



St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 17 July 2024

Present: Keith Hilton-Turvey (Chair)
David Houghton (Churchwarden)
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)
Andrew Beech
Sue Cooper
William Hopkinson
Ian James
Richard Nightingale
James Smith
Tim Keyes (for items on the tower and bells and on volunteering only)

Apologies: Stephen Cheetham, Maria Dineen, Anne Scull, Peter Scull, Sue Simpson, Will Wake

1272. Keith Hilton-Turvey opened with Psalm 11 and prayer.

Minutes of meeting held on 17 July

1273. These were agreed unanimously.

Minutes of the Standing Committee on 1 July

1274. These minutes were noted.

Safeguarding

1275. No cases to report. DBS rules had changed, and now required PCC agreement to people from the church seeking DBS clearance for taking on church posts. It was agreed unanimously that June Smith be approved for carrying out a number of roles within the church. It was also agreed that more detail as to the nature of the posts to be filled should accompany future nominations. Three or four other cases are awaiting DBS clearance.

1276. It was agreed that Carl Steventon (Diocesan Safeguarding Officer) and Annie Lindon (Parish Safeguarding Officer) should be invited to the next PCC meeting to explain the procedures involved. Keith Hilton-Turvey would issue the invitations.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey

Tower and bells

1277. Tim Keyes argued that an examination should be made (a) of the level of noise emerging from the tower when the bells are rung, and (b) of potential measures to reduce the impact of this noise upon neighbours. In discussion it was felt that measures to reduce the amount of non-church ringing (already taken, to some extent) should help reduce problems with the neighbours. The proposal for the examinations was agreed.

1278. Tim Keyes argued in favour of erecting a cover over the bell frame to protect it from dust and water. Andrew Beech argued that protecting the bells would be better effected if (a) the spire were repointed, as recommended in the current quinquennial report, and (b) if at the same time Galebreaker were fitted to the lucarnes in the spire. Andrew will contact Sue Simpson to see whether her son might conduct a drone survey of the spire. It was agreed that the Fabric Sub-Committee will devise a specification for the work needed.

Action: Fabric Sub-Committee

Volunteering

1279. Tim Keyes introduced a paper on the shortage of people willing to volunteer for tasks in the church (and Friends) (see Annex A). In discussion it became clear that this was not a problem confined to SMAA. Keith Hilton-Turvey proposed, seconded by David Houghton, the establishment of the group proposed in the paper. This was agreed unanimously. There was no discussion about membership of the group, although Tim Keyes volunteered to join it.

Awayday

1280. Cath Beech had circulated a further summary of progress thus far. Cath proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the paper be given wider circulation within the church membership. This was agreed unanimously.

APCM resolution

1281. Keith Hilton-Turvey had produced a paper setting out his understanding of the scriptural position on the ordination of women, and their role in the liturgy. David Houghton had yet to contact the Rural Dean about chairing an additional PCC meeting.

Policies and procedures

1282. Stephen Cheetham had recommended that the reserves policy be maintained unchanged. Ian James was concerned that, because maintenance demand fluctuates considerably year on year, it would be better for the policy to refer instead to “essential elements of maintenance”. Ian will draft an appropriate form of words.

Action: Ian James

1283. Stephen had also submitted a revised document setting out Finance Procedures and Delegated Authorities (see Annex B). Concern was expressed that the fifth bullet point under “Budgeting” risks removing those trustees not on the Standing Committee from the

decision making process. It was agreed unanimously that all such cases should be reported to the PCC, and minuted in the Standing Committee minutes.

Net Carbon Zero Demonstrator Church

1284. Will Wake had met Lorna Theophilus from the diocese.

Parish Share

1285. A decision on whether Parish Share for 2025 should be maintained at 2024 rates (as proposed by Stephen Cheetham) was postponed until Stephen could confirm that this level of giving was affordable.

Director of Music

1286. Keith Hilton-Turvey proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the Director of Music's fees be increased from £450/month to £500/month. This was agreed with one vote against and one abstention.

Fabric

1287. Andrew Beech presented a paper setting out progress so far in identifying a replacement heating system. For a number of reasons, progress has been slower than hoped for. However, three responses had been received to the request for tenders for consultancy work on the heating. Andrew Beech, seconded by Sue Cooper, proposed that the tender from Ingleton Wood be accepted. This was agreed unanimously.

1288. Richard Nightingale pointed out that members of the congregation would not be content to worship in a barely heated church during the cold months of winter. There was general agreement to this. It was agreed that Keith Hilton-Turvey should write again to the archdeacon seeking his agreement to the 10.00 service being held elsewhere (the Burgage Hall is a likely candidate). The 0800 service would once again be moved to St Katherine's Chapel. Andrew Beech will draft a suitable form of words.

Action: Andrew Beech

1289. It was agreed that the congregation needed to be given information on progress with the heating. It was agreed that the paper presented to the PCC, minus the commercially sensitive information, should be sent to the congregation by email, and that paper copies should be made available in the church for members to collect.

Action: Andrew Beech

1290. The roof valley work had been delayed because of a backlog of work.

1291. It had been concluded that the floor of the eastern upper room was in good order. The floorboards would be replaced when the additional ones in the western upper room were lifted.

1292. The public consultation phase of the pew faculty had been completed, and the application had gone forward to the Diocesan Registrar.

1293. The Diocesan Chancellor had still not responded about the application to donate the former Trinity altar to St Helen's, Hangleton, Sussex.

Church silver

1294. No further progress to report.

Other Business

1295. It was agreed that Max's Fish Stall could use the churchyard up to four times per year when his usual pitch in the High Street being unavailable. This would be subject to church events taking priority. Should the number of occasions exceed four, PCC agreement would be sought. Peter Scull will inform Max.

Action: Peter Scull

1296. Cath Beech reported that the Deed of Surrender of the lease on St Katherine's Hall was on the verge of being exchanged. In principal, the Mallen bequest will be handed to whichever body becomes responsible for the St Katherine's clock. All keys to the hall need to be handed to the churchwardens, and any personal property removed. Cath will put a note in the pew sheet to this effect. Keith Hilton-Turvey thanked the churchwardens for the work they had put into the transfer.

Action: Cath Beech

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23 September at 7.15pm in the Chapter House (Please note: This is a change to the scheduled date and time)

The meeting ended at 21.04 with prayer.

Volunteering

1. The challenge

- a) It is a national issue that the many aspects of community life that have long been sustained by volunteers are now struggling. An army of volunteers who may have started to help as younger adults are now in their 60s, 70s and 80s and are not being replaced in sufficient numbers by those in younger generations.
- b) This is particularly true in the CofE. The problem is aggravated by the declining numbers in many churches. More and more work and responsibility is falling upon fewer and older shoulders.
- c) As working life extends increasingly into people's late 60s or 70s, people are less inclined in retirement to commit themselves to regular volunteering.
- d) Safeguarding is, rightly, taken much more seriously by all organisations which rely heavily on volunteer help. The requirement, as part of Safer Recruitment, of submitting to an interview and providing names of referees (and, in the case of working with the young or vulnerable, having DBS screening) seems "over the top" to some potential volunteers and may act as a deterrent.

2. The situation in St Michael's

What is going well as regards volunteering?

- We continue to sustain a commendable range of activity (see Appendix 1)
- One-off volunteers (helping with events, making cakes etc) will readily come forward.
- Communication by email about forthcoming events and about activities in the church has made it much easier to keep the St Michael's community up to date.

Where do the problems lie?

- It is hard to see where replacements will come from when current volunteers (especially those in charge of activities) stand down - as many are likely to in the next five years or so.
- We currently have only one paid executive and no formal office support. This makes it harder than it used to be to oversee the range of activity in the church. I believe that we should have in mind the aim of appointing a part-time paid person to help with administration and coordination of activity in the church when this can be afforded.
- The demise of the church magazine means that we have lost a key means of celebrating activity in the church.
- We do not have a clear picture of the nature and extent of our human resources.
- We have no clear strategy for encouraging and enabling people to participate in volunteering activity.
- There is not a strong culture of appreciation and recognition.

3. Further thoughts

It is part of our declared mission to reach out to our local community in order to share the good news and offer practical help in a range of ways. Part of our reaching out might also be to communicate and celebrate the breadth of activity that takes place in the church and (where appropriate) to encourage people not immediately connected with the church or its worship to become involved. This is already happening in some areas. LEAF in particular, in which many Christians from across the Ledbury churches are involved, has a particular focus on

meeting areas of need in and around the town, but its work should always be seen as complementary and not in any way as replacing any part of the mission of our churches.

4. Recommendations

- I. That a sub-committee of the PCC (co-opting as might be helpful) holds a couple of meetings to consider the issue and agree a strategy.

The following points are my own suggestions but may be worth consideration by such a group in addition to the ideas that they generate themselves.

- II. That a person might be appointed to oversee the whole range of volunteer activity. This role would be primarily to ensure that the Rector and PCC are aware of the full range of activities and who is involved. Such a person would also have a particular role in supporting and encouraging leaders of activities and in promoting their activities with the wider membership / congregation.
- III. That a register be kept of all volunteers both by activity, names of individuals and length of service so that the load on any one person can be easily identified.
- IV. That all regular attenders who are able should be encouraged to find a role which they would enjoy in supporting the activities of the church.
- V. That we should use regular short slots in services to draw attention to what is going in a range of activities.
- VI. That we should have a noticeboard for activities which details what they are, who is in charge of each, and what vacancies need to be filled.
- VII. That we thank and encourage volunteers regularly.
- VIII. That PCC members join the Rector in visiting activities (where appropriate) on an organised basis.
- IX. That there should be an annual 1:1 review meeting with activity leaders (with brief notes recorded of these meetings) so that there is a chance to find out what support they might need and what suggestions they may have.
- X. That the arrangements for taking on new volunteers should be clarified and be in line with diocesan requirements / best practice.

Tim Keyes, July 2024

Appendix 1

Activities listed in the annual report (in the order they occur)

PCC, Friends of Ledbury Parish Church, Lesson Reading, Intercessions, Sacristan and Communion Assistants, Welcomers, Young Church, Pastoral Team, Prayer Ministry, Safeguarding, Music, Bellringing, Worship Review Development Group, Home Communion Team, Home Groups (currently 8), Ledbury Deanery Synod, After Church Refreshments, Coffee Stop, Open the Book (Ledbury and Eastnor), Church Mission Society, Deanery Mtwara Link, Communications Group, Banners, Flower Guild, Buildings Working Group, Mothers Union, Data Protection, LEAF (various activities). There is also a Second Sunday Group which meets to plan and review 2nd Sunday 10.00 am services.

These groups/areas of activity are led by 27 different people (a number of whom oversee more than one activity).

I have not included those who preach and take services (other than the Rector) in these leadership roles.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedures and levels of authority for agreeing spending budgets and signing off expenditure on behalf of the PCC of St Michael and all Angels Church Ledbury.

Budgeting

- The PCC should agree a budget, normally annually, covering estimated:
 - routine expenditure (eg on utilities etc);
 - routine maintenance (eg regular inspections of alarm systems);
 - planned maintenance (eg QQ items) and
 - planned improvements
- The budget will set out whether items of expenditure are to be covered from income (offerings etc), from reserves or whether additional funding (eg grants) will be sought
- The PCC will also agree whether estimates of future income appear reasonable
- This agreement, and a copy of the budget should be recorded in the PCC minutes, signed by the chair
- Anticipated significant variances on routine expenditure and routine maintenance (where the variance is likely to exceed 10% of the budget or £750 for an item or a group of items, taking into account matching income such as grants, and taking account of recoverable VAT) will be reported to the Standing Committee and if the Standing Committee considers it necessary to the PCC
- Significant anticipated variances in income shall also be reported to the Standing Committee and, if it considers it necessary, to the PCC.

Agreeing Expenditure

- The Standing Committee or PCC will agree who will be responsible for arranging for items of budgeted planned maintenance or improvements to be carried out
- These individuals or groups will be authorised to agree expenditure up to the limit agreed in the budget;
- Any anticipated overspends, taking into account matching income, should be reported to the Standing Committee as soon as practicable, and the Standing Committee can agree additional expenditure up to £750 net of VAT. Above that amount the agreement of the full PCC is needed
- Additional items of planned maintenance and improvement which arise during the year, not anticipated in the budget should be considered and approved by the Standing Committee (up to £750) and by the full PCC (for items above £750)
- In emergencies only, agreement may be sought after the expenditure is incurred

Authorising and Recording Expenditure

- All payments from the church bank account should be approved by two signatories, approved by the PCC. The signatories should not be related
- The second signatory should ask to see whatever documents they feel are necessary to show that the expense is legitimate and properly agreed. **Other than in exceptional circumstances,** they should be given supporting evidence **for all expenditure** (normally an invoice)

- Where the expenditure relates to an item of planned maintenance or improvement, any invoice should be approved by the individual or group authorised to agree the expenditure before being sent for payment.

- **All financial transactions should be recorded in a computer accounting packaged (currently Xero) and summaries provided for each PCC meeting**

- **Annual accounts should be prepared and independently examined in time for the APCM. The format of these should comply with the Charities SORP (FRS 102)**

- **All records should be retained for a minimum of six years in either paper or electronic form in accordance with the Charities Act 2011**

Revised July 2024, revisions **bold underlined** (previous revisions 2018, 2020 and 2022)

Stephen Cheetham, Hon. Treasurer 2/7/24