

Hughenden Parochial Church Council

Minutes of Meeting - Thursday 13th May 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, Ben Sharp, Matt Skillen, David Tester, Christopher Tyrer
Secretary: Susan Brice

1. Opening Prayer

Keith opened in prayer.

He then explained that some members and the secretary would be late joining the meeting as they were attending the Ascension Day service.

2. Apologies

Antony Rippon sent his apologies.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16th March 2021

The minutes were accepted and approved without amendments and will be posted on the website.

4. Matters Arising not on the agenda.

Looking at the action points, it was established that Mark Sherrington had been asked to trim in the churchyard. Also, Roger and Keith had met to address the diocesan safeguarding form.

It was commented by Keith that we should be using the term 'Standing Committee' rather than 'Standing and Finance Committee.' This will be corrected where necessary.

5. Treasurer's Report

Brian began by saying that we were about one third of the way through the year and the church's finances were in a reasonable state due to donations and also to the fact that none of the direct debits had been cut.

He reported that £1,700 of VAT had been reclaimed on professional fees and £8,500 in grants had been received for the streaming equipment as well as £5,000 in donations from the church congregation.

It was noted that the planned gift day did not happen this year. However, utility bills have been lower than normal and we have overpaid for electricity so that overall it was expected that we would break even financially over the year. The level of working capital was perfectly acceptable and the CCLA savings account had not been touched.

There was a discussion about how people might be thanked for their financial assistance with the streaming equipment, the Belltower project and in general over this difficult period.

Brian proposed that the 2020 accounts he had offered to the PCC be authorised.

Ben seconded this and the PCC members voted unanimously in favour.

The PCC were then shown a 3 minute film about giving called Generosity.

Afterwards there was comment that as yet the congregation was ignorant of the need to rebuild, both financially and as a physical church. Several methods were discussed for asking for money and for informing the congregation. Conclusions and agreement proved to be elusive. It was accepted that the lockdown situation had given some people a great opportunity to save but it was also commented that others had experienced financial hardship. Ben suggested that a focus group was needed to decide how to inform the congregation of the current situation and how to move forward. Frank Hawkins agreed to lead this with the Standing Committee and also to co-opt Richard Peters.

Frank told the meeting that the Standing Committee had agreed that the Outlook magazine should be given free but with the invitation for people to donate towards its publication.

6. The Belltower Project

Richard Peters joined the meeting to report on the Belltower Project.

Richard stated that there was a need for a big fundraising project soon and that this had been put off as it was inappropriate during the pandemic.

A discussion took place about the possibility of asking people personally for contributions. TJ commented that this would need to be done very tactfully, taking care to treat everyone the same.

Christopher expressed the need for some urgency in telling the congregation what was needed and suggested a display at the back of church in time for the APCM.

Several people were unhappy that there was still no overall, final figure for what money would be needed to complete the Belltower Project.

Frank told the meeting that firm quotes for the repairs to the Belltower would be available soon. Richard added that Derek Brown was looking at the engineers' and architects' specifications and was pricing the operation.

Richard reiterated that the diocesan faculty gave us until 2025 to do this work but that there was a firm intention to complete it in a timely manner. He also stated that we need to raise money before we can sign a contract.

Brian commented that we have enough unrestricted funds to move forward.

Richard was thanked for his input and then left the meeting.

7. The Vision Group

Questions were asked of the Vision Group, particularly with regard to whether they knew what projects they wanted to undertake and if they could be priced.

There was some confusion over the role of the Vision Group within the overall Belltower Project. It was however stated that the group were moving forward well in a prayerful manner and intended to consult the community within the next few weeks.

8. Vicar's Matters

There were no matters to be discussed.

9. Churchwardens' Matters

Frank said that there was now a calendar of social and outreach events going through the summer and the autumn.

He invited Mike to talk about the Nature Quest event. Mike said this would take place on the weekend of the 12th and 13th June but that there were many organisational details still to be sorted out. He requested help with refreshments and also discussed the need for

shelter and a decision as to where exactly this should be. The PCC were happy to agree that this event should go ahead.

The matter of the large waste bin at the bottom of the drive was raised. 2 problems were commented on. The first being that it is unsightly and an eyesore where it is currently stored. The second problem is that it is frequently left on the wrong side of the gate and sometimes the gate is not closed, thus leaving the churchyard open to the cattle.

Brian said that he was in contact with Biffa and was hopeful the problem would be sorted out. It was suggested that some sort of fenced enclosure be created to largely hide the bin from view. Julia and Frank were looking at this proposition.

10. Parish safeguarding

Julia gave the report on behalf of Roger.

She said that Roger had now signed into the C of E safeguarding portal. Both he and Julia had done the leadership training and were now looking at DBS renewals and training needs. The intention was to raise the issue of safeguarding across the parish, possibly using Outlook to inform both the congregation and the community.

It was noted that there was one active safeguarding concern of which Keith was aware.

11. Electoral Roll

There was no report.

12. AOB

A Flower Festival has been suggested for the Bank Holiday weekend of 28th-30th August. Keith commented that this would be dependent on COVID restrictions. Sylvia Clark would be in charge. Julia said that she would organise refreshments but could not be there on the day. It was agreed that there was money in the flower fund that could be accessed and that visitors would be asked for donations that would go to church funds.

The PCC was happy for this event to take place and it was commented that it would hopefully bring more of the community into the church.

Keith closed in prayer and the meeting ended at 9.21 pm.

ACTIONS

- **Frank Hawkins agreed to chair a focus group to move the Belltower project forward and to decide how best to inform the congregation of the plans for the Belltower and the finances needed to complete the whole operation.**
- **Julia and Frank would look into the problem of the red Biffa bin and aim to arrange for the construction of a fenced enclosure at the bottom of the church drive.**
- **Mike would oversee the running of the Nature Quest on the weekend of the 12th and 13th June.**
- **The Vision Group will report back to the next PCC meeting once they have consulted with the community.**