



St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Minutes of Parochial Church Council - 16 March 2022

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

Apologies: Ian James, Diana Veasey, Peter Veasey

921. Keith Hilton-Turvey opening the meeting with Psalms 3 and 136:1-9, followed by prayer. He handed out copies of the new Welcome Leaflet, and the prayer for 2022 in bookmark form.

Minutes of meeting held on 21 February

922. These had been agreed by email and signed.

Minutes of Standing Committee on 7 March

923. William Hopkinson noted the Standing Committee minute that Keith Hilton-Turvey was to refresh the website and asked that he keep the Communication Review Group informed.

Action: *Keith Hilton-Turvey*

Safeguarding

924. Keith Hilton-Turvey recorded that he had met Mandy McPhee (Diocesan Safeguarding Officer), who felt that the approach taken by the church was good, but asked

us to guard against complacency. It had been agreed that the church should keep a record of safeguarding training undergone by members.

Worship

925. Covid restrictions had not yet been lifted. Once they were, communion will be offered using the chalice at the high altar, and intinction at Trinity for those who prefer. New servers are needed to join the rota, as many of those who served prior to the Covid pandemic now wish to retire. Tim Keyes suggested that a short attractive job description be circulated.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey

Refugee support

926. It was agreed that any gifts sent to Ukraine or neighbouring states for the aid of refugees should be in the form of a donation of money to organisations working in the field. Such organisations would have a better idea of what was needed than groups sending goods from the UK. Keith Hilton-Turvey, seconded by Sue Cooper, proposed that the church register with the Sanctuary Foundation, which assists refugees and is linked to the government scheme. This was agreed unanimously.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey

927. The Archdeacon has agreed that the spire can be lit in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. Lisa-Jayne Lewis will consult a friend who is a theatre lighting designer about the best way to achieve this.

Action: Lisa-Jayne Lewis

APCM

928. Andrew Beech informed the Council that, because of late receipt of the accounts from the independent examiner, the Annual Report for 2021 and the accounts would have to be printed as separate documents, as in the previous year. The meeting will take place at 7.00pm on 6 April, in the church.

Action: Andrew Beech

Strategic vision

929. A meeting of the incoming PCC will be held to take this forward. The intention is to produce a document that can be discussed at a future church awayday.

Action: Andrew Beech

Small groups co-ordinator

930. Keith Hilton-Turvey will convene a meeting of small group leaders, to seek to identify a new co-ordinator.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey

Reviews - general

931. Keith Hilton-Turvey reported that the youth and young people's work review had met once thus far. Representatives of John Masefield High School had met Ian Beer and Keith Hilton-Turvey had met the chair of governors of the school.

Pastoral review

932. William Simmonds circulated a paper from the review team (see Annex A). This proposed two quick wins - the establishment (a) of a prayer chain and (b) of a skills audit, so that the skills available within the church membership are better known. In the longer term it was proposed that the Pastoral Support Group, which technically still exists but which in practice has not functioned much for a couple of years, should be re-established. The report was welcomed as being very comprehensive and practical, although concern was expressed that the role of pastoral care co-ordinator might be beyond just one person's ability and that responsibility might need to be shared. William Simmonds proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the report be adopted by the PCC. This was agreed unanimously.

933. The recommendations will be taken forward by the PCC, and will be placed on the agenda for the May meeting.

Action: Andrew Beech

Magazine

934. The Communications Group had, at the request of the PCC, revised its paper on the oversight of the magazine (see Annex B). It was submitted as a majority document. For the most part the paper was felt to be much better than the previous version, being objective, well expressed and easily readable. It was felt in discussion that the magazine should represent St Michael's to the town and its own membership, informing them of what was being offered by the church. On this basis it was felt that the magazine should be anodyne and avoid controversial issues. Articles and other material on more controversial issues, especially those of a detailed theological nature of little or no interest to the people of Ledbury, should be published elsewhere.

935. Keith Hilton-Turvey objected to the final sentence of paragraph B.2. Simply by being the magazine of a Christian church, bias, in the strict sense of the word, was neither unavoidable or undesirable because it is the Christian faith, as opposed to any other, that is to be promoted. He proposed, seconded by James Smith, that the sentence be deleted. This was agreed with six votes in favour, four against and four abstentions.

Finance

936. Cath Beech tabled a finance update. She stressed the very large increase in energy costs that the church were facing; the Fabric Sub-Committee were investigating whether it might be possible to add a thermostat to the church boiler and also to reduce the hours that the church was heated.

Action: Andrew Beech

937. Sue Cooper, seconded by Christabel Panter, proposed a vote of thanks to Cath for the work done during her term as treasurer. This was agreed unanimously.

St Katherine's

938. A meeting with the Dean and Chief Operating Officer of Hereford Cathedral was being arranged.

Action: David Houghton

Reordering/BWG

939. William Hopkinson expanded on the management of the reordering project at St Philip and St James, Leckhampton, Cheltenham (see paragraph 905). A very useful meeting with diocesan representatives had taken place. He paid tribute to Ian Stainburn and Joan Wakeling, who had left the BWG. It was agreed that the secretary would convey this to them. Keith Hilton-Turvey thanked William Hopkinson and the other members of the BWG for the work being done.

Action: Andrew Beech

Liturgical plan

940. It was agreed that the liturgical plan needs to be short, straightforward and forward looking. Given that one of its purposes, if not the main one, is to assist in the raising of funds for reordering works, it was agreed that Lisa-Jayne Lewis will assist Keith Hilton-Turvey in the production of the next draft for consideration by the PCC.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey/Lisa-Jayne Lewis

Fabric

941. Andrew Beech reported that the floor grill that gave way during the deanery communion service had been repaired. The Archdeacon had given his agreement to the repair of the floor stones broken by the cherry picker during the installation of the chancel lighting. He hoped that this would take place quickly.

942. Applications for faculties to install the drop-down screen and projector, and for the Chapter House lighting, had been submitted. The DAC would not meet until the end of the month to consider them.

Vestments

943. There was a debate about the role of vestments used in the liturgy, with some members favouring the use of full vestments at certain services during the year, especially on main church festival days. Others felt that the use of ornate vestments is off-putting to those exploring the faith and who might be newly attending church. Benjamin Hilton-Turvey proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the PCC should record that it has been consulted about the wearing of vestments and agreed that officiating clergy may wear such robes as they see fit. This was agreed with ten votes in favour, two against and two abstentions.

Matters arising

944. Andrew Beech reported that no response had been received from the town council with regard to assessing the safety of grave markers and tombs. The town council were taking the view (as with the now resolved dispute over street lighting) that upkeep of the churchyard was not their responsibility. This was the result of a wider dispute between the Church of England and the Local Government Association over the correct interpretation of Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972. No test case has been brought.

945. The PCC recorded their thanks (proposed by Peter Scull, seconded by Will Wake) to those who maintain the Garden of Remembrance.

946. Work on the altar linen is under way.

Other business

947. William Hopkinson, seconded by Sue Cooper, proposed a vote of thanks to William Simmonds for his service on the PCC. From 4 April, William will be licensed to the Cider Churches, and hence will no longer serve on the Ledbury PCC. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

Date of next meeting

948. The next meeting will be on 18 May at 7.15p.m. in St Katherine's Hall.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9.53 pm.

ANNEX A

Pastoral Support Review Paper

A.1 As recorded in items 18 and 19 of the minutes for the APCM of June 2021 a motion was passed that the PCC should appoint a team to undertake a thorough review of the pastoral support provided by SMAA looking at both past and future provision. This paper contains the first recommendations of the review team for consideration by the PCC. Other papers will follow at later dates.

A.2 A discussion document written initially and primarily for the pastoral support review team is available from me, William Simmonds, on request. That document provides more back-ground and rationale to the recommendations contained in this paper, should anyone want that. The document acknowledges the very significant amount of pastoral support work that is currently undertaken in the church. The recommendations in this paper are intended to build on, support and complement that work whilst addressing a few shortcomings.

A.3 The recommendations fall into two parts, i.e.: (i) 'quick wins' - being measures that could be put in place relatively quickly but which could still yield significant benefits; (ii) recommendations for the renewal of an official SMAA pastoral support group.

'Quick Wins'

Prayer Chains

A.4 When the motion was put to the APCM one of the 'quick wins' suggested was for one or more prayer chains to be established. The concept is quite simple, but powerful: a prayer chain is essentially a list of people who agree to pray together for themselves and for others during at a time of trouble or need. Because it is a group of individuals who have decided to pray together - 'linked' together in prayer - this, theoretically, amplifies the power of the prayer. It also has an additional pastoral element in that it serves to help the prayer chain members to connect to each other as well as to God. There are several models of prayer chains, all really quite similar. The proposals below aim to keep things as simple as possible.

A.5 Prayer chains would initially be formed from members of the congregation. Those who sign up to a chain need to be willing to join in prayer at short notice as needs arise, their own situation at the time permitting. They will need to respect people's privacy and be discreet if that is what the person requesting prayer wants. A prayer chain might grow to include others in the wider faith community, family, friends and colleagues.

A.6 Each prayer chain may choose to designate one person in the chain to act informally as a 'coordinator'. The role could be kept very light and need not involve anything more than being prepared to act as a POC for the chain for prayer requests, maintaining a list of volunteers and ensuring that requests have been communicated to the chain.

A.7 Prayer requests to chain volunteers could be communicated by a variety of means, including word-of-mouth, telephone calls, text and email - an email list of a chain's volunteers could be built to communicate prayer requests with one click. It is important that any changes to a person's trouble or need be communicated quickly so that prayers can be kept appropriate and up-to-date.

A.8 Prayer chains could be advertised by a variety of means including word of mouth, notice sheets, the magazine, if reinstated. Some churches advertise prayer chains on their web-site so that anyone with a situation that needs prayer can request prayer for that. That might be done by contacting the parish office by email or by phone, the request being then forwarded to a prayer chain. SMAA might look at so advertising prayer chains on its new website.

A.9 It is recommended that one or more prayer chains as desired be established along the guidelines above. The initial step would be to communicate the idea to the congregation through notices and to seek volunteers. The PCC should find an interested person to undertake this communication.

Skills Register

A.10 This proposal involves setting up a simple register by which people can offer their skills to help others in need. The idea arose in a case in which a member of the church was recently released from a long stay in hospital. An effort was made to support that person by organising the tidying and cleaning of their house and garden in preparation for their return home.

A.11 People willing to offer their skills to help others would give their permission for their name and any particular skills they have to offer to be added to the register. Skills might include: basic decorating and gardening, IT skills, occasional provision of lifts, removals, online access - e.g. for shopping, help with form filling (electronic or paper), flat-pack assembly.

A.12 No commitment would be asked of people putting their name on the register. If, though, someone did need help in a particular area that a person on the register could assist with, then they would be open to being approached to so help that person.

A.13 Access to the register would be through one or two designated individuals who would also undertake to maintain the register, although the register need not be anything more than a simple Word document.

A.14 Such a register is already in use by at least one other charitable organisation in Ledbury. It is recommended that a register be so established for SMAA.

Pastoral Support Group

A.15 The pastoral support group - in its various forms - has in the past played a very important part in the provision of pastoral support, particularly within the church.

A.16 A brief history of the pastoral support group since 2004 can be found in the discussion document if desired. The pastoral support group was restarted after a significant hiatus of some 2-3 years in 2017 at the instigation of the Rector. The group had some excellent and committed people. However, the group seemed to suffer from lack of referrals and publicity and, not helped by Covid, has very much 'slipped under the radar'.

A.17 There is a strong argument to be made for re-starting the pastoral support group. One of the many benefits of having such a group is that it provides for better communication and co-ordination, two factors that would seem to be essential to the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of pastoral support in a relatively large church like SMAA. In

coming up with the recommendations below, other models of pastoral support were considered before falling back on the group model as has been used before, but with measures to address the problems that have arisen previously.

The role of the group

A.18 The group is an official, recognised group within the church consisting of trained volunteers drawn from the church. Its role is to offer pastoral support to both members of the church and to members of the wider community who might approach the church at a time of need. The pastoral support offered is mainly emotional and spiritual support through listening, befriending and prayer, all in a Christian context. Importantly, it is not a counselling service.

The role of Co-ordinator

A.19 The group will have a designated Co-ordinator. This is a very important role as the Co-ordinator, amongst other things, acts as a manager of the enterprise and a single point of contact for referrals of pastoral support cases and concerns, thus improving coordination and communication of pastoral matters. The Co-ordinator should be given a designated email address reflecting their role title and that the Co-ordinator be listed on the 'those who' section on the website and similar publicity material.

A.20 The Co-ordinator will be very important to the pastoral support enterprise, which will need strong and effective management. The skills of the Co-ordinator should include the following:

- Pastoral care skills, particularly empathy. It is not enough to wish to do good; the person appointed must be able to manage the scheme, those supporting the people in need, and those themselves in need; they should have reasonably good self-awareness, sufficient at least to know when they themselves need to seek help and support or to take a sabbatical;
- Some management skills, particularly in 'people management' and ensuring processes such as the referrals process (to and from the pastoral support group) are correctly adhered to;
- Be confident in public speaking; and
- Liaising skills - which will be needed particularly to agree, establish and maintain links with LEAF.

The role of Co-ordinator is a very important role and a lot is being asked of him/her. In return they are entitled to expect the full support of the PCC and the wider church in their work. The Co-ordinator will meet with the Rector as and when necessary, but at least on a twice-yearly basis.

Training

A.21 It is expected that all official befrienders will undertake training as provided by the Diocese and to include refresher training. The training can be expected to include empathy, and listening skills, also, importantly, how to make referrals. Here referral means referrals made by befrienders to a third party. It is a process triggered by a befriender's realisation

that they have reached the end of their skill set, and so need to find more appropriate ongoing support for their client/friend. For the well-being of both client and the befriender, it is important that referral as a process is properly understood and effectively carried out. It might, at its simplest, just involve the befriender signposting their client/friend to a more specialist organisation/person; or it might involve more active befriender support and encouragement to make the transition to more appropriate support. Either way, the possible destination-referral-options and what they can offer must be well known and well-documented, and known to be available/viable to avoid raising false hope.

A.22 It is expected that suitable DBS checks will be necessary for volunteers in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy.

Referrals to the pastoral support group

A.23 Many official befrienders will not be professional counsellors, but they must have a clear understanding of agreed policy to be allowed to represent the church officially in this way. A good system of referral, well understood by both casual and official befrienders, is essential so that people know what is being offered by way of support and expectations are managed.

A.24 Referrals to the pastoral support group from within the church could be made directly by the person seeking support by approaching the Co-ordinator or other official befrienders, or referrals could be so made by concerned third parties.

A.25 In the period 2004-2012 an alternative way of making referrals to the pastoral support group was by way of a form available in paper form. The form included optional sections where the nature of the concern and suitable times for visiting could be added. This should be considered as an option with the forms made available in paper or electronic form on the church website. Referrals could also be made via contact details provided on the website.

Publicity and advertising

A.26 How is the group to be publicised within the church? One of the problems faced by the last group was lack of awareness of the group, which led to lack of communication of pastoral care cases. To help address this a big thing should be made of the re-starting of a new group, e.g. invite a senior diocesan figure, such as the Archdeacon, to present the team to the church in a main service, the team may wish to make promises and it gives the congregation the chance to endorse the team and offer their support.

A.27 How is the group to be publicised to the wider community? Obvious channels are the website, local magazines like the Ledbury Focus and notice boards. It is important though that expectations are managed in publicising the support group.

Who cares for the carers?

A.28 It is very important that the support group themselves have support. To this end a dedicated Chaplain should be found for the group. The Chaplain should be someone not resident in the parish, or at least not otherwise involved directly in the life of SMAA. This is standard practice as it means the Chaplain is not distracted by other SMAA matters and can focus on the needs of the support group volunteers. It would be expected that the Chaplain be present at the introductory service as suggested in A.26.

Recruitment

A.29 It is advised that the PCC first recruits a Co-ordinator for the group. Ideally that person will enjoy the confidence of the whole of the PCC. Once chosen, the Co-ordinator should be given a significant say in the recruitment of the remaining group members.
LEAF

A.30 LEAF is now already well established and, inescapably, provision must be made for a strong link with what LEAF provides by way of pastoral care.

A.31 There are significant differences though between what LEAF provides and what is to be provided by the pastoral support group: LEAF is a charity run by volunteers from the churches, but clients are mainly from the wider community and not necessarily church-goers, or even religious. The support offered by LEAF reflects this, and is not specifically Christian... unless, that is, the client wishes it be so. There are Anglican volunteers who do much good work for and within the LEAF system, but it is important for both LEAF and SMAA as registered charities that there is a clear boundary between the two. This does not mean though that links cannot be established for the benefit of both.

A.32 One such link might be via a two-way referral process between LEAF and the SMAA pastoral support group. The pastoral support offered by the group is not counselling, but there may well be times when a befriender feels that their client/friend would benefit from a qualified counsellor. LEAF though does offer a counselling service through three qualified Christian counsellors, and referrals could be made to these counsellors. The LEAF counselling is not specifically Christian, but it can be so if a particular client wants it to be. Conversely, LEAF can provide counselling for up to ten clients at any one time with each case possibly lasting many months. It might be that at some point a counsellor feels that a client is ready to move on, and that a referral to a befriender in the pastoral support group would be appropriate. Again, in making such a referral it is important that the client knows that the nature of the support being offered by the pastoral support group, specifically that it is essentially Christian befriending, and is happy with that. Setting up such a two-way referral process would be best done by the pastoral support Co-ordinator liaising with Tony Hodder.

Care plans

A.33 A care plan for the sick and bereaved shall be provided for use by the pastoral support group. Such a plan will be presented to the PCC in a future paper.

A.34 It is recommended that the pastoral support group be re-started according to the above paragraphs.

ANNEX B

Oversight of the magazine

B.1 PCC Minute 871 records the invitation to CORE to prepare a simpler, shorter paper reflecting the principles of CORE 2021/21, to which latter reference could be made in case of need. The issue at the heart of that is the frame within which the editor of the Magazine should work in order to avoid favouring or discriminating against any section of the congregation of SMAA.

B.2 The Church of England is a broad church, bringing together Catholic and Reform, liberal and conservative, all valid positions. The Rector and the Editor will be sensitive to the need to produce a magazine that respects and reflects the range of experience and views within the congregation. ~~S/he and the Editor agree that they will edit the magazine without bias on religious and topical matters.~~ *(Sentence deleted by PCC)*

B.3 The Editor will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the magazine. As with all church activities, the PCC will be the supervisory body for the magazine, and take a supportive interest in it. The editor will submit an annual report on the magazine to the PCC for discussion. Any unresolved case of difficulty with contributors or readers will be reported to the PCC who shall consider it as speedily as possible.

B.4 The magazine is primarily for members of the church community: to inform, encourage, call to prayer, prompt to reflection, amuse and entertain. It could contain reviews of events, information about forthcoming events and church services, charitable projects, reports on progress with various initiatives (eg LEAF), news of projects like the Bell Project or recent developments on the Last Supper painting, personal testimonies, interviews, role profiles (and notes on those who do them) within the church, articles on holidays people have taken, especially if they had some sort of church connection, retreats, updates on what is going on in the other denominations in town, reviews of books, art, music, theatre (particularly local), 'Desert Island Books', updates on organisations which the church supports (Mtwara etc), puzzles and quizzes, articles on points of interest in the church building.

B.5 The magazine should also reach outwards into the town, by persuading the people of Ledbury to take an interest in what the church is doing and advise what the church's position is on both religious and secular matters. It should include articles giving a Christian perspective on current concerns and how individuals in the church are responding to them.

B.6 The editor will have in mind members of the church community, the local town and area community who might be expected to see the church as an important organisation within the town with a role to play and visitors to the church wishing to get an insight into what SMAA does. He or she shall take account of strategic requirements laid down by the PCC for Communications.

B.7 The magazine should be made available in electronic format downloadable from the main website.

B.8 Every issue of the main magazine should include a statement that the views expressed are not necessarily shared by the Rector, the PCC or the editor, although the Rector will generally have his own "reflection".

B.9 The PCC is invited to agree paragraphs B.2 to B.8 above as constituting the summary guidance for the editor and editor in chief.