 27 |
| May | 22 |
| July | 24 |
| Sept | 25 |
| Nov | 27 |

Lucinda Howard closed the meeting with a prayer.