

# St James's Church Bramley

## Parochial Church Council

Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### Minutes

*Final : 7 May 2019*

**Present:**

John Lenton (Chair), John Crampton-Hayward, Ian Evett (Secretary), Nairn Glen, Sarah Mitchell, Ken Payne, Jonathan Large, Jeremy Masson, Ruth Saunders.

**Apologies:**

Jerry Adams, Stephen Ball, Karen Bentall, Ranil Jayawardena, Alison Jones, Malcolm Knowles, Sarah Hodnett, Wren Vaughan

**Welcome and prayer**

John read from 2 Corinthians 12 and this was followed by prayer

Actions

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

Approved with two amendments and signed by John

19/9 Matters arising

18/30 DBS forms for PCC members (RMS)

In progress. Anyone requiring assistance should speak to Ruth

19/2 (1) Nairn (with John's assistance) to write to Diocese about our CMF contribution (FNG/JRL)

Nairn's e-mail correspondence with Colin Harbidge was circulated prior to the meeting. See Treasurer's report below (19/17).

19/2 (2) Seek advice from Gordon Randall on appealing to the congregation about increasing level of giving (JRL)

JRL

John has this in hand.

19/2 (3) Think about ways in which we could make new attenders aware of how they might contribute financially

In hand

19/2 (4) Ideas for raising income from Cross House (MK/SM/FNG)

Nairn reported that income had started to flow from Cross House lettings. Nairn will discuss with Steve Day, who is taking over from Pam Luck. John will ensure that Pam is duly thanked at the APCM for all her hard work as Cross House manager for several years

JRL

19/7 Preparation of new electoral roll (IWE)

The new electoral roll is on display in the church porch (names only). Regulations dictate that it must be displayed for a total of 14 days. Afterwards, the old electoral roll (paper and electronic versions) will be destroyed

IWE

19/7 Ask Alex Marianos to be examiner of the accounts (FNG)

This has been done and Alex has already approved the accounts (see Treasurer's report below at 19/17).

19/7 Write to Alison, Karen, Wren and Nairn about re-election to PCC (IWE)

This has been done. Alison and Nairn have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election. Wren has said that she will stand down. John said that he would speak to Karen. Ian will prepare election forms for Alison and Nairn.

JRL  
IWE

18/48d Sarah (M) reported that she had written to the Parish Council about returning the £200 that had been donated for the Christmas Lunch. However, the PC has asked that we retain the money and put it towards the cost of future community lunches.

#### 19/10 ***Bishop's intention to extend John Lenton's licence for one year***

John introduced this item by explaining that an extension to his existing licence will expire on 13<sup>th</sup> May. The Bishop has indicated his intention to extend the licence for an additional year. The archdeacon has written to ask that the PCC should consider the Bishop's intention and his letter was forwarded to PCC members prior to the meeting. Following this, some clarification on the process was sought following questions raised by Jeremy. Consequently, the archdeacon has contacted the churchwardens on the matter, as is set out in the framework for this process.

John then left the room and Nairn took the chair.

Jeremy expressed his concern for the medium-term future and it was agreed by all that there needed to be a dialogue between the PCC and the Diocese on the subject as a matter of priority. The Bishop's proposal was discussed and it was proposed by Jeremy, seconded by Sarah (M) that the PCC should support the Bishop's intention to extend John's licence by a year. The proposal was approved unanimously.

John returned and was told of the PCC's decision. The discussion about the medium-term future of the parish ministry was then renewed. The main concern, shared by all, that we needed re-assurance that a process would be in place to ensure that, when John did eventually retire (whether after one, two or more years) there would be a smooth transition to a new incumbent. There is no enthusiasm for an interregnum, whatever the length.

We agreed that we, as a PCC, should write to the Arch Deacon (copied to the Bishop) to express our concerns. The letter should include the following:

- 1) A request for an explanation for the process.
- 2) Some indication of how the Diocese views the needs of our parish
- 3) Note that the population of the village is increasing rapidly
- 4) We look for an early appointment to build on the excellent work that has been done in the parish over the last 8 years
- 5) Ask the Arch Deacon to visit and discuss the matter with the PCC

JJM

Jeremy undertook to prepare the first draft of the letter.

19/11 ***Clift Meadow Trust and proceeds of 2018 fete***

At its meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, the PCC agreed to return half of the £2250 we had been given by the Clift Meadow Trust from the proceeds of the 2017 fete (17/31). As yet, this has not been actioned but we agreed unanimously that Nairn should transfer the £1125 to the Trust. We also agreed unanimously that we should not return any portion of the £1700 that we received from the Trust for the 2018 fete. Finally, we agreed unanimously that we will take no share of the proceeds for the 2019 fete.

Nairn agreed to write to the Clift Meadow Trust. John to advise on drafting

NMG/JRL

19/12 ***Cross House Fire upgrade (JRL for MK)***

John reported, on behalf of Malcolm, that a quotation had been received from a company called Circle Fire for bringing the building up to compliance with the fire regulations. The total cost would be approximately £4500 including VAT. It was agreed that this work was high priority but we should ask Malcolm to secure quotations from at least one other provider.

MK

19/13 ***Cross House: anniversary, upkeep and admin (JL)***

Jonathan put forward several ideas for events to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of Cross House this coming July. He agreed to prepare a set of plans for the PCC to consider. Nairn suggested that all events should be self-financing. Jeremy suggested that something should go into the magazine as soon as possible.

JL

Jeremy also pointed out that this year was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Bramley school.

19/14 **DBS checks update (RMS)**

Ruth had already reported under matters arising. In hand.

RMS

19/15 **Electoral Roll and APCM (IWE)**

Ian reported that the new Electoral Roll had been completed. A list of the names of the members is currently on display in the church porch. Regulations require that it remain on display for 14 days.

Given the vacancy following Wren's decision not to seek re-election, it was suggested that Steve Day might like to stand though it was emphasised that we should not burden him with any duties additional to the management of Cross House. Ian agreed to speak to Steve.

IWE

19/16 **Annual Report for APCM (IWE)**

Ian reported that the draft Annual Report had been circulated among the PCC members. It will now be finally proofed, printed and photocopied in time to be at the back of the church on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March. It will also be necessary to print and photocopy the Treasurer's annual report and a copy will need to be displayed in the porch for at least seven days before the APCM.

IWE/JRL

19/17 **Reports**

*a) Treasurer (FNG)*

Nairn had prepared a report for the PCC - see Appendix. This had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Nairn reported that the finances had improved by the greater-than-expected £10,000 received from Gift Aid and also by a bequest of £5000 from Phyl Davies. In view of this, Nairn proposed that our CMF payments for this year should be increased to £4,000 per month. Seconded by Ruth and passed unanimously. Nairn will write to Colin Harbidge to tell him of the change.

FNG

Nairn reported that the insurance premiums had increased substantially but sought approval to pay the necessary amounts. Approved unanimously.

FNG

*b) Parish Mission Action Plan (JJM)*

The pMAP team (Jeremy, Alison and John) are preparing a first outline draft for discussion by the PCC, but have not yet reached consensus on all of its contents. Since all three are busy, it is difficult

to find time to meet, but will make every effort to keep to the diocesan timetable. The report will be circulated among the PCC members as soon as possible.

JJM

*c) School (JRL)*

John asked Jeremy, who has recently joined the School's Governing Body as a co-opted member, to comment on what he had observed. Jeremy reported that the school was doing well. Staffing is in a good state; the finances are heading for a surplus; collective worship is a regular part of the school week; well prepared for OFSTED.

19/18 ***Any other business***

There was no other business

The meeting closed at 9.42pm with the saying of The Grace.

**Next meeting**

7<sup>th</sup> April for APCM

## BRAMLEY PCC 13 MARCH 2019

### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### 2018 ACCOUNTS

The accounts for 2018 have been prepared and signed by Alex Marianos as independent examiner. A copy is attached to this report. The deficit for the year which came in at £17753 will not be a surprise given the matters we discussed at the last PCC. Just under £6000 of this was the cost of masonry repairs to the bell tower. (It will be recalled that the cost replacing the window was covered by our insurance policy.)

Interest and dividends received on the various investments held for us by CCLA totalled £2600 and are included in arriving at the overall deficit above. They were offset almost exactly however by the reduction in value of the investments held. This too is unsurprising given the pattern of stock market returns in 2018. As a result our total reserves fell by £20,000 but are still healthy at £211,250.

#### CURRENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Since my last report we have recovered some £10,000 in Gift Aid relating to the tax years 2016/7 and 2017/8. This is very good news and is well above what Sarah and I were expecting. In addition we have received a very generous bequest of £5,000 from the estate of the late Phyl Davies. Finally a little more income has started to flow from Cross House lettings. In aggregate these have put our finances into a healthier position than they were when I wrote my last report. On the other hand we are facing fairly big costs of complying with current fire regulations in Cross House and the kitchen also needs work.

I am also conscious that there are suggestions about taking on new activities in support of the Parish Mission Action Plan, which, if adopted, will require funding.

#### COMMON MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTION

Following the discussion at the last PCC meeting I wrote to the Head of Operations at the Diocese stating that the deficit in our current year income and expenditure meant that we felt we could not commit to maintain the CMF contribution at the same level as in 2018. As was to be expected this was not a welcome message although as far as I can gather we are not the only parish experiencing difficulty in meeting our requested CMF payment.

I am attaching to this report Colin Harbidge's email to me expressing his disappointment and suggesting that we consider charging the exceptional costs incurred in 2018 to our reserves. Although he is mistaken in thinking they were all maintenance costs, there is no doubt that we can justify charging the costs of repairing the bell tower against the fabric fund. The point I was making last time, however, was that current income was running below current expenditure even after charging repairs against reserves and I still consider it prudent to reduce the CMF payment until we see a further increase in income.

Colin Harbidge says in his email “Ultimately it is of course for each PCC to decide how much they contribute to the CMF.” But he then goes on to ask me to work with the Deanery Finance Chair to develop a flight path, which he calls “an informal agreement between the PCC and the Deanery team (ratified by the Diocesan team) that set out a three year plan for how a PCC aims to reach its target request.” This slightly contradictory paragraph suggests they expect us to meet their requested contribution.

A flight path seems to require projections of expenditure for several years together with a commitment by the parish to increase our giving by a given percentage to allow us to increase CMF payments to the desired level. Our main costs relate to services and other outreach and faith work and we have seen significant increases in utility costs recently. On the income front it is not for the treasurer to suggest a commitment to an overall increase in our giving in the next few years. All this means any attempt at meaningful forward projections is inherently speculative.

## SUGGESTION FOR 2019

I have now received the proposed contribution for Bramley which shows a further increase of 5.3% on top of the 40% increase in 2018. This compares with the average increase for Odiham deanery of 1.3% and for the Diocese as a whole of 0.5%. I believe we need to review our overall income and expenditure with a view to trying to close the gap between our current CMF contribution and the amount requested by the Diocese as follows:

- The improvement in our finances since my last report would allow an increase in our monthly payment to £4000 and I suggest we agree to this for the rest of the year.
- Expenditure required to comply with fire regulations could justifiably be treated as improvements to the fabric of our buildings and charged to reserves.
- We should assess any financial commitments needed to support our PMAP.
- We should review all outgoings to ensure they are fully justified in relation to our commitment to Christian outreach in the community
- We should use the renewal of the Parochial register as a reason to remind everyone of the importance of regular giving, ideally through the Parish Giving Scheme.
- We should review the outcome of these actions in the summer with a view, if possible, to making a further payment to the Diocese at that time and possibly increasing monthly payments from then on

## INSURANCE

Our insurance policies are due for renewal on 1 April 2019. I have received renewal documentation from Ecclesiastical, who have been our insurers for some years proposing a 7.3% increase in premium for St James to £2289.64 and a 1.5% increase to £555.69 for St Stephens. Both include Insurance Premium Tax at 12%.

During 2018 the insurers carried out a Risk Assessment of the church. As part of their valuation work the loss limit was increased from £5.2M to £7.8M. No increase in premium was charged for the last insurance year but clearly the higher valuation is now reflected in the premium. The policy is specifically tailored to the insurance requirements for Anglican churches and, as such, I recommend we approve the premiums for 2019.

In addition to Property damage we are also covered in relation to loss of money, theft by officials, employers' and public liability (cover is £10M), legal expenses and personal accident. The last section sets out benefit (generally £10,000) in the event of death or disablement and applies to "insured persons". These are defined as employees and authorised volunteers whilst engaged in [the church's] business or authorised activities. It states that the policy document lists all insured persons and these appear to be the Vicar and Churchwardens for the time being and the PCC. It does not appear to cover anyone who is not a member of the PCC and I wonder if it is worth looking into obtaining cover for any others who may be involved in our activities such as bell ringers, the flower team, etc.

## **BANK MANDATE**

Our current bank mandate with NatWest has been unchanged for some time and needs review. Current signatories are John Lenton, Priscilla Hungerford, Geoff Twine, Richard Wood and Alex Marianos. It is suggested this be changed to John Lenton, Sarah Hodnett, Malcolm Knowles, Ian Evett, Alex Marianos and Nairn Glen. It is also suggested that the bank be advised that correspondence should in future be sent to Nairn Glen rather than to Alex Marianos.

## **CCLA**

The CBF Church of England Deposit Fund manages a number of investments for the church. The trustees were last reviewed in 2010 and appear to include all members of the PCC as at that date. It is suggested that the same people named in the preceding section be confirmed as trustees of the various funds managed by CCLA.