



St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Minutes of Parochial Church Council - 8 December 2022

Present:	Rev. Chris Moore	(Chair)
	Keith Hilton-Turvey	(Rector)
	David Houghton	(Churchwarden)
	Cath Beech	(Churchwarden)
	Andrew Beech	
	Sue Cooper	
	Benjamin Hilton-Turvey	
	William Hopkinson	
	Ian James	
	Anne Scull	
	James Smith	
	Diana Veasey	

Apologies: Stephen Cheetham, Maria Dineen, Tim Keyes, Christabel Panter, Peter Scull, Peter Veasey

1. The meeting was held as a discussion meeting to take forward the ideas and conclusions that arose from the PCC awaydays held on 27 August and 19 November. The Rev. Chris Moore, Rector of Fownhope Benefice, had kindly agreed to facilitate the meeting.
2. David Houghton, supported by a number of others, pointed out that the self-esteem of the PCC is low, demonstrated by the lack of trust, respect and concern for and between individuals on the council, including the rector. The PCC is especially argumentative and ground rules need to be set, notable to make meetings tighter and to work better. William Hopkinson pointed out the range of theological positions held on the PCC and felt that some of the problem could be alleviated by the rector making more of an effort to accommodate this range of views.
3. Andrew Beech felt that the PCC spent too much time on business and far too little time considering the church's ministry, both within and without the building itself. He drew attention to the legal requirements of PCCs¹:

"It shall be the duty of the minister and PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.

The functions of PCCs shall include -

¹ Extract from Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, as amended; Regulation 2

(a) co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;

(b) the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question."

Whilst it was nice sometimes to indulge in abstruse arguments about doctrine, these get in the way of the PCC actually being able to decide positive things about the church's ministry. He felt that some of the misunderstanding in the council arose from a lack of understanding of what the rector's position was on certain issues, and why. He suggested that the rector should be encouraged to share his views, and that the PCC should listen to them, even if certain members did not agree. It was suggested that a revival of the Thursday evening study sessions might be a vehicle for this, although concern was also expressed about being seen to wash the church's dirty linen in public.

4. Ian James suggested that the PCC should have a more active vice-chair who could chair the meeting to allow the rector to share his views. Sharing ones own views was difficult when also chairing a meeting. Chris Moore suggested that the PCC should receive reports from its sub-committees, notable Finance and Fabric, without discussion unless matters of debate or those requiring a decision were under consideration². This would free up time for fuller consideration of the church's mission.

5. Many members expressed dissatisfaction with the current position. Some members of the council are clearly and fundamentally at odds with the rector. Many are not. The view was expressed by some that the constant complaints about the rector are holding back the church's ministry and should stop. Chris Moore acknowledged that there had been considerable hurt in the recent past, but that council members and the rector should put this behind them and move on. It was important for all parties to recognise that the Anglican Church allows and accepts a wide range of views on the part of its members; everyone should acknowledge and celebrate this and not take a narrow view of what is acceptable.

6. On contentious issues, Chris suggested that it would be wrong for the PCC to ask the incumbent to act against his conscience. But there needs to be an accommodation both on the rector's part and on the part of PCC members in order for the PCC to live and work together. It was noted that, in the earlier awaydays, Derek Chedzey had suggested workarounds, to allow what, in wider Anglican terms, would be acceptable activities to take place when the rector is absent.

7. In terms of the ground rules for operation of the PCC, Chris Moore suggested that the incumbent and the PCC each have roles to play. The PCC should be sharing with the incumbent what members of the congregation think about issues that arise, and the incumbent should listen carefully to what the PCC is saying. Taking note of the limitation on the ability of PCCs to discuss doctrine (see above) all should accept that any doctrinal view held, so long as it lies within the boundary of what is Anglican doctrine at the time, is acceptable.

² As the PCC has agreed should happen in the case of the various reviews currently underway.

8. It was suggested that the church should seek to ascertain why people leave, listen to them and seek to provide a wider range of liturgy and a much less poisonous atmosphere to encourage more people to stay.

9. One matter was agreed: each PCC meeting will start with a 15 minute time of prayer and worship.

Andrew Beech

PCC Secretary