

# St James's Church Bramley

## Parochial Church Council

Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### Minutes

*Final: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019*

#### **Present:**

John Lenton (Chair), Jerry Adams, John Crampton-Hayward, Ian Evett (Secretary), Nairn Glen, Sarah Hodnett, Alison Jones, Malcolm Knowles, Jeremy Masson, Sarah Mitchell, Ken Payne

#### **Apologies:**

Stephen Ball, Karen Bentall, Ranil Jayawardena, Jonathan Large, Ruth Saunders, Wren Vaughan.

#### **Welcome and prayer**

John read from Acts Chapter 15 and this was followed by prayer

#### **Minutes of last meeting (previously circulated)**

Approved and signed by John

Actions

19/1 Matters arising

18/30 DBS forms for PCC members  
Defer to next meeting in Ruth's absence

RMS

18/31 Review of data audit (IWE)  
Complete. Nothing to report.

18/36 Cross House Kitchen (SH)  
See below

18/38 Common Mission Fund (FNG)  
See treasurer's report below

18/40 Church Suite and Google Docs (JRL)  
This is a pMAP matter – defer to next meeting

18/41 Recovering cost of quinquennial inspection from Diocese (FNG)  
Nairn reported that the bank account has been credited with the appropriate amount from the Diocese, though he has, as yet, not had a reply to his e-mail.

18/44 Approval of Bishop's decision to institute Stephen Ball as the next incumbent of the benefice

Ian reported that he had informed the Diocese of the PCC decision.

18/45 Replace the adult safeguarding policy for adults on the website with the most recent version. (AJ/RMS)

Alison reported that this had been done and two additional policy documents had also been added. The question arose as to whether the parish should be alerted to the presence of these documents on the website. Ian to speak to Ruth.

18/46 Card readers

The card readers have been acquired and are working as expected. They have been trialled in services.

18/47a "Friends of St James's" fund: SM/JRL

John reported that in Muswell Hill a "friends fund" has been set up as a stand-alone charity with its own trustees. This arrangement seems to work effectively. Sarah (M) reported that a similar scheme in Fowey had proved popular with locals, even non church-goers; at one point they tried to merge the two funds but in the end reverted to the separate scheme.

18/47b New draft pMAP (AJ/JJM)

In progress.

18/48a Costings for relay to Cross House from Church (KP)

Ken has found a camera that would suit our purpose at a cost of £650. We would need a cable at a cost of around £150. Ken has the necessary sound kit but needs to discuss the computer side of things with Nathan. We agreed that, particularly in view of the Treasurer's report (below) we will need to think hard about priorities. Deferred to a future meeting.

18/48b Roof repairs (MK)

The roof repairs to the church roof have been completed by PF Smith to Malcolm's satisfaction.

18/48d Lunch at Cross House on Christmas Day (AJ)

Alison and Sarah (M) reported that this had been a great success. There will be a report in the next issue of the magazine which will help awareness throughout the village in anticipation of repeating the event next Christmas. The Parish Council had kindly donated

£200 towards the costs but, because of a generous private donation, this was not needed and it will be returned (with thanks) to the PC

19/2 **Treasurer's report**

Because of its urgency, this was brought forward in the agenda.

Nairn had prepared a report – see Appendix below.

Briefly, the running costs of the church are approximately £15,000 pa and the costs for Cross House are about £4000 pa. Our total income from all sources in a good year is about £60,000. Thus we are in a position to pay in the region £40,000 to £45,000 to the Diocesan Church Mission Fund. On this basis Nairn believes that in the current year we should not commit to pay more than £3500 per month. Nairn believes that for 2019 the Diocese will be requiring a small increase on what we paid last year, which was £4385 per month.

After a wide-ranging discussion we agreed on the following:

1. Nairn (with John's assistance) to write to the Diocese explaining that we believe that this year our payments to the CMF must fall some way short of what the Diocese will expect.

FNG/JRL

2. We ask for advice from Gordon Randall on how we might go about appealing to our congregation with a view to increasing the overall level of giving. (John to arrange meeting)

JRL

3. We have a number of new attenders (Sunday@nine) who are not familiar with the notion of sacrificial giving. We need to think of ways in which we could make them aware of how they might contribute. (All)

All

4. We need to raise income from the use of Cross House. Malcolm/Sarah (M)/Nairn to work up some provisional ideas in consultation with Pam Luck.

MK/SM/FNG

19/3 **Report on Standing Committee actions (IWE)**

Ian reported that the standing committee had exchanged e-mails following a report that the Cross House floor polisher had broken down irreparably. The standing committee had approved the purchase of a new floor polish for £712.

19/4 **Cross House maintenance (MK and SH)**

Sarah reported that the Cross House kitchen door had been replaced. She asked that anyone going into the kitchen at any time should check that the door is securely shut.

Malcolm reported on the Cross House roof. There is a leak but it has not yet been possible to localise it with any degree of confidence. We have consulted an architect/surveyor and, following his advice, some temporary

- repairs have been carried out but we will not be able to gauge their effectiveness until the next rainy period. It has emerged that the window that opens onto the flat roof (from the committee room) is in urgent need of outside painting. MK
- Sarah reported that the church and Cross House boilers are to be serviced within the week. John pointed out that there was a need to check the individual radiators in Cross House. Sarah will bear this in mind SH
- 19/5 **Cross House – 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (JL)**
- In the absence of Jonathan Large, this was deferred to the next meeting.
- 19/6 **Clift Meadow Trust: proceeds of 2018 fete (JRL)**
- At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, we agreed that we would return to the Clift Meadow Trust half of the £2250 we had received from them as our 50% of the proceeds of the 2017 fete (item 17/31). (This meant, in effect, that the church would accept 25% of the fete proceeds). John asked that we give some thought to whether we should do something similar with regard to the proceeds of the 2018 fete.
- Deferred to next meeting
- 19/7 **Electoral Roll and APCM(IWE)**
- Ian reported that this year we are required to prepare a new electoral roll. This must be done in good time for the APCM. In hand. IWE
- The date for the APCM had been fixed for 14<sup>th</sup> April but, because several of the PCC members would be away at that time, we agreed to bring it forward to 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- It was agreed that Nairn should ask Alex Marianos if he would be prepared to be examiner of the accounts FNG
- On the basis of seniority, Alison, Karen, Wren and Nairn are due to stand down from the PCC this year but, of course, they are eligible for re-election at the APCM. Ian to write to all four. IWE
- 19/8 **Bishop's Commission for Mission nomination (JRL)**
- John proposed that Sarah (H) should be put forward to take the pastoral module of the Bishop's Commission for Mission at a cost to the PCC of approximately £90
- Seconded by Nairn and carried unanimously.
- No AOB taken because of the lateness of the hour.
- The meeting closed at 9.50 pm with the saying of The Grace.
- Next meetings**  
13<sup>th</sup> March, 7<sup>th</sup> April for APCM

# APPENDIX:

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

As reported at previous PCC meetings, the church's finances have been coming under pressure following the substantial increase in the contributions we have been making during 2018 to Winchester Diocese Common Mission Fund (previously known as the Parish Share).

### CASH FLOW PRESSURES IN 2018

As well as meeting the higher CMF payments we also had to pay £4841 to the Diocese for wedding and funeral fees for 2017, which had not been paid in the previous year.

In the last couple of months we have also had to fund a number of major costs including

	£
• Repairs to bell tower (net of grant from Bellringers fund)	5062
• Parish running expenses for Feb to Dec paid by J Lenton	2310
• Replacement floor polisher for Cross House	712
• Replacement door for Cross House	725
• Repairs to and cleaning of guttering	780
• Total	9589

These items have made a very large hole in our bank account which currently stands at about £10,000. Note the above list does not include the repairs to the tower window which were covered by our insurance policy. It may also be possible to recover the VAT on the repairs to the tower.

Other major expenditure in the year included

• New sound and vision equipment for Cross House	2154
• Fire risk assessment and follow-up work	1155
• Running expenses re H2 2017 funded by J Lenton	1026
• Replacement ropes for bells (see below)	1065
• Payment to Amadet College	1909
• Total major or prior year items	7309

The replacement ropes were funded from the Bellringers' account but this is no longer held separately by the Diocese having been returned to us last year. It is now part of our main bank account.

Outstanding payments include the Harvest Festival collection which was committed to Tearfund and the collection on Remembrance Sunday committed to SSAFA. These total £430 (net of lunch costs) and £625 respectively.

## ANNUAL PLANNED AND OTHER GIVING

PGS giving rose by 30% in 2017 but has remained largely static in 2018. Other giving through the envelope scheme and the regular collections fell in 2017 (perhaps as people transferred their giving to the PGS?) but rose quite substantially in 2018.

	2016	2017	2018
	£	£	£
Parish Giving Scheme	32111	41939	41407
Other giving	11865	5027	10695
TOTAL GIVING	43976	46966	52102

We have fallen behind in reclaiming gift aid on the envelope scheme and other collection money and this will be brought up to date in 2019 so a further £3000 – 4000 should be recoverable in relation to 2017 and 2018.

## CHURCH RUNNING COSTS

The costs of running the church, including heating, insurance, normal maintenance, costs of services, visiting clergy, our agreed charitable donations, etc. is approaching £15,000. Costs of Cross House are lower this year at about £4000 but there has been very little income received in 2018. I am trying to establish whether this is due to a reduction in use or failure to collect income.

## SUMMARY OF CHURCH FINANCES

Other revenue includes any surplus from the magazine (likely this year to be of the order of £1000), contribution from the village fete (£1700 in 2018), wedding and funeral fees (although a large share of this goes to the Diocese), and any donations or profits from fundraising events. In a good year this might bring our total income to about £60000. As noted above our running costs are about £15000. Cross House is likely to cost a modest amount each year leaving £40000 to £45000 for payment to the Diocesan Common Mission Fund. In 2017 we paid £36,336 and in 2018 £52618. I don't have a final figure for what the Diocese is requesting for 2019 but believe it will be a small increase on last year's figure of £4385 per month. Based on the above (rather crude) estimates I feel we should not commit to pay more than £3500 per month.

## THE DIOCESAN COMMON MISSION FUND

This is a very sensitive subject and I am sure the Church does not want to be seen as a body always with its collective hand out for more money. The vast bulk of what the Diocese brings

in it spends on “ministry” activities. Increasingly this includes pensions for retired clergy, who like the population at large, are living longer and so drawing pensions for longer than might have been anticipated when the C of E pension arrangements were set up.

The Church owns a significant number of Grade 1 listed buildings, which are expensive to maintain and these costs also have to be met in the main from parishioners.

On the other hand some church-goers may feel listed buildings should be maintained by the country at large rather than just the worshipping community. In Bramley, some may be thinking we should just “look after ourselves” particularly as our vicar does not receive a stipend!

Having said that (and probably many other things as well) the contribution we are asked to make is less than £10 per week per member of our “worshipping community”. Given that there are several people contributing very far in excess of that, it follows that there are many who are contributing less – or perhaps nothing at all.

## POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

- A further general plea for more money on a regular basis. It may be timely to remind people of the cost of running the church; to point out that if we were truly a stand-alone organisation meeting all its costs including paying a vicar, we would have to raise broadly the sum we are being asked to meet.
- Raid the reserves. We are fortunate in having quite substantial reserves built up over the years to keep St James in good order and maintain it as central to the life of the village. It may be thought that any major expenditure could be taken from these reserves leaving more of our income to fund CMF contributions. This is something of a slippery slope as clearly the money can only be spent once and “eating the seed corn” is generally not to be recommended! However there are some costs which it seems to be can legitimately be covered from reserves. I would include in this the repairs to the bell tower. I’m not sure, however, that there are many other costs this year that I would be happy to see charged to reserves.
- Parish Council. I understand the council has suggested it might be able to make grants for specific expenditure. This will be pursued. It might also be possible to get the Council to fund some maintenance costs of what might be seen as a village asset.
- Fundraising. Whenever we have had events we have managed to raise quite respectable sums. These are hundreds of pounds however – not thousands and so, while welcome, do not seem to be a long-term answer to our needs.
- Project fundraising. Again when we have asked people to contribute to specific projects such as new hymn books or pew cushions, we have had no trouble raising the money required and more. This should certainly be considered for any such expenditure in the future but may be less relevant in meeting day to day running costs – or CMF contributions.

- Use of Cross House. Income has fallen this year and we need to understand why. It's a great resource and arguably underutilised. Is there a case for more social events in future – e.g. curry evenings, quiz nights, country dancing!!!

## SUMMARY

We have been living beyond our means throughout 2018 in the context of the higher CMF contributions we have been making. This has been possible because of our relatively high bank balance. When I became treasurer this was almost £30000, swollen of course by magazine advertising revenue paid in advance but still healthy. It's now down below £10000 and, if we continue to pay CMF as requested, will shrink further quite quickly.

My proposal is that we write to the Diocese outlining these points and suggest we make payments on account to CMF of £3500 per month. Depending on how the year turns out financially we may be able to make a further "13<sup>th</sup> payment" at the end of the year.