



# St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

## Minutes of Parochial Church Council - 17 January 2022

**Present:** Keith Hilton-Turvey (Chair)  
David Houghton (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech  
Cath Beech  
Benjamin Hilton-Turvey  
William Hopkinson  
Ian James  
Tim Keyes  
Lisa-Jayne Lewis  
Christabel Panter  
Sue Cooper  
Peter Scull  
William Simmonds  
James Smith  
Diana Veasey  
Peter Veasey  
Will Wake

**Apologies:** Abby Wake

**882.** Keith Hilton-Turvey opening the meeting with Psalm 71:1-6, 9 and 18-24, followed by prayer.

### Safeguarding

**883.** A safeguarding issue continues to be managed under the guidance of Mandy McFee (Diocesan Safeguarding Officer). An historic issue may become a safeguarding issue.

### Electoral roll

**884.** Ian James had prepared the papers necessary for the revision of the electoral roll. The archdeacon had advised that electronic applications to join the roll were acceptable, provided the correct form was used. It was agreed unanimously that application and notification by email was acceptable. Ian suggested that from the next full revision of the roll the church should consider including email addresses in the roll, and whether the person concerned was a regular attender at church.

## **Finance**

**885.** Cath Beech, seconded by Diana Veasey, proposed that the investment policies continue in place unchanged. This was agreed unanimously. Cath will circulate the reserves policy to members, and asked members to send her any questions they may have about the finance report. She will circulate the response to any questions to all members of the Council.

### ***Action: Cath Beech***

**886.** Cath offered to explain to potential replacements the duties of the church treasurer. She was thanked for all her work as treasurer.

## **Vision for the church**

**887.** Keith Hilton-Turvey introduced the subject for the rest of the meeting, which was to start to identify a vision for the future mission of the church. After a time of prayer, members were asked to set out, in single sentence answers, their assessment (a) of where the church currently stands and (b) where they believe the church should be. Individual answers to these questions are set out at Annex A. Ian James declined to offer answers.

**888.** Keith Hilton-Turvey set out his vision for the third question on the agenda - where Christ is calling the church to be. Members then gave their individual answers, which are set out at Annex B.

**889.** Having absorbed these responses, the Council will need to consider at future meetings how we connect our calling in the Great Commission to the church's life in the parish.

## **Date of next meetings**

**890.** It was agreed that an additional meeting will be held on Monday, 21 February at 7.15 pm in St Katherine's to transact normal business (please note the change of venue). The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, 16 March at 7.30pm in the Chapter House.

## ANNEX A

### Question 1 - Where does the church currently stand?

Keith Hilton-Turvey: We are currently a mostly older Christian community with a growing number of younger people, along with older people, joining what they experience as a warm and welcoming worshipping community and warm worship.

David Houghton: Friendly and growing numerically, but needing to her more united in our relationships with one another, and other churches, as the body of Christ in our community.

Andrew Beech: At best the church is treading water, if not drowning, because of a superfluity of ageing people and very few younger ones who might take forward the church's ministry to the community of Ledbury when we are all dead.

Cath Beech: There is warmth and care in the church and also a will in some parts to move forward and outward, but no consensus on how to do it. We lack focus and spend too much time on issues which are trivial set against the need to share the Christian gospel in Ledbury and beyond.

Sue Cooper: Apart from the Pastoral group which is just beginning to get organised again, much is being done by individuals unseen and unknown, as well as Sue Simpson 's coffee at the food bank and Margaret Neal's Coffee stop. More corporately more is being done as part of Leaf. There are a few more younger members of the congregation but no children. Stewardship welcomes to the church make a tremendous difference to visitors experience. Good work is being done in planning for refurbishment of the church, and the bells have been brought into the 21st century through the heroic efforts of the Tower Captain and Ringers committee. We have had some good fun times in spite of COVID Otherwise there is a somewhat stagnant feel.

Benjamin Hilton-Turvey: A Bible teaching and Bible led community with a few vocal malcontents, some dedicated volunteers but mostly passive members.

William Hopkinson: We have failed to ensure the appropriate provision of pastoral care and of the ministries of word and sacrament, so that all may find opportunities to grow in faith as disciples of Jesus Christ and to hold together the diverse strands within the existing congregation: giving them the security of knowing that they are valued, and ensuring their nourishment and growth in discipleship, nurturing long-established Anglicans in liturgies with which they are familiar.

Tim Keyes: We are an ageing congregation with correspondingly diminished capacity for mission, but the refreshment of new members joining the church and our deepening links with other denominations in the town offer the prospect of more effective outreach.

Lisa-Jayne Lewis: A church with a good heart, but with some noticeable and sometimes unpleasant division and disunity; a church that does not seem to have a credible reputation in the community. We are somewhat of a closed shop to anyone who doesn't appear to fit the mould.

Christabel Panter: Stagnant! We are not the centre of the Community of Ledbury.....

Peter Scull: We seem to be a fractious, disunited group of individuals, somewhat resistant to change; however there are encouraging signs as new, willing, spiritual and prayerful people are coming into the church and wanting to see it move forward.

William Simmonds: I think we are very far from the church that I and many others envisioned SMAA becoming and as set out in the documents that served as the legal basis for the appointment of a new Rector in 2015. That was a church that would embrace and encourage those from all traditions. That hasn't happened. Many, including me, have felt increasingly sidelined and excluded, and feel unwelcome. Many have left, including senior laity and retired clergy, and I myself am soon to leave to be re-licensed. The former Bishop came to this church on no less than two occasions to give sermons addressing the problems (once in 2017, the other a week or so before he retired in 2019). In these sermons he directly called for the existing congregation to welcome newcomers of all traditions, but equally important that newcomers should respect the traditions of those already here, some of whom have been here a very long time indeed. I fear that the Bishop's call has not been heeded.

James Smith: Keeping the show on the road for the faithful middle class Christian in Ledbury.

Diana Veasey: Spiritually deskilled and going backwards into a state of confusion, fear, frustration and joylessness.

Peter Veasey: We have a small congregation for a town of over ten thousand inhabitants and I believe this is because we are seen as outdated and exclusive and we do not integrate sufficiently with town activities.

Will Wake: Doing a great job of housekeeping but not working together or focused enough to make a big difference.

## **Question 2 - Where should the church be?**

Keith Hilton-Turvey: We want to be a vibrant, lively, active, biblically orthodox Anglican church becoming more warm and welcoming, that continues to grow in a variety of people from different social, education, economic and age groups. With people at all ages and stages of faith in Jesus and seeing His life-transforming work amongst us all.

David Houghton: Effective, united and relevant in our service, mission and worship in and to the community of Ledbury and surrounding area.

Andrew Beech: A church that has attracted a number of younger people, and especially families, who feel comfortable in the church, with its people and with its worship, and a church that reaches out to the people of Ledbury, sharing the relevance to them of the Christian gospel.

Cath Beech: A central part of the life of this town, a congregation of all ages sharing the gospel and encouraging Christian discipleship.

Sue Cooper: Personally I would like to see more engagement with the town on a more frequent basis and some way of attracting young families, though possibly not on a Sunday morning, when there is SPORT. We need to show more enthusiasm for our beliefs. We also need an audit of members' talents, as well as what they are doing already, like the form which was produced when I first arrived in 2013. We could then see what gaps there are and work out how to fill them. The PCC members should have a copy of the leaflet produced by LEAF for the new members of the town, and where it has been distributed.

Benjamin Hilton-Turvey: A Bible teaching, Bible following and Bible believing community, shown through our statements and actions.

William Hopkinson: A church properly and happily embracing the wide spectrum of theology and practice of the C of E, welcoming and encouraging all, young and old, new and existing and former members, whilst acknowledging past mistakes and undertaking to remedy them.

Tim Keyes: A congregation united on and motivated by an outward-looking mission plan approved by the PCC and clearly explained to and understood by all, and having a transformed building that supports that mission.

Lisa-Jayne Lewis: A church that is known and appreciated as a place of welcome and warmth, where people can dip their toe into a relationship with Christ and others swim in the deep end at the same time, where people can walk their journey of faith wherever stage they may be at when they come through the doors. A church that is inclusive, diverse, joyful and empowering.

Christabel Panter: I would like to see a bright, evangelistic congregation with a desire for Mission to Ledbury, with a diversity of types of worship, and activities in a Church that is fit for purpose.

Peter Scull: I would like to see our church and all its members working in harmony together, in our lives and worship - forward looking, lively, informal, relevant and attractive to non-believers, prayerfully displaying the fruits of the spirit, as in Galatians...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

William Simmonds: I would like to see the church as envisioned in the recruitment documents – a church which rejoices in its diversity of traditions, which sees that as a strength and not as weakness, where differences are respected without anyone having to conform to one line or point of view, and where all are encouraged to love and serve the Lord in their own unique way. A church where different views can be discussed openly without fear of censorship or rebuke – all a sign of a healthy church.

James Smith: Joyfully worshipping God in ways that engage meaningfully with all the people of Ledbury rather than providing a performance for the faithful.

Diana Veasey: Able to share the love of God within the Church without fear and favour, and out in the community, so that all people we encounter feel the welcome, nurture, respect, healing and joy that comes from God via Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

Peter Veasey : We need to provide a variety of forms of worship, make the church more accessible, comfortable and attractive, stage events that are of more general interest, and be more accepting of all no matter where they are in their journey of faith.

Will Wake: Moving together in faith, understanding and using individual gifts and talents to gather, develop and support others (disciples) to make a significant impact on each other and on our community.

## ANNEX B

### Where is Christ calling the church to be?

Keith Hilton-Turvey: In questions 1 & 2 We've had an I/me focus. Now, in question 3, we have a Him/His focus.

The key context passage is Matthew 28:19-20:

18 And Jesus came and said to them,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore

and make disciples of all nations,

baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

As the community of faith - that is the local Christian community, gathered at S. Michael's we are called to fulfil 'The great commission'...

we're to do this because Jesus has made it a priority under the complete authority He has.

Grammatically there are 5 verbs:

1 finite, 3 participles (dependent on the finite verb)

and 1 infinitive (with further dependency).

To the surprise of many of us, the key verb is not 'Go', it is 'MAKE'!

Go, Baptise and Teach are subject to MAKE

and to observe (as in follow, act on, obey) is dependent on Teach.

Disciples - mathetes - are learner-followers. In our case, learner-followers of Jesus.

A disciple is one who knows Jesus personally. It's relational not merely informational.

The men in John's gospel had an encounter with Jesus - which is where faith in Him begins for us all.

### Make Disciples (MD)-

MD means we're all called to know Jesus and grow in our faith, maturing.

As disciples we're called to grow.

As part of growing we are to be taught - the biblical, apostolic faith -

and we're to learn in response, putting that into practice (see Acts for that).

We're to teach younger disciples biblical teaching and to obey it.

We also grow through prayer, study, community, worship,

MD means we're all called to show our faith and to share our faith in Jesus to others and with others...

yes... that shocking word 'Evangelisation'!

It doesn't mean we're all called to be Evangelists!

However, we are all called to be witnesses...

to who it is we know and what it is only He offers.

If we don't show and share scripture, how will people ever know about Jesus?

If we don't show and share our relationship with Jesus, how will people get to meet Him?

As disciples we're called to show and share... in word and deed...

MD means we're all called to build the community of faith we're called to be part of and build a healthy, Christian community, nurturing, strengthening, supporting others in faith and worship and action, serving God and one another, using our God-given talents and gifts. We're called to bring salt and light and be salt and light to our wider community too, so nurturing, strengthening and supporting the wider community in relation to God, serving the wider community in word and deed as the royal priesthood we are. (see 1 Peter 2:9)

As disciples we're called to build a strong, healthy Christian community through mutual service

which in turn builds a healthier/healthy, wider community through service

which is seen and known to be because we're Christians.

Going is not primarily travel it is primarily doing.

MD means we're all called to worship God - who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, individually and together... in Spirit and Truth (see John 4:23-24)

It is when disciples are gathered to praise, pray and encounter Jesus together that we are the church - ecclesia.

We gather to worship as a royal priesthood, as living stones (see 1 Peter 2:4-5), as a living body.

Our gathered worship is about God, to God and for God and as a consequence is an up-building event for disciples and a witness to and for those who don't yet know Jesus.

We worship throughout the week by living faithful lives wherever we find ourselves – doing what we do with God and for God...

in prayer and praise, in word and work (like the Benedictines).

David Houghton: To really learn to love one another, growing in our knowledge and willingness to follow Christ in our lives, and sharing that joy with others in our community. In the words of a well know author, we need to 'Get out of the boat'.

Andrew Beech: To work together lovingly and go out to the community of Ledbury with the gospel of Christ. We need to go out to where people are rather than expect them to come to us. Most people in Ledbury have no idea of what the Christian gospel is, or what strange things go on in the church building.

Cath Beech: To stop being introspective and get out into the community of Ledbury with Christ's word.

Sue Cooper: I'm sure he wants us as an organisation to get out of our comfort zone. How we do this is the main question.

William Hopkinson: Metanoia. To examine ourselves and our doings. To define in concrete terms what we must do; to set out how we shall do those things, and to recognise how and where we have failed. Above all, to abandon narrow prejudices and uncharitable actions and to embrace the whole world, not their wrong doing, but them with their wrong doing and, to recognise that what we perceive as the right way may not be so.

Tim Keyes: To believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform what we think we can do; to encourage one another, pray for one another and focus on Christ as the centre of all that we do, starting with our personal walk of faith. He is surely calling us to have a clear sense of common purpose. We need to divine what that comprises.

Lisa-Jayne Lewis: To the people! However, we need to understand our context though as very different from the charge in the Great Commission. We need to acknowledge the reputation, not only as a local church, that the church overall has in society, we are not coming from a neutral position.

Christabel Panter: Are we allowing Him to lead us...this is not clear, so we need a collective vision, with prayer, unity of purpose, and open minds for change for the Kingdom of God, under the authority of Jesus.

Peter Scull: I believe LEAF is a sign of Christ leading the church of Ledbury on - as its outward looking emphasis and social concern is following Christ's example - and we should continue with and support/encourage the various activities planned by LEAF, while at the same time opening up and making more useful/practical our historic but somewhat impractical building.

William Simmonds: I think it must involve first a major exercise in self-examination and reflection, looking backward and forward to see where things have gone right, and where they have gone wrong. This exercise must involve the whole church and not just the PCC. This has been something that a number of people have called for, including me, several times in the past, but to no avail. I think it is overdue.

James Smith: To prayer and obedience, as ever, working together to explore ways of worship that resonates with the language and spiritual needs of our neighbours.

Diana Veasey: To share our faith joyfully, openly, and inclusively welcoming all with the love of Christ consistently and enduringly; not dwelling on the ancient theory nor on individual passages of the Bible with a literal theology and interpretation which can block progress; but Instead embrace the truth contained wholistically, appreciating more its breadth, depth and support for personal applications of its truth.

To 'just do it' as we journey together with God, and as we work together to 'share God's Love'. We are led to treat all with dignity, respect and Grace, mindful of the culture of today. Our faith is alive as we walk with God, following Christ who leads us to prayer; to increase in understanding of God through experience (and honest discernment together); and learn to really appreciate all the differences that come together through Christ to make us Church. We should definitely be continuing to grow together.

Peter Veasey : I believe Christ is leading us to God's Kingdom here on earth, though he has not given us a step by step guide, so we need to step out into the world and share our Faith and the most effective way of doing so is by love and example.

Will Wake: Way out of our comfort zone to selflessly share his love.