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

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 12 JULY 2021 ON ZOOM AT 8.00 pm.**

PRESENT: David Balcombe; Jean Bowring; Brian Buck; Adam Calvert *(Churchwarden)*; the Rev’d. Wendy Carr *(Associate Vicar);* Dianne Dartnell; David Farquharson; Steve Higgs; Robert Kidson; Jeremy King; Patricia King; Felicity Layton; Helen Longley; Alison Minton; Sally Musson; David Robins *(PCC Secretary);* Ray Tanner *(Treasurer)*; Paul White *(Churchwarden)*.

Paul White in the chair.

Jean Bowring opened the meeting with a reading from 1 Peter 4 vv 7 – 13 from the Message version, and prayer.

1. Apologies for absence: Susan Knight

2. **CORRESPONDENCE.**

(i) Bishop Simon’s letter to role -holders in the Diocese had been forwarded to members.

(ii) The letter from the Diocesan Property Director relating to the Vicarage was dealt with under item 6.

3. **FINANCE and TREASURER’S REPORT**

(i) **Update on 2021 half-year figures**. *(Appendices 1 & 2)* Ray Tanner reported that the income and expenditure are in balance and in line with the budget at the half-year point. He noted that £7,500 had been transferred from the General Fund to the Youth Fund As the parish’s Youth & Children’s Minister, Andy Page’s salary is charged to the Youth Fund which is a restricted fund established exclusively for youth work. However, as a component of Andy’s work in recent months has been related to administrative tasks not directly related to youth work, it was felt appropriate to compensate the Youth Fund accordingly

(ii) **Projection for 2021 and 2022**. Ray Tanner said that while the parish had received very faithful giving for the first six months, the balance of income for the year is under serious pressure owing to natural causes and movement of parishioners to other parts of the country. He warned that the impact could result in a £10,000 shortfall in income this year, but more importantly up to £40,000 in 2022. He said that he and the Finance Committee are working on different scenarios to mitigate this, and will keep the PCC informed as the 2022 budget is prepared.

In response to a question he reported that a legacy of £20,000 had recently been received and that he was in discussion with the family about its potential use. He noted that legacies often came with restrictions which limited how such funds could be spent by the parish.

(iii) **Stewardship Advisor.** With the departure of Jonathan and Ali Harber from the parish, the Finance Committee is seeking a new Stewardship Advisor.

(iv) **Kondoa link.** Ray Tanner Tanner reminded the PCC that the Diocese had made a grant of £5,000 in respect of the 2021 youth trip to Kondoa. As this trip had been cancelled, the grant had been returned. He also explained that the balance of the balance of the money (£7500) raised from donor across the parish to assist with school fees for 2021 has been sent to Kondoa. There are currently 97 children in the St Peter and St Paul School there.

4. **SAFEGUARDING.**

(i) A memo had been received from the churchwardens. *(Appendix 3)* under the following headings:

1. Provide a short reminder of the PCC’s role

2. Provide an update on remediation actions.

3. Seek approval for the appointment of volunteers into the required roles related to safeguarding.

4. Introduce the idea of ‘Safeguarding Sunday’.

In response to a question about the responsibility of the PCC in the event of a safeguarding incident arising, Paul White said that, as he understood it, providing the PCC had put the correct structure and systems in place, then the day-to-day management of an incident lay with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Vicar and the Diocese.

(ii) Proposed by Ray Tanner and seconded by Patricia King, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

***This Parochial Church Council approves the appointments:***

***Parish Safeguarding Officer Amanda Harris***

***Lead Recruiter[[1]](#footnote-1) & DBS Administrator Paul White***

***DBS checkers Jeremy King***

***Yolanda Roberts.***

(iii) Adam Calvert appealed for more help in writing ‘role descriptions’ for volunteer roles in the parish. Currently he and Patricia King were undertaking this significant task but more help was needed.

5.  **YOUTH & CHILDREN’S WORK.**

A written report had been received from Andy Page and Emily Speed *(Appendix 4)*. It was agreed that discussion of this item would be moved to item 10 (i) ‘Re-opening of churches’.

6. **VACANCY MATTERS: Vicarage development.**

(i) A letter from the Diocesan Property Director had been received in reply to the PCC letter of 27 May 2021. Plans for the proposed development of the Vicarage had also been received. *(Appendices 5 & 6).* David Balcombe reported that there had been no further development since the receipt of the letter. He noted that the most recent version of the vicarage extension showed reduction in size and cost, including the installation of a flat roof. No proposal for the length of lease for the Coach House and car park had yet been offered by the Diocese.

(ii) The following questions were raised and answers given:

1. Are there any plans for improvement to the Coach House? No.

2. Are there any plans for solar panels on south-facing roofs? No.

3. Is there an opportunity for the parish to benefit financially from the proceeds of the sale? No.

4. Are there plans to mitigate the loss of parking? Not at present.

(iii) Ray Tanner made the following observations:

1. The Diocese will negotiate with TMBC to gain permission to fell the copper beech tree which is in the line of the proposed access drive.

2. Any change to the proposed access to the development land would require agreement by the PCC.

3. The parish needs to take a pragmatic approach to this matter. Points of principle were agreed by the PCC when the scheme was first proposed by the Diocese in 2008, and this weakens our opposition to parts of the scheme now. However he reassured the PCC that they would be kept fully informed of progress.

7. **STAFFING MATTERS.**

(ii) **Staff working arrangements.** Adam Calvert said that he intended to meet with each member of staff to clarify their working arrangements as lock down restrictions ease. He stated that in future a more flexible approach could be adopted so that staff could continue to work partly from home.

8. **MISSION ACTION GROUP.**

(i) The minutes of the most recent meeting of the Mission Action Group (MAG) had been circulated. *(Appendix 7)*

(ii) Memos setting out the proposed changes to the MAG Terms of Reference and the reasons for the changes had been sent to the PCC. *(Appendix 8 & 9).*

Proposed by Jean Bowring and seconded by Jeremy King, the Council passed the following resolution unanimously:

***This PCC notes the proposal from MAG for modified Terms of Reference and approves the changes.***

9. **PCC MATTERS.**

(i) **Members’ responsibilities.** Adam Calvert drew the Council’s attention to notes from CPAS for new PCC members. He mentioned four points:

1. Please attend meetings in person; no substitutes.

2. Maintain confidentiality if requested.

3. Read the associated paperwork before the meeting.

4. Be involved in follow up work.

He also asked that members consider offering to support the work in particular areas of interest:

a. Policy.

b. Communications.

c. Re-engagement after Covid.

d. Pastoral work.

e. Community links.

f. Technology.

To this list was added Eco Church (see item 10(iv)).

(ii) **Financial Liability and Trustee eligibility forms**. These had been circulated to the PCC and were due to be signed and returned to the Secretary.

10. **UPDATES FOR THE PCC.**

(i) **Re-opening of churches**. A paper from the churchwardens had been circulated *(Appendix 10).* Paul White noted that the paper had been written in late June hence before the Government’s announcement on the move to Stage 4 of the Covid roadmap made earlier in the day.

(a) Youth and Children’s work. It was noted that all churches across the country were finding this area to be a struggle. A combination of exhaustion from home-schooling, confusion over recent self-isolation and other family demands in different generations meant that parents were giving low priority to engaging children with church activities. It was felt that personal home visits were important for re-establishing contacts, but these were difficult to arrange. Wendy Carr was pleased to report that she was encouraged that the second ‘Worship in the wild’ had attracted more families.

(b) Church Services. Sally Musson said that St Saviour’s was planning to re-open the 10 am service of Morning Prayer in August on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. St Philip’s was planning outdoor worship on 17 July and 14 August at 11.30 am. The latest Diocesan digest indicated that the Places of Worship Taskforce is to meet on 14 July, and updates to the Church of England advice are expected by the 17July. Until then, decisions about distancing, mask-wearing and singing would be put on hold. It was noted that rapid and complete re-opening might frighten some but encourage others. It was agreed that the St Saviour’s service would serve as test cases for future action. Reference was made to the responses to Living Questions and it was hoped that we would do more than simply return to business as usual.

(ii) **Deanery report**. Sally Musson referred the council to the recent minutes *(Appendix 11)*.

(iii) **Diocesan Poverty and Hope Appeal 2021.** It was agreed that the parish should support the 2021 Diocesan Poverty and Hope Appeal.

(iv) **Eco Church**. Helen Longley introduced the Eco Church award scheme administered by A Rocha. She said that this was important in the context of the approaching climate conference COP26 in Glasgow in November. She also drew attention to the 4th and 5th marks of mission of the Church of England:

‘4*. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.*

*5.To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.’*

The Eco Church survey covered five areas:

Worship and teaching,

Buildings,

Land,

Community and global engagement, and

Lifestyle.

Paul White commented that the Environmental Working Group of the CofE was promoting such schemes and that the survey was extensive. It was agreed that Helen Longley should form a group, register the parish in the scheme, and return to the PCC when the survey has been completed. Helen Longley requested that a member of the property group be involved as the parish owns a significant number of buildings. Jean Bowring said that the Diocesan Synod had passed a resolution supporting the aim of become carbon net-zero by 2030.

The Chairman drew the meeting to a close with Grace at this point, the time being 21.50.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)