**PARISH OF ST PETER & ST PAUL TONBRIDGE**

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 22 MARCH 2021**

**ON ZOOM AT 8.00 pm.**

PRESENT: The Rev’d. Wendy Carr;David Balcombe; Jean Bowring; Brian Buck; Adam Calvert *(Churchwarden)*; Dianne Dartnell; Minnie Fraser-Allen; Robert Kidson; Patricia King; Felicity Layton; Helen Longley; Sally Musson; Les Naylor *(Treasurer)*; David Robins *(PCC Secretary);* Mike Seaman; Ray Tanner;Paul White *(Churchwarden)*.

David Balcombe began the meeting with a reading from Matthew Ch 10 vv 2 – 4 and prayer

Paul White in the chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Jeremy King was reported as absent.

2. CORRESPONDENCE.

The Secretary reported the receipt of a message from Pam Calvert :

Dear Mr. Robins,

I am writing to you as Secretary to the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St. Peter & St. Paul Tonbridge to ask if I could have permission from the P.C.C. to apply for the Church to become ‘Hong Kong Ready’.

As I am sure you are aware, a large number of Chinese people will soon be moving to live in Britain. I have approached the organisation UK/HK to make enquiries but did not give the name of the Church, explaining that we are in a time of interregnum.

A website was launched on 12th February at St. Martin in the Fields giving information for new arrivals and attended by Dame Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London.

If we were to apply to become a ‘Hong Kong Ready Church’ we would need to make an application and give the name of the Church and details of our Safeguarding/ Data Protection Officer. This is because some personal details may be shared in the process of informing us of people who may need help in our area.

This seems like a wonderful opportunity for us, as a Church, to reach out and share God’s love and compassion with people who have found themselves with no choice but to come and live in this country. I do not envisage that we would have a large number of people referred to us, unlike central London Churches or Churches which are in the suburbs of the city.

I do hope the PCC will consider this and be willing to give me permission to make further enquiries and hopefully set us up as a ‘Hong Kong Ready Church’.

Thank you. Yours sincerely, Pam Calvert.

It was agreed, after some discussion, that Pam Calvert should be encouraged to make further enquiries on behalf of the PCC.

3. FINANCE AND TREASURER’S REPORT.

(i) Update on 2021 figures.

Les Naylor had presented the summary of funds, together with income and expenditure, to the end of February 2021. He noted that the situation had remained relatively stable during this period. He also said that the unusually large amount shown in the Kondoa fund was temporary, and that transfer of most of the total to Kondoa was made in the early days of March.

(ii) Annual Report 2020.

The report had been passed to the Independent Examiners (formerly Auditors), Les Naylor said, although it was not its final form. It did include the report from the Independent Examiners. He asked that any comments or proof errors be sent to him as soon as possible. The final version had to be ready at the beginning of May, in time for the APCM on 26 May. **ACTION: All**

(iii) Diocesan Offer Certificate 2020.

It was noted that the PCC had received a certificate from the Diocese acknowledging the parish’s financial contribution of £112,000 in 2020 and thanking the parish for it. The thanks would be passed on to the parish in the next newsletter.

(iv) Appeal for funds.

Following Les’s appeal for financial support for specific projects made during the on-line service on Sunday, he reported that he had already received several responses. In response to a question asking for a breakdown of the £40,000 estimated cost of AV upgrading, he said that it was intended that the work be carried out in three phases. The first phase was costed at about £2,000, and the second at £25,000. It was noted that high quality AV equipment needed for live broadcasting from the parish church was expensive. The broadband connection also required significant upgrade.

(v) Regular giving.

Les Naylor agreed to send to members comparative figures for 2019 and 2020 of regular donations to the general fund. **ACTION: Les Naylor**

(vi) Thanks to Les Naylor.

Paul White thanked the Treasurer, as he is to stand down after the APCM. Paul noted that Les had been treasurer for most of the last 15 years in three stretches. He reminded the PCC that Les had also given significant support to the development of IT and the website, as well as handling the large response to the Life-giving questions project. Paul asked the council to let him know of any who might replace Les as treasurer. He observed that strong support is available for the role in the finance team. **ACTION: All**

4. SAFEGUARDING

(i) DBS checks and training.

Paul White reported that work was still being done on closing gaps in the DBS and training records of PCC members.

(ii) Safer recruitment.

Paul White reported that he and Adam Calvert had met the Diocesan safeguarding officer, Greg Barry, and learnt about the new training programme bring issued later in the year. Paul outlined the three strands of safer recruitment: role description, code of conduct and references. He noted that the first two were relatively straightforward, but that obtaining references, particularly in retrospect, was more problematic. There was significant discussion and the following points were made.

(a)The code of conduct, produced by the Church of England, will be issued to volunteers annually. It was also felt that there should be specific comment on the need for volunteers to be discreet when they were aware of safeguarding issues and that these should only disclosed to the appropriate people i.e. the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Wider disclosure within our church context or when talking with friends outside the church should not occur.

(b) It was agreed that retrospective references for long-standing volunteers are probably only needed for those in sensitive and responsible positions with children. Greg Barry’s advice was to apply the principle proportionately.

(c) It was clear that one reference should come from a referee outside the church family.

(d) The question of requiring annual renewal of references requires further consideration.

(e) The position of young leaders was discussed. It was noted that they were not left in sole charge of younger children and that they did undergo safeguarding training.

(f) It was emphasised how vital it was that safeguarding and safer recruitment became part of our ‘core’. Following the publication of the IICSA (Independent inquiry into child sexual abuse) report into the Church of England we had to be fastidious in our policies and their implementation. Wendy Carr said that there was a national ‘Safeguarding Sunday’ in October 2021, and Greg Barry was happy to be invited to speak to the parish.

5. RENEWAL OF REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION TO SUSPEND SERVICES.

Following the email communications from the churchwardens on 26 February and 15 March about the proposals for reopening our churches, the response from the PCC had been unanimously in favour. However, Paul White explained that the timing required a request for a short extension to the Episcopal Dispensation to suspend services.

The following resolution was proposed by Patricia King and seconded by Mike Seaman:

***The Area Dean of Tonbridge and the Church Wardens, as Sequestrators, and the Parochial Church Council of St Peter and St Paul, Tonbridge, acting jointly, request that the Bishop 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 on a regular basis for the period between 1 April 2021 and 30 May 2021 (inclusive).***

The resolution was passed unanimously.

6. VACANCY MATTERS.

(i) Parish profile.

Sally Musson reported that the profile was almost ready to be passed to the PCC for comment and eventual approval. It had been sent to CPAS, the Archdeacon and Area Dean, and their comments incorporated. She intended to circulate it to the PCC in the next day or two.

(ii) Parish representatives.

The council noted that the selection process had resulted in David Balcombe and Alison Minton being chosen as the representatives. At the Section 11 meeting Alison would be co-opted on to the council before the appointments were formally approved. Paul White agreed to talk to Yolanda Roberts about publicising this news to the parish.

(iii) Section 11 meeting.

It had been agreed by the Standing Committee that the Section 11 meeting would be held at 8 pm on Tuesday 6 April 2021. At that meeting the Parish Representatives would be formally appointed, the Parish Profile approved and a decision about advertising the vacancy made. Sally Musson reported that some progress had been made in producing a draft advertisement for the Church Times, and that Alison Minton and David Balcombe would take over responsibility for that and the final version of the profile. Following the meeting the secretary would complete Form 34 for the patron and Diocese, summarising the outcome of the meeting.

Adam Calvert reminded the PCC of the timetable suggested by CPAS which, if held to, would lead to candidate interviews on 17 June 2021.

7. STAFF MATTERS

(i) Jane Mata’s role.

It was noted that a breakdown of how the work done by Jane was to be redistributed was recorded in the Standing Committee minutes of 22 February 2021, item 5.

(ii) Administration.

Adam Calvert reported that, as it would be a large task to undertake at this busy time, it had been decided that the assessment and possible reorganisation of the administration of the parish should take place once the new vicar has been appointed.

8. MAG MATTERS.

The minutes of the Mission Action Group meeting on 15 February 2021 had been circulated and were noted. Discussion 0f the paper on options for funding mission partners was postponed to the next meeting as the paper had not been circulated.

9. UPDATES AND FEEDBACK.

(i) Re-opening churches.

The churchwardens reported that they were to meet with Jane Higgs to look at seating plans and availability of volunteers in order to fulfil the plans for attended services. Wendy Carr

explained that the programme of a series of ten-minute thoughts spread over six hours was intended to give parishioners the flexibility to celebrate Good Friday as was most appropriate for them. The projection in the parish church of the streamed service on Easter morning had two purposes. It was intended to enable those living alone to be in the church building with other worshippers while taking part in the service, and also to give those without internet access a chance to join the service. It was explained that there would be no leader in the church, simply a projection on the screen. **ACTION: The churchwardens**

In response to a question from Helen Longley about restarting bellringing, Wendy Carr said that they still awaited information from the Diocese.

(ii) Alpha courses.

Wendy Carr reported that the Monday and Tuesday Alpha courses had been attended by 24 people and finished next week. She reported good times, and this was supported by Felicity Layton. The intention was to consider running Alpha again in the autumn to enable recent participants to invite others.

(iii) Christian Aid 75th anniversary.

Helen Longley drew the PCC’s attention to the important anniversary of the founding of Christian Aid this year. She reminded the council that the foundation was in response to the needs of the millions of refugees in the aftermath of WW2. She said that Christian Aid week this year is 10 – 16 May, and expressed the hope that this could be marked in our service on Sunday 16 May with a special appeal and donation of funds. Paul White suggested that the April parish newsletter could contain information and an appeal encouraging donations.

(iv) 2021 Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) date.

In order to increase the chances of being permitted to hold the APCM in church, it had been decided to move the date to Wednesday 26May, 2021.

(v) Meeting schedule.

The provisional schedule of Standing Committee and PCC meeting for 2021 -2022 had been circulated.

(vi) Living in Love and Faith report.

Paul White reminded the PCC to look at the resources related to this report suggested by Mark Brown.

10. STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS MONDAY 22FEBRUARY 2021 & MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2021.

The minutes of these meetings were noted and the correction of the date of the Section 11 meeting to Tuesday 6 April 2021 in item 5(iii) of the 22 February minutes.

11. PCC MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2021.

The minutes of this meeting had been approved and were noted.

12. MATTERS ARISING FROM 11 ABOVE.

There were no matters arising.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

(i) Kondoa.

Ray Tanner presented an update on matters in Kondoa. Bishop Given had been suffering from typhoid but was now slowly recovering. The St Peter and St Paul School now had 92 pupils and a new teacher had been appointed. He passed on thanks for the donations which had contributed to the school fees of the children. The Bible College had 200 students and the Church Mission Society had appointed a new ordained tutor with a young family, but the timing of his arrival was not known.

(ii) The Vicarage and garden.

David Balcombe and Ray Tanner had met the new property director for the Diocese to talk about the Diocesan plans for the Vicarage extension and garden development. These have been previously described. It was clear that the Diocese intends to proceed with the plans. They had explained that the parish was unhappy with the plan to move part of the site to Glebe land and asked for another meeting to pursue this further.

14. IDENTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS.

There were none.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS.

PCC: Section 11 meeting Tuesday 6 April 2021

Standing Committee: Mon 12 April and Mon 17 May 2021

APCM & PCC meeting: Wed 26 May 2021

Paul White closed the meeting in prayer at 9.45 pm.