

Hughenden Parochial Church Council

Minutes of Meeting - Thursday 21st January 2021 at 7.30pm (held via Zoom)

Present

Clergy: Keith Johnson, Helen Peters, Tracey Jones (TJ)
Churchwardens: Julia Grant, Frank Hawkins
Elected: James Gamon, Clare Godfrey, Mike Hill, Arthur Johnson, Brian Morley,
Antony Rippon, Ben Sharp, Matt Skillen, David Tester, Christopher Tyrer
Secretary: Susan Brice

1. Opening Prayer

Helen opened in prayer, inviting us to pray for each other.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 17th November

The spelling of Kathie Faulkner's name will be corrected and the minutes will then be posted on the website.

4. Matters Arising Not on the Agenda

As no one had yet volunteered to replace Mike Dean as our contact with the National Trust, Julia Grant said that she would undertake to do this. Christopher Tyrer offered his support if needed.

The discussion about the printer had not yet happened in the Standing and Finance Committee and would be on the agenda of their next meeting.

It was noted that the Christmas card had been sent out to the parish using a local distributor and the PCC expressed thanks to Jane Tyrer and Frank Hawkins for their work on this project. It was felt that positive contact had been made with our community and that there had possibly been a greater uptake of Christmas services because of the card.

5. Treasurer's Report

Brian Morley shared the accounts with the PCC. He commented that the regular donations given to the church by standing order had continued during the last year but that yellow envelope and cash donations had dropped dramatically. There was also the loss of wedding fees due to Covid restrictions and it was hoped that this summer might return to some level of normality with approximately 10 weddings already booked.

Antony requested that a variants column be added to the accounts for ease of reading and Brian said he would facilitate this.

The parish share has been reduced very slightly for the year.

It was pointed out that no heating oil had needed to be purchased during 2020 and that the price had now reduced considerably.

Standing Committee

Brian told the PCC that the monetary target had been reached for the buying of video streaming equipment. However, responses to further grant applications were pending which could further reduce the cost to church funds.

The planned installation of the equipment had prompted the Standing Committee to consider security at the church. As such, a proposal was presented that Ben Sharp should lead a further project to install a CCTV system, spending up to £2,000. He hoped to reduce that cost by completing the work at the same time as the video streaming equipment.

Questions were asked at this point as to where the CCTV cameras would be placed and who would have access to the system. Ben Sharp assured the committee that these questions would be carefully considered and that people would not be filmed praying or communicating.

David Tester observed that there was a generic CCTV policy on the C of E website that we might choose to use.

Ben Sharp commented that he hoped to have the work within the church completed by Easter.

It was proposed by Frank Hawkins that Ben go ahead with the purchase and installation of the necessary equipment. This was seconded by David Tester and the vote of the committee was unanimous.

The DAC has agreed in principle to extend the time allowed for the repair of the Bell Tower until the summer of 2025. The Standing Committee felt that it was reasonable to aim at work beginning in 2022. Thanks were expressed here to Tony Sackville for reinforcing the great work done by Richard Peters.

Before that time, we need a maintenance plan for the church building and can no longer rely simply on the quinquennial reports. James Gamon, Alan Jaycock, Antony Rippon and Andrew Collard are willing to be involved with this and Antony pointed out that we do have a generic document relating to health and safety within the church, (this will be particularly relevant to accessing the tower.) There was an obvious need to physically meet within the church which was difficult at this time due to Covid restrictions.

Application for Charitable Status

Having read the relevant document, thanks were given to Frank Hawkins for all the work he had put into this application.

Discussion took place about the position of '*an employee*' as a PCC member and thus a trustee, as well as being employed by the committee. The application for charitable status required information of some detail about this situation. It was agreed that as the self-employed parish clerk and vergier, '*the employee*' received an emolument for services rendered and was reimbursed for certain expenses. If further explanatory detail was required then it would be given after possible further discussion.

Frank assured the committee that any changes he made to the application would be sent to the PCC members.

It was understood that once the church's application was successful, an annual report would be required stating any change in personnel of the trustees.

It was agreed that Frank would imminently submit this application. David Tester proposed this resolution, it was seconded by Mike Hill and the vote was unanimous.

6. Purchase of Camera Equipment

(The majority of the discussion on this subject took place within the Treasurer's Report.)

The DAC has confirmed that a full faculty is not required for this project, instead an application for List B works is needed. This still involves getting permission but the process is slightly more streamlined.

A List B application will be submitted by the end of January, informed by a finalised specification.

7. Bell Tower Faculty Update

Richard Peters joined the meeting.

Richard reported that Frank Hawkins had formed a fundraising group and Brian Morley and Christopher Tyrer had worked hard on the details of fundraising applications. Thus, we are now in a good position for making grant applications. The fundraising group does, however, need a vision to share with the grant givers and other donors. The Vision Group has made excellent progress, reported on separately, but it still needs more time to complete its task.

Meanwhile, there has been continued angst about the Bell Tower deadline set by the DAC. To meet their deadline we would need to start work this summer. The PCC agreed to make 'best endeavours' to do this but made it very clear that if it were not possible, we would have to delay, whatever had been required by the interim faculty granted for the repair.

Supported by a passionate email from Tony Sackville, Richard reported that he had returned to the Diocese to ask if they would agree to change their requirement. The Chancellor had responded that, if supported by the DAC, he would accept this. The DAC is 'content.' Consequently, Richard is currently completing the paperwork to formalise this change as part of the final faculty paperwork we must complete, now the public petition related to the works has been posted. We should not intend to delay unnecessarily, but if accepted, we would not be obliged to complete the works until summer 2025. It was pointed out that the required funds need to be raised first before we can enter into any contract.

The PCC expressed grateful thanks to Richard for his continuing hard work on this project.

It was realised that a health and safety issue remained in dealing with the bell tower over the next few years. People would need to access the bells and the roof for routine maintenance. Andrew Collard and Antony Rippon have created a checklist for the risk assessment when working in or on the church building. Antony will continue to review risk assessments and access procedures with Richard and those closely involved with the tower.

Richard told the committee that Derek Brown would re-visit the tower in April to clear the gutters and to ensure that the repair he had put in place was still holding.

TJ pointed out that all those involved in the tower e.g. the steeple keeper, the captain of the tower and the ringers, all need to be included and kept up to date with what was happening. The PCC agreed.

The PCC passed a resolution approving the formal faculty application for 'repairs to tower roof and stonework of church', agreeing to include the request for the 5-year time period for completion (from the date of repair). The resolution was agreed unanimously, being proposed by Antony Rippon and seconded by Arthur Johnson.

8. Vision Group Update

Keith said that the group had met several times since the last PCC meeting.

There had been a good response to the video, asking for thoughts and ideas as to what the vision of the church should be and how this could include our whole community.

Keith told the PCC that they were about halfway towards putting together a vision statement and would report at the next meeting in March. Covid restrictions have made it problematic to interact with the wider community yet, as had been previously hoped.

9. Vicar's Matters

Keith stated that he wanted to avoid increasing PCC fees for weddings and funerals this year.

The ability to offer live streaming for these occasions as well as videos was discussed, as well as the need to set fees for people undertaking these tasks.

In February there will be 2 interactive zoomed services at 6.00 pm on 14th and 28th February. The format will be up to the leader, either Keith or Helen, but the aim is that it will be interactive and personal. An open link will be used. It was noted that St James', Downley had employed this successfully throughout 2020.

Keith commented that many people were beginning to feel disconnected and the new 6.00 pm service was designed to help alleviate this problem.

The idea of people having bread and wine at home whilst watching a communion service was discussed. Keith categorically stated that this would not be communion, nor would the clergy at St Michael and All Angels be alluding to it as such. It would be against Church of England rules and was theologically very complicated. It was accepted however, that there was nothing to stop people doing this within their own home.

Keith proposed from the chair and the council voted unanimously in support of the new services and the agreed setting of fees.

Suspending Public Worship: Some Legal Questions and Answers

Keith told the PCC that they needed to agree to one of two resolutions as to what would be offered and allowed within our church in the immediate future. During this lockdown the government is leaving the extent of church worship to be decided locally.

The PCC decided to accept Resolution 1, as recorded here:

The Vicar and the PCC of St Michael and All Angels, Hughenden, acting jointly, authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B11 and the celebration of Holy Communion as required by Canon B14 during the period of time: 21st January to 28th March inclusive.

It was agreed that these dates would be reviewed at the PCC meeting on 16th March.

The resolution was proposed by Ben Sharp and seconded by Antony Rippon. 12 people voted in favour and there were 3 abstentions.

10. Churchwardens' Matters

Julia raised the subject of the outdoor notice boards. It was agreed that they needed large, bold posters/notices and Ben Sharp agreed to liaise with the chair of the communications committee, Jane Tyrer.

11. Parish Safeguarding

There was nothing to report.

12. Electoral Roll

Will and Lizzie Hurrell will be removed from the electoral roll as they have now moved away.

13. AOB

No items had been declared and the meeting was concluded at 9.51 pm.

Keith closed in prayer.

ACTIONS

- **Julia will contact Mike Dean re: NT liaison.**
- **Standing and Finance committee will ensure the printer is on the agenda for their next meeting.**
- **Brian will add a variants column to his accounts.**
- **Ben will facilitate the purchase and installation of camera equipment, hopefully by Easter.**
- **Frank will imminently apply for charity status for the PCC.**
- **Richard to submit application for the required faculty, with regard to the Bell Tower.**
- **Keith to report to PCC with a draft vision statement at next meeting.**
- **Ben and Julia to liaise with Jane regarding notice boards.**

Susan Brice
23rd January 2021