



# **St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury**

## **Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 20 May 2024**

**Present:** David Houghton (Chair)  
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech  
Sue Cooper  
William Hopkinson  
Anne Scull  
Peter Scull  
James Smith  
Will Wake

**Apologies:** Stephen Cheetham, Maria Dineen, Keith Hilton-Turvey, Ian James, Richard Nightingale, Sue Simpson

**1253.** In the absence of the rector, who was sick, David Houghton chaired the meeting. David opened with Psalm 111 and prayer.

### **Minutes of meetings held on 20 March and 10 April**

**1254.** These were agreed unanimously.

### **Minutes of the Standing Committee on 7 May**

**1255.** These minutes were noted.

### **Safeguarding**

**1256.** Nothing to report.

### **Vision and awayday follow-up**

**1257.** Cath Beech had circulated a summary of progress thus far. A draft flyer listing prayer opportunities had been circulated. Once comments had been received from PCC members this would be amended and circulated to the whole church. There was a discussion about whether it might be better to recommence giving notices during services, as some people clearly didn't read either the pew sheet or the slides shown before the service started.

## **PCC Code of Conduct**

**1258.** Cath Beech introduced the proposed Code of Conduct (see Annex A). This was based on a diocesan template. There was concern that the fourth indent might be held to preclude the development of action where a previous decision had been shown to require amendment, or where events had overtaken an earlier policy or decision. Andrew Beech will redraft and circulate for comment.

**Action: Andrew Beech**

## **APCM resolution**

**1259.** The churchwardens proposed that this issue would best be dealt with by holding an additional PCC meeting. The Rural Dean will be asked to chair the meeting.

**Action: Churchwardens**

## **Policies and procedures**

**1260.** Stephen Cheetham had submitted a revised Finance Procedures and Delegated Authorities document. It was not clear how this differed from the previous documents. Stephen was asked to supply a revised document showing the changes proposed. It was also agreed that the document should show dates by when things had to happen.

**Action: Stephen Cheetham**

**1261.** Other policies and procedures to be considered are: health and safety, food hygiene, lone working and safeguarding. All for the July meeting.

**Action: Cath Beech/Sue Simpson/Keith Hilton-Turvey**

## **Deanery changes**

**1262.** The merger of the Ledbury and Bromyard deaneries had been proposed by the diocese. The PCC had no comments to offer.

## **Sunday morning readings**

**1263.** James Smith commented on the shortage of volunteers to read three lessons each service. It was agreed that the three lessons could be read by just two readers where necessary.

**Action: James Smith**

## **Finance**

**1264.** Stephan Cheetham had circulated a treasurer's report. This was noted, subject to the day to day running costs being separated from items of capital expenditure.

**1265.** David Houghton will speak to Stephen Cheetham and Ayo Adewale about presenting the need for individuals to give more to the church to the congregation.

**Action: David Houghton**

## **EcoChurch**

**1266.** The diocese had put forward St Michaels as a potential Net Zero Carbon Demonstrator Church. Andrew Beech presented a paper (see Annex B) setting out what the consequences might be. If the PCC agreed to proceed with the recommendations a volunteer would need to be found to act as EcoChurch champion. The recommendations were agreed unanimously, and Will Wake was appointed EcoChurch champion.

## **Fabric**

**1267.** Andrew Beech reported:

a) that the Fabric Sub-Committee had sought tenders for advice on a replacement heating system;

**Action: Fabric Sub-Committee**

b) the roof valley work was expected to commence the following week;

c) Plans for refurbishment of the upper rooms had been received from the architect. Whilst renovation of these rooms was a recommendation of the Quinquennial Report, delivery of this would have to await funding. However potential structural problems with the floor had been found, and it would be necessary to lift more of the floorboards to assess the situation more thoroughly;

d) There had been no further progress with the catering unit;

e) Further checks had revealed problems with the proposed castors for use on the front pews. Andrew Beech would contact the DAC Secretary. There were a number of calls for the front pews of the church to be removed permanently;

**Action: Andrew Beech**

f) The report on the wooden chest near the north door has revealed that repair would cost £1,500. It was agreed that this could not be afforded;

g) Lord Biddulph had agreed to pay for repair of the two monuments in the Biddulph tomb area that needed urgent work. Andrew Beech would contact him to make the arrangements;

**Action: Andrew Beech**

h) A second dehumidifier was required to protect the organ from damage. Andrew Beech proposed, seconded by Peter Scull, that a further one be purchased. This was agreed unanimously.

## **St Katherine's**

**1268.** Once the Deed of Surrender is signed, all the church's belongings would need to be removed from the hall. An inventory had been drawn up, and consideration was being given to those items that the church wished to retain. If any other suggestions for retention were made, the person making the suggestion would need to indicate where the items concerned would be stored, as no more space was available at the church. Other items could be sold to LEAF for a nominal sum.

### **Matters arising**

**1269.** William Hopkinson was concerned that the text of the Terms of Reference for the Worship Review and Development Group agreed at the previous meeting was deficient, as it did not refer to the need to comply with Canon Law. Andrew Beech will redraft and recirculate.

**Action: Andrew Beech**

**1270.** There had been no progress on the church silver.

**Action: David Houghton**

### **Other Business**

**1271.** Although a number of individuals from the church were involved with Ledbury Foodbank, it was felt that more could be done to give the connection greater prominence within the church. Peter Scull agreed to take this on.

**Action: Peter Scull**

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 17 July

The meeting ended at 20.59 with prayer.

### PCC Code of Conduct

**A.1** After each APCM it is good practice for the new PCC to agree and sign the Code of Conduct. These 'ground rules' are useful in facilitating trust and accountability, and in establishing appropriate boundaries. The PCC meets to discuss and decide on matters of the business of the Church, and as such meetings are expected to be respectful, and conducted with grace and love.

*(This list is not exhaustive and should be altered in agreement by the PCC each year.)*

**A.2** Contributions to discussions are made through the chair (usually the Vicar or Lay Chair).

- Members are asked to arrive promptly, fully prepared to contribute to the meeting. If supporting papers are needed by the agenda, they should be sent to the Rector or Secretary prior to the meeting, and distributed to the Council in good time to allow for preparation.
- Allow all members to speak at reasonable length and without interruption, listening carefully to one another. Respect each other's thinking.
- In matters of disagreement, focus on challenge the idea, not attacking the person. Constructive and robust discussions can create good results, however behaviour that tips into bullying (whether of clergy or laity) will lead to long term negative effects.
- Discussions at PCC are confidential. Decisions and minutes belong to the whole church, and those on the roll are to have access to minutes, except those the PCC regards as confidential.
- Majority votes are to be accepted as decisive and final.
- Each member is there to represent the views of church members, not just themselves.
- Keep comments on topic and avoid repetition. Respect each other's time.
- Collectively and individually, avoid undertaking activities which may place at risk the church's reputation.
- All members are expected to treat each other with respect, regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

Date:

We, the undersigned, agree to abide by the PCC Code of Conduct:

### Greening St Michaels

#### Introduction

1. In July 2020 the General Synod passed a resolution committing the Church of England to achieving Net Zero Carbon status by 2030. More details were agreed at the General Synod in July 2022. The immediate impact was that the faculty rules were amended to make the introduction of carbon-friendly measures easier.
2. The impact of this on St Michaels in the short term has been, unfortunately, negative. Had our gas boiler failed before the faculty changes we could simply have replaced it with another one. Now we are no longer allowed to unless we can demonstrate that there is no alternative that does not use fossil fuels. This will require much greater expenditure in hiring consultants to examine all the various alternatives (and probably much greater expenditure in the replacement heating system itself), a considerable amount of additional paperwork and a much longer timescale before the replacement heating system is up and running. The Fabric Sub-Committee is having to work on this.

#### Net Carbon Zero Demonstrator Church

3. There are some funding opportunities from the central church to help churches meet Net Zero Carbon, which could help with assessing and delivering a new heating system for St Michaels. The diocese is considering 3-4 churches that could be put forward for the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Demonstrator Churches grant scheme. This scheme offers a package of support for parish churches to move towards reaching Net Zero Carbon. As we are known to be looking to replace our defunct gas heating system, St Michaels is one of the churches that the diocese has entered for Stage 1 support. This would include a free or subsidized energy audit through parish buying; access to independent technical advice service (desk based); access to a fundraising consultant; and up to a maximum of £15,000+VAT towards technical studies or other professional fees (including heating consultants, architects' structural surveys, planning permission and/or faculty fees, and if needed project management, or funding towards a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan) required to deliver a carbon net zero heating system for St Michaels.
4. If we wish to take this forward we need to be willing to meet the following criteria over the next few months:
  - Be a registered Eco Church and ideally have achieved or be working towards an award;
  - Have submitted an Energy Footprint Tool return;
  - Have a basic Net Zero Carbon Action Plan in place;
  - Put the church on a 100% green energy tariff, or commit to changing to such upon contract renewal.
5. We would also need to be willing to participate in project monitoring and evaluation, and be prepared to be visited by other churches, to contribute to national case studies and evaluations, including potential photographs, films and written materials which may be published online or elsewhere.

#### Practical considerations

6. There are a number of difficulties facing the church that have already been identified:
  - a) Firstly we are a Grade I listed medieval building and hence would not be allowed, even if we asked nicely, to make substantial adaptations to the structure to save energy. For instance the building is uninsulated. It would cost a fortune to insulate the roof of the church, and permission to do so is highly unlikely to be obtained even if the money could be found

because of the visual impact of the insulation. The same considerations apply to double glazing the windows. This might lessen our attractiveness to those operating the Eco-Church scheme;

- b) Secondly we have no direct control over the churchyard, which is the responsibility of the Town Council. The churchyard is one area where significant improvements to its conservation status could be achieved. But whilst we could encourage the Town Council to do so, we cannot force them to. And they are as cash-strapped as the church is;
  - c) Thirdly some alternative environmentally friendlier heating systems have already had to be ruled out. The floors of the nave, and probably of the Chapter House, are solid concrete, ruling out the installation of underfloor heating. Heat pumps are useful only in well insulated buildings. St Michaels has no insulation and no realistic prospect of getting any (see above). Furthermore ground source heat pumps would necessitate digging up much of the churchyard, with all the concomitant difficulties of disturbing graves, and the considerable expense of an archaeological survey. Air source heat pumps are noisy, and we should have consideration for our neighbours, who would be disturbed by them.
- 7. The Energy Footprint Tool has existed on the environment and climate change section of the Church of England website for some time. Churches have been asked for some time to submit annual returns. This has never been done for St Michaels (and no-one has ever chased up its absence), but would now need to be done. Probably the work to be done by consultants advising on the replacement heating system might help towards working out how to use the Tool and to complete it.
  - 8. There are a number of more minor changes being promoted by EcoChurch that we could fairly easily meet, such as collecting rainwater from the roof, installing dual-flush buttons to the toilets, using nothing but environmentally friendly cleaning products etc. Many of the EcoChurch suggestions are already practiced within the church.

#### Next steps

- 9. Given the timescales, the diocese has already nominated St Michaels as a demonstrator church. At this stage this doesn't commit us to anything and we could withdraw should we wish to. However the professional help and grants potentially on offer could be extremely useful as we seek a replacement heating system.
- 10. The members of the Fabric Sub-Committee are heavily involved in church work already, and it would be useful if someone else, preferably someone with enthusiasm for improving the environment and fighting climate change, could be appointed as the church's Eco-Church champion. The champion would be expected to take forward all of the measures listed in paragraph 4 above, working closely with the Fabric Sub-Committee and the church treasurer.
- 11. The PCC is invited to agree the recommendation at paragraph 10, above, and to identify someone to appoint to the post of EcoChurch champion.

Andrew Beech

Chair, Fabric Sub-Committee

May 2024