



St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Minutes of Parochial Church Council - 2 February 2023

Present: Keith Hilton-Turvey (Chair)
David Houghton (Churchwarden)
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)
Andrew Beech
Stephen Cheetham
Sue Cooper
Benjamin Hilton-Turvey
William Hopkinson
Ian James
Christabel Panter
Anne Scull
James Smith
Diana Veasey
Peter Veasey

Apologies: Maria Dineen, Tim Keyes, Peter Scull, Will Wake

1056. Keith Hilton-Turvey opened with Philippians 4:4-9 and 1Thessalonians 5:16-24 and prayer.

Minutes of previous meeting

1057. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were agreed unanimously.

1058. The minutes of the Standing Committee on 11 January were noted.

Safeguarding

1059. Annie Lindon will notify all those who need DBS checking. DBS applications have been subject to computer problems.

PCC awayday follow-up

1060. Cath Beech explained that follow-up consists of two strands: the first is to develop the vision for the church, the second to improve the functioning of the PCC. Maria Dineen has developed a survey designed to gauge members' views against the Seven Marks of a Healthy Church as set out at the second awayday. The wardens will meet her to see how

this can be carried forward. The churchwardens may also initiate a series of bilateral meetings with Council members to elicit in private their views.

Action: Cath Beech/David Houghton

1061. On the former, it was felt that a checklist should be produced from the two awaydays, showing where effort might be concentrated. On the latter the possibility of the rector relinquishing the chair to the vice-chair (on occasions, at least) would free him up to express his own views on any given subject. Christabel Panter pointed out that previous rectors did do this.

1062. James Smith pointed out that the church had no vision for children, youth and families. How do we attract and hold on to them? He felt that other non-liturgical offerings at different times, such as Sunday afternoons might achieve this. It was noted that Messy Church at Ledbury Baptist Church, whilst being successful in itself, had not led to families or children joining the church. This issue will be taken forward as part of the development of the church vision.

Reviews

1063. Keith Hilton-Turvey reported that the review group had not met, and that the church was seeking to support the work going on in schools, through LEAF for work at the primary school, and through Zoe Smith at John Masefield High School.

1064. There was discussion of why it had not been possible to locate the LEAF youth work at St Katherine's Hall. It was explained that this had been because the youth work needs to leave quantities of furniture and equipment permanently in place and that this could preclude other activities taking place in the hall. Anne Scull proposed, seconded by James Smith, that the church negotiate with LEAF to find a way for them to be able to use the building. This was agreed with one abstention. The wardens asked to be kept in the negotiating loop as they were responsible for the management of the hall.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey/Anne Scull

1064. No action has been taken as regards the Local Ministry Development Group. Diocesan policy towards such groups may be changing.

Parish Directory

1065. Following the decision of the previous meeting, William Hopkinson introduced a paper setting out how the Parish Directory might work. As few had read the paper prior to the meeting it was agreed that members comments should be passed to William Hopkinson, James Smith and Stephen Cheetham to allow for discussion at the March meeting. Andrew Beech was asked to circulate contact details of members of the Council to all of its members.

Action: Andrew Beech

Website

1066. Stephen Cheetham will invite a group with technical knowledge to look over the new website, to eliminate snags.

Action: Stephen Cheetham

Church office

1067. David Houghton informed the Council that Sarah Williams had been served notice of redundancy from 31 March. He stressed that there would be no replacement office. Such as continued to exist would be deemed a “resource centre”. This is to avoid any possibility of a claim for constructive dismissal. It was agreed that Keith Hilton-Turvey will inform the undertakers in the town of the change.

Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey

1068. David proposed, seconded by Ian James, that a small group be set up to oversee the transition, consisting of the rector, churchwardens, treasurer and either Julia Warren or June Smith. The proposal included terms of reference for this group (see Annex A). The proposal was agreed with one abstention.

Action: David Houghton

Finance

1069. Stephen Cheetham presented the finance report. The deficit for 2022 (£13,000) had wiped out the reserves. Whilst income had fallen only slightly, the cost of energy had risen severalfold. This was, to an extent, offset by an underspend on maintenance. Charity Commission guidelines state that charities should have available reserves to enable them to operate for six months. This would indicate a need for £60,000. The budget for 2023 will be prepared to seek to maintain the existing position. A one-off payment has been received from the diocese to alleviate in part the increase in energy costs. The full financial benefit of the closure of the office will not be realised until 2024, as Sarah will receive her salary for the first three months of 2023, plus her redundancy payment.

1070. Stephen Cheetham will propose an investment strategy for up to half of the church’s restricted or designated funds to the incoming PCC after the APCM.

Action: Stephen Cheetham

1071. It was agreed that the entire cost of verger fees will in future be paid by those organising the event (wedding or funeral). Currently the church subsidises half of this cost.

Reordering

1072. William Hopkinson presented the papers from the Buildings Working Group of which consideration had been deferred at the previous meeting. The paper containing the recommendations put to the PCC is at Annex B below.

1073. First addressed was the proposal to study further the options available for seating in the church (see paragraph B.6H, below). Consideration had been given in the past to putting the pews on casters to give greater flexibility as to their layout. It was noted that this had been done at St Peters, Bromyard. However the pews at SMAA were too long, and would need casters that were too high for practical use. David Houghton proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the PCC agree in principle to a study of the practicality and cost of remodelling the long pews to shorter, moveable ones, and to an ascertainment of

options for replacement chairs, including, so far as possible, the feasibility for their storage and costs. This was agreed with one vote against.

Action: Buildings Working Group

1074. William Hopkinson proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the Fabric Sub-Committee be asked to review the church heating system, and the options and possible sources of finance for replacing the existing gas boiler (see paragraph B.12, below). This was agreed with two abstentions.

Action: Fabric Sub-Committee

1075. Next to be discussed was the issue of levels within the church (see paragraph B.19, below) and the provision of a nave dais, to raise the nave altar above the level of the existing floor. Andrew Beech argued that the existing ramps into St Anne's chapel and thence into the nave were too steep for effective use, and that consideration of better access should be moved to the "Things to be done soon" category. William Hopkinson proposed, seconded by Andrew Beech, that the Fabric Sub-Committee be asked to study ways of transiting from one level to another at the east end of the church. This was agreed unanimously.

Action: Fabric Sub-Committee

1076. William Hopkinson proposed, seconded by Ian James, that the Buildings Working Group should be asked to investigate the options for a dais. This was agreed unanimously.

Action: Buildings Working Group

1077. It was agreed that the provision of parking around the church was a problem (paragraphs B.20 - B.22, below). William Hopkinson proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the BWG should commission a study of the available options, both short- and long-term. This was agreed with one abstention.

Action: Buildings Working Group

1078. Ian James proposed, seconded by Stephen Cheetham, proposed that the remaining items from the "Things to be done soon" category (paragraph B.6 A-G, below) be dealt with as and when funds become available. This was agreed with two abstentions.

Action:	A (Decluttering)	Cath Beech/David Houghton
	B (Sound)	Benjamin Hilton-Turvey
	C (St Anne's)	Keith Hilton-Turvey
	D (Upper rooms)	Fabric Sub-Committee
	E (Lighting)	Fabric Sub-Committee
	F (Interpretation)	Tim Keyes
	G (Pews)	Peter Scull

1079. Consideration of the proposal that a small standing communications group to oversee linkages to the website (and social media) be subsumed into the agreed balanced Communications group, able to pull together the entire communications strategy for the parish, was deferred to the next meeting.

Fabric

Chapter House lighting

1080. A second tender, from KGK Electrical Ltd of Worcester, had been received. This was significantly lower than the other tender. The firm had been shown the site by Ian Cramp, in the light of which the tender was increased slightly. The firm's references had been checked and found acceptable. Adding a contingency and fees element brought the cost to £3,370 as compared to a tender of £6,272 from Woliters. Ian James, seconded by Andrew Beech, proposed acceptance of the KGK tender. This was agreed unanimously. It is hoped that the work will be carried out in March.

Action: Andrew Beech

1081. Ian James reported that Caroe's had taken a second look at the roof valley gutters, and concluded that the existing flash banding was in worse condition than previously thought. The PCC were asked to agree (a) that tender documents for this work should be drawn up, at an estimated price of £2,000 + VAT, (b) that tenders be sought, and (c) that in principle some £40,000 be set aside for the work to be done. It is hoped that the repairs would have a life expectancy of some 20 years. This was proposed by Ian James and seconded by David Houghton. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

Action: Andrew Beech

1082. Noting the decision on the upper room (see paragraph 1078 above) Ian James proposed, seconded by David Houghton, that a short-term scheme, with costs, be drawn up for the upper rooms, to enable this asset to be used for storage until its long-term future be determined. This was agreed with one abstention.

Action: Fabric Sub-Committee

1083. Benjamin Hilton-Turvey was thanked for his work on the new screen and projector.

1084. Clevedon Organs had advised that repairs be carried out to the oboe pipes in the organ, and to correct the warping of the upperboard on which these pipes stand, at a cost of £560. David Houghton proposed, seconded by James Smith, that this work be carried out. This was agreed with two abstentions.

Action: Kate Cheetham

Next meeting

1055. The next meeting will be in St Katherine's Hall at 7.15pm on Wednesday 15 March.

The meeting closed at 9.45.

ANNEX A

GROUP TO OVERSEE THE CLOSURE OF THE CHURCH OFFICE

Purpose/role of the group

A.1 The church office function will be transferred to voluntary operation as from 1 April 2023, following the part-time paid job being made redundant on 31 March 2023. This group will:-

- Firm plans and oversee implementation/functioning of the following to meet deadlines as specified.
- Install an integrated telephone system by end of February 2023.
- Establish dedicated email addresses for, Rector, Secretary, Treasurer, Churchwardens, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Eastnor, and Safeguarding by end of February 2023.
- Investigate any additional functions needed for the central electronic diary by end of February 2023.
- Create comprehensive flow charts for Weddings, Funeral and Concert Bookings by mid-March 2023.
- Identify and secure volunteers for the following key focus areas by end of February 2023¹:
 - Concert bookings*
 - Pew sheet production.
 - Weddings/Funerals bookings and liaison.
 - Returns to Diocese.
 - Printer/photocopier and stationery monitor
 - Invoicing and Payments.*
 - Data Protection & GDPR Officer.
 - Electoral Roll Officer.*
 - Liaison with Eastnor.
- Prepare and publish timely notices and communication items about what is happening and when, to ensure any adverse impact relating to the change is minimised - throughout the next 3 months.
- Advise 'regular' users, (especially undertakers), of the changes, by end of January 2023.
- Liaise with the St Katherine's Hall management committee to agree date and transfer of functions relating to the Hall by end of March 2023.

Membership

A.2 Rector Keith Hilton-Turvey, Cath Beech, David Houghton, Stephen Cheetham and either Julia Warren or June Smith.

A.3 The group will function from 23 January to 30 June. If required, this timescale can be extended.

¹ Already allocated - Concert booking – Kate Cheetham, Invoicing etc – Stephen Cheetham, Electoral Roll – Ian James

ANNEX B

Reordering of Ledbury Parish Church

B.1 This note seeks the agreement of the PCC to steps in the reordering of the church. It covers:

- What we would seek to do - the overall outline programme;
- The ordering of that;
- The authorisation of certain work and works;
- The parish machinery to carry the project forward;
- The need for new or additional personnel, paid and voluntary.

B.2 The meeting of parishioners on 5 October was constructive and generally supported the proposals in the summary placed before it. Nothing in the wider consultation has given grounds for substantive revision. There has been no argument against the threefold division into Things to be done Soon; Things for the Medium Term; and Possible Longer-Term work. What is still lacking at this stage is the vision for the parish and so its strategy and detailed ambition for mission and relations with the town.

B.3 In principle one would agree the whole programme of reordering; take professional help in preparing an outline plan; seek finance; and then proceed to detailed planning and execution of the comprehensive scheme. A comprehensive scheme for reordering would be important for fundraising. However, matters are not ideal; we do not have the money for extensive professional help or preliminary planning; and see above about vision. We are faced, therefore, with the option of either holding back on everything or the compromise of feeling our way forward; addressing things that can be done without prejudice to other wider possibilities; and implementing things for which we do not need a comprehensive fund-raising exercise. Nevertheless, the agreement in principle of the PCC to the general package outlined in this paper is sought, with specific agreement to certain actions.

B.4 The PCC's agreement will, of course, be subject to the obtaining of faculties and consultation with heritage and conservation bodies. The views of the Diocesan Advisory Committee will be sought on the results of the PCC discussion, including on the option of removing all the pews, a matter of possible contention with the Victorian Society and others.

i. Things to be done soon

B.5 The summary listed five things for the near future. Two involve no monetary cost; one, sound, (which is urgent) involves modest expenditure for which there may be funds available. Lighting would be more expensive and would have to be funded from reserves, bequests, or Income. The PCC has already decided to tackle the upper rooms before the next quinquennial and that may involve considerable outlays.

B.6 This paper adds to the above: Consultation with the Friends on displays for interpretation, and early progress at minimal cost to the church by partial removal of pews. The PCC is asked to authorise:

- A.** A general tidying up and assessment (and disposal), under the supervision of the churchwardens, of items stored throughout the church, starting with the Chapter House. The preparation of in-house plans for the storage of retained items, pending the obtaining of professional plans at a later stage of reordering;
- B.** A professional survey of sound throughout the church; the commissioning of plans to rectify any deficiencies and the obtaining of tenders for the work;
- C.** Rearranging St Anne's chapel, addressing uses, seating, displays and, when funds are available, lighting. This will involve positioning the chairs, removing the book displays and the altar frontals chest, and tidying up other things left there. The lighting needs substantial replacement and improvement. Re-gilding the angel bosses to be undertaken when this can be afforded;
- D.** Given the PCC's decisions on the upper rooms, the obtaining of updated plans for their renovation. A scheme for these rooms was prepared in 2009. In order to provide sufficient space to install a staircase it would have been necessary to remove part of the existing chimney stack and to remove and replace the first floor at a different level. This was very contentious and will be if pursued again. In 2009 the English Heritage Inspector agreed to removal of the eastern, 19th C, section of the stack and lowering of the floor because the benefit of doing so to facilitate use of the upper rooms outweighed the harm to the historic fabric that would result. Another Inspector, and the Victorian Society, may reach a different conclusion;
- E.** When funds allow, commission a professional survey of lighting not recently renewed, followed by plans and obtaining tenders;
- F.** Consult the Friends on interpretation, and action;
- G.** Remove the front pews (two or three rows) and remove those pew lengths extending into the north aisle. The removal of pews generated significant differences of opinion but the balance was quite strongly in favour of removal. For concerts, theatrical performances, larger choirs and more flexibility in worship, it would be desirable to remove the front pews. A possible immediate and interim step that would free up useful space would be the removal of two or three rows at the front. Putative improvements in catering would also require the removal of all pew lengths protruding north of the pillars; such shortening could give rise to abortive expenditure if it were later decided to proceed to full removal;
- H.** Review replacement seating options, with possible extension to the north aisle. The cost would be relatively modest, mainly in the purchase of replacement chairs or the cutting of the pews into smaller and more mobile units. Design of the replacements and storage provision for them would need to be considered in the context of other major changes as they could have a significant impact on overall design of the lay out of the church. On the other hand, clearing the Nave and the Aisles would have such an impact in fitting the church for a wider range of uses, and so service to the community, that if a start were not made on this much else could be frustrated.

The seating needs at present are some 100 seats on a normal Sunday, rising to perhaps 400 for special services. Therefore, some 100 seats should usually be in the nave, with provision available to provide another 300 a few times a year.

ii. Medium term improvements

B.7 This item in the Summary consists of three items. Several of them require further work; some of them will require difficult or controversial decisions. With the exception of heating the costs should not be excessive, though difficult in present circumstances. The items in the summary are:

A. Catering/servery. Consider detailed needs and design and placing. Obtain options for meeting them, and estimates.

B. Shop/Bookstall. Consider design and placing. Obtain estimates.

C. Heating: Consider options and timing for replacement.

Catering

B.8 There is widespread agreement that catering must be improved. What is not yet agreed is what facilities should be provided, nor where. There is a clear link with the development of the church's Vision. For the parish's own needs the aim must be to provide hot and cold drinks, snacks and washing up facilities. The sinks and coffee apparatus in the priest's vestry should be moved to join the new catering facilities. To implement the vision we may need to go further with eg simple heated food for social support. Location will be governed largely by existing water and drainage, and is likely to be in the north aisle, near to the choir vestry.

B.9 For ease of serving, and access, the main catering arrangements will require a counter in the north aisle, which should contain most of the necessary fitments. Ancillary storage might be in the choir vestry. Depending on removal of pews, re-siting of the bookstore, and the future of the Biddulph pew, it should be possible also to provide a modest number of tables and chairs for catering. PCC is asked to commission BWG to bring forward detailed proposals for a catering facility, providing initially for the parish's own needs, but being capable of expansion to meet needs arising from the vision.

B.10 Linked with catering, should be improvement to provide more and better lavatory facilities. Decisions on what and where must wait the detailed design requirements for the upper rooms which will have some impact at least on the choir vestry.

Bookstall

B.11 The Bookstall is successful and relatively uncomplicated as a structure. It may be possible to expand its role and merchandise in future years, but for the present a decision simply on location can be put to the PCC when we have decisions on the pews and catering. There should be early consultation with the Friends, who run the bookstall.

Heating

B.12 The most difficult item in this category is heating. This will be expensive and the timing is largely out of our hands. Replacement may be forced upon us by the state of the current boiler, but a simple exchange of like for like may be incompatible with Government and wider church policy. We must, nevertheless, prepare as best we can. Meanwhile, current costs spiral upwards. PCC is asked to invite the Fabric Sub-committee to prepare

a comprehensive review of the boiler, and the options and possible sources of finance for replacing it.

iii. Possible Longer Term Improvements

B.13 There are four items that fall under the longer term heading. All would contribute significantly to the ambience and functioning of the church. All would require significant fund-raising. At present the church is not equipped with the necessary structures, personnel or skills to do that.

B.14 Whilst our worship needs (in terms of use of space) are relatively straightforward, the need to adapt spaces for different sorts of worship, and to accommodate smaller groups require careful thought, given the range of churchmanship and theological preferences in the congregation. The re-ordering of the church to facilitate community presents a greater challenge. We need flexible uses of space so that large groups, small groups and even one-to-one sessions can all be provided for. The requirement to cater for a span of ages from toddlers to the elderly and infirm, in comfort, access and facilities further increases the complexity.

B.15 Selection of existing rooms or spaces for particular functions will require great care. For example, there is significant call for a return to a robed choir; that will have to be considered on its merits; it must not be blocked simply on the grounds that the choir vestry has been taken for other uses. Spaces set up for children could also be used for groups other than our own provision for children's work or worship. Meeting rooms could have a dual purpose; being used for small community-based groups as well as church worship or administration. Those groups could include counselling or parental support groups. LEAF would certainly welcome such facilities. Appropriate accommodation is needed to enable these forms of outreach and would enable St Michaels to develop not just as the worship centre for the town but also as a core community hub that the people of Ledbury recognise as a focal point for their personal physical, cultural and emotional support.

B.16 Glazing the west door by means of an internal porch would improve light, save heating and significantly improve the attraction of the church to tourists and probably the community. The work is doable, but complicated by the steps at the west end. That would probably make the work particularly expensive if full access there for all were aimed at. The decision for the PCC is whether, when resources became available for studies, they would wish to commission technical and professional work on this. (The costs of such preliminary work would themselves not be negligible.)

B.17 There could be adverse presentational effects: when all were under pressure from rising prices, and with real poverty around, would such a project command sympathy in the town and help relations with it? Whilst the work would be a real asset for many years to come, local enthusiasm for it might be limited. On balance, the PCC is invited to consider and approve the possibility but to hold back from active pursuit until the financial climate has improved, for both church and community.

B.18 Addressing floor level changes at the east end of the nave and aisles would be desirable but technically difficult if tackled comprehensively. St Anne's, Chancel, Trinity and Chapter House are all on different levels. Beneath the Chancel are the Martin and Skyppe Vaults. Beneath the other floors, except the Chapter House, is concrete from the 1895 reordering. To sort them out to a common level could only be done by raising all to a common height above the nave, which would still leave access from the nave as an issue

and be very disruptive not only to worship but to fixtures, fittings and (probably) existing glazing to the Chapter House.

B.19 A less disruptive partial solution might be the provision of a dais. (One, for the nave altar, was in use in the first decade of this century.) However, size, style, position and function would all raise significant problems. Given the differing floor levels to be addressed an attempt to resolve the levels problems completely in this manner might be messy and aesthetically unattractive. A better solution for the near future would be to improve access between levels by improved ramps, with separate consideration given to the possible functions, and so dimensions, of a dais. The PCC is asked to commission work on ramps from the Fabric Sub-committee, and from BWG on the options for a dais.

B.20 Parking and exterior access pose significant problems to which there is no immediate solution. That is not simply a matter of finance, though that could be greater than might be thought, because of the need for archaeological survey, possible movement of monuments, etc. It is simply that the only current vehicular access to the church is to the west end and north side, through narrow, listed, gates. To have the west front cluttered up by cars would be very much less than attractive. Arranging parking on the east side would involve a lengthy run through the churchyard. Extending the existing parking between tower and church is not feasible.

B.21 The most likely options for improving parking might be off-site, either directly or by obtaining a new access to the eastern part of the churchyard. Parking or access could be in or via the police station car park, or at the bottom of the upper hall land. Either of those could mean a considerable walk for the elderly or disabled. What is needed first of all is a study of the needs, for normal services, for special events, for emergency services, taking account of an ageing congregation with increasing disability, and the desire to extend the use of the church by the community for non-worship purposes. In the light of such a study, and soundings about the possibility of off-site parking, the PCC could consider what further provision would be feasible and appropriate. The PCC is recommended to commission such a study, and informal soundings.

B.22 Meanwhile, a possible interim measure might be to introduce restrictions on on-site parking on Sunday, limiting it to those with impaired mobility. The PCC is invited to consider whether it would wish to undertake a study of the practicalities of this.

B.23 The PCC is asked to note the urgent need for younger active people to play a major role in all this, preferably some with technical and professional qualifications in construction, conservation and related finance. There are not in-house the necessary skills to carry forward many of the recommendations after paragraph B.6 above.

B.24 If circumstances and funds permitted, the launching and carrying forward of a major reordering the parish would need a core team of active people working pretty much full time over say 10 years to carry it to conclusion. That could not be found from those currently engaged with the matter. BWG urgently needs reinforcement in terms of younger members and professional skills even to carry out the immediate actions proposed above. PCC is invited to consider where those additional resources can speedily be found.