



# St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

## Minutes of Standing Committee – 7 May 2024

**Present:** Keith Hilton-Turvey (Rector)  
Catherine Beech (Churchwarden)  
David Houghton (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech

**Apologies:** Stephen Cheetham

**818.** The meeting opened with prayer. David Houghton chaired the meeting.

### Minutes of the meeting on 29 February

**819.** These had been agreed and signed at the PCC meeting on 20 March.

### Awayday/Vision

**820.** A group<sup>1</sup> has been set up to follow up two useful meetings on the church's prayer life held recently. Georgina Hicks has been asked to set up a Prayer Corner in St Anne's chapel. Keith Hilton-Turvey will explore with the archdeacon whether permission is required to do so. Communications about prayer are to be improved. Participation in the midday prayer meeting on Thursdays and the Zoom prayer meeting on Fridays would be encouraged. Keith will also speak to Sarah Whitlock, Diocesan Communications Adviser. It was agreed that the Holy Week programme of meditation and prayer would be repeated before Harvest and Advent.

### **Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey**

**821.** It was felt that the teaching series on Sunday mornings was going well, but each sermon was probably attempting to cover too wide a field. It was felt that these issues could perhaps be addressed in greater depth as part of the third Thursday teaching series, where people would also have a chance to ask questions. The first few Third Thursday sessions (not related to the sermon series) were being organized. Keith Hilton-Turvey will speak to Father Cosmin of the Romanian Orthodox Church about giving a talk on the Orthodox liturgy.

### **Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey**

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<sup>1</sup> The group consists of: Rector and churchwardens, Anne Scull, Georgina Hicks and Bill MacKenzie. One other person has been approached to join the group.

**822.** Concern was expressed that IKnowChurch was not working well. Keith Hilton-Turvey will discuss possible fixes with the firm that supports it.

**Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey**

### **APCM resolution on the role of women**

**823.** Discussion was deferred until after the next wardens' meeting. Keith Hilton-Turvey felt that a separate PCC meeting might be held to discuss this one topic.

### **Policies and procedures**

**824.** These need to be discussed by the new PCC at its May meeting. Stephen Cheetham was asked to review all the financial policies and procedures in advance of that meeting, and to propose any changes to the existing texts to the PCC. Cath Beech will remind Sue Simpson of the need to review the Health and Safety Policy. She will also discuss a church risk assessment with Maria Dineen.

**Action: Stephen Cheetham/Cath Beech**

### **Net Carbon Zero Demonstrator Church**

**825.** Andrew Beech presented the paper at Annex A. It was agreed that the paper will go to the May PCC for agreement. A couple of potential names were proposed as EcoChurch champion.

### **Merger of Ledbury and Bromyard deaneries**

**826.** There were no comments on the consultation document from the diocese that proposes the merger of Ledbury and Bromyard deaneries. The document will be put to the PCC to see whether anyone wishes to comment.

### **Volunteers**

**827.** Tim Keyes had asked the PCC to consider how to address the lack of volunteers within the church to take on the various roles needed. This was a problem widely faced by a number of (but not all) volunteer organisations. It was agreed that Tim Keyes should be invited to the May PCC meeting to lead a discussion on this topic.

**Action: Andrew Beech**

### **Finance**

**828.** Stephen Cheetham had submitted a finance report. This was noted without comment. Keith Hilton-Turvey will speak to Ayo Adewale about what could be done to encourage members to give more to the church.

**Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey**

**829.** It was agreed that a second dehumidifier should be purchased for the organ at a cost of £200.

**Action: Stephen Cheetham**

### **Fabric**

**830.** It was agreed that John Hainsworth should join the Fabric Sub-Committee. The PCC will be asked to ratify this.

#### Permanent heating solution

**831.** A number of fee proposals were awaited from potential consultants. One had been received thus far.

#### Roof valley repairs

**832.** As the weather had improved it was hoped that this work would commence soon.

#### Upper rooms

**833.** Further work was needed to assess the condition of the floor under the western upper room, which was giving cause for concern. This would necessitate the removal of the choir robes. William Hopkinson had agreed to store these for the duration.

#### Pews

**834.** Unexpectedly the manufacturer of the proposed casters has confirmed that they would damage the floor. Alternative castors are being sought.

**Action: Fabric Sub-Committee**

#### Trinity altar

**835.** An email received from Chichester diocese would be forwarded to the Hereford Diocesan Registrar. Hopefully this would allow the release of the former Trinity altar.

**Action: Andrew Beech**

#### Catering Unit

**836.** No further action, as the replacement heating has been given priority.

#### Wooden chest beside north door

**837.** Conservation and repair of this chest had been estimated at £1500-1700. It was felt that the church was faced with major expenditure elsewhere, and that this project should be put on hold.

## Bells – noise abatement

**838.** Tim Keyes had suggested that the remaining moneys in the bells account (some £28,500) should be used to fund noise abatement measures on the north and west sides of the tower. This was in response to complaints from a neighbour. In discussion it was felt that these complaints were groundless, and that the person(s) concerned had purchased their property in the full knowledge that there was an active bell tower next door. Instead the money would be better used to repaint the spire, which was a recommendation of the current Quinquennial Report. To the May PCC meeting.

## **Church silver**

**839.** No action to report.

**Action:** *David Houghton/Andrew Beech*

## **Safeguarding**

**840.** Nothing to report.

## **Date of next meeting**

**841.** The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on 1 July at The Croft, Woodleigh Road.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm with prayer.

## Greening St Michaels

### Introduction

1. In July 2020 the General Synod passed a resolution committing the Church of England to achieving Net Zero Carbon status by 2030. More details were agreed at the General Synod in July 2022. The immediate impact was that the faculty rules were amended to make the introduction of carbon-friendly measures easier.
2. The impact of this on St Michaels in the short term has been, unfortunately, negative. Had our gas boiler failed before the faculty changes we could simply have replaced it with another one. Now we are no longer allowed to unless we can demonstrate that there is no alternative that does not use fossil fuels. This will require much greater expenditure in hiring consultants to examine all the various alternatives (and probably much greater expenditure in the replacement heating system itself), a considerable amount of additional paperwork and a much longer timescale before the replacement heating system is up and running. The Fabric Sub-Committee is having to work on this.

### Net Carbon Zero Demonstrator Church

3. There are some funding opportunities from the central church to help churches meet Net Zero Carbon, which could help with assessing and delivering a new heating system for St Michaels. The diocese is considering 3-4 churches that could be put forward for the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Demonstrator Churches grant scheme. This scheme offers a package of support for parish churches to move towards reaching Net Zero Carbon. As we are known to be looking to replace our defunct gas heating system, St Michaels is one of the churches that the diocese has entered for Stage 1 support. This would include a free or subsidized energy audit through parish buying; access to independent technical advice service (desk based); access to a fundraising consultant; and up to a maximum of £15,000+VAT towards technical studies or other professional fees (including heating consultants, architects' structural surveys, planning permission and/or faculty fees, and if needed project management, or funding towards a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan) required to deliver a carbon net zero heating system for St Michaels.
4. If we wish to take this forward we need to be willing to meet the following criteria over the next few months:
  - Be a registered Eco Church and ideally have achieved or be working towards an award;
  - Have submitted an Energy Footprint Tool return;
  - Have a basic Net Zero Carbon Action Plan in place;
  - Put the church on a 100% green energy tariff, or commit to changing to such upon contract renewal.
5. We would also need to be willing to participate in project monitoring and evaluation, and be prepared to be visited by other churches, to contribute to national case studies and evaluations, including potential photographs, films and written materials which may be published online or elsewhere.

### Practical considerations

6. There are a number of difficulties facing the church that have already been identified:
  - a) Firstly we are a Grade I listed medieval building and hence would not be allowed, even if we asked nicely, to make substantial adaptations to the structure to save energy. For instance the building is uninsulated. It would cost a fortune to insulate the roof of the church, and permission to do so is highly unlikely to be obtained even if the money could be found

because of the visual impact of the insulation. The same considerations apply to double glazing the windows. This might lessen our attractiveness to those operating the Eco-Church scheme;

- b) Secondly we have no direct control over the churchyard, which is the responsibility of the Town Council. The churchyard is one area where significant improvements to its conservation status could be achieved. But whilst we could encourage the Town Council to do so, we cannot force them to. And they are as cash-strapped as the church is;
  - c) Thirdly some alternative environmentally friendlier heating systems have already had to be ruled out. The floors of the nave, and probably of the Chapter House, are solid concrete, ruling out the installation of underfloor heating. Heat pumps are useful only in well insulated buildings. St Michaels has no insulation and no realistic prospect of getting any (see above). Furthermore ground source heat pumps would necessitate digging up much of the churchyard, with all the concomitant difficulties of disturbing graves, and the considerable expense of an archaeological survey. Air source heat pumps are noisy, and we should have consideration for our neighbours, who would be disturbed by them.
7. The Energy Footprint Tool has existed on the environment and climate change section of the Church of England website for some time. Churches have been asked for some time to submit annual returns. This has never been done for St Michaels (and no-one has ever chased up its absence), but would now need to be done. Probably the work to be done by consultants advising on the replacement heating system might help towards working out how to use the Tool and to complete it.
  8. There are a number of more minor changes being promoted by EcoChurch that we could fairly easily meet, such as collecting rainwater from the roof, installing dual-flush buttons to the toilets, using nothing but environmentally friendly cleaning products etc. Many of the EcoChurch suggestions are already practiced within the church.

#### Next steps

9. Given the timescales, the diocese has already nominated St Michaels as a demonstrator church. At this stage this doesn't commit us to anything and we could withdraw should we wish to. However the professional help and grants potentially on offer could be extremely useful as we seek a replacement heating system.
10. The members of the Fabric Sub-Committee are heavily involved in church work already, and it would be useful if someone else, preferably someone with enthusiasm for improving the environment and fighting climate change, could be appointed as the church's Eco-Church champion. The champion would be expected to take forward all of the measures listed in paragraph 4 above, working closely with the Fabric Sub-Committee and the church treasurer.
11. The PCC is invited to agree the recommendation at paragraph 10, above, and to identify someone to appoint to the post of EcoChurch champion.

Andrew Beech

Chair, Fabric Sub-Committee

May 2024