

Parish of St.Peter, Bengeworth

Minutes of the meeting of the PCC held on Monday 18th March 2024 at 7pm in the church.

Present: Andy Smith (Chair), Steve Bramley, Simon Browning, Tim Clack, Sandra Cockram, Simon Cooper, Kimberley Gunn, Jane Richards.

There were apologies of absence for Dave Cockram.

Declaration of Interest and AOB:

- Declaration of interest from Simon Cooper (in relation to item: Church Cleaning Discussion)
- AOB: Street Pastors discussion.

Matters Arising from the minutes:

None.

Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting:

Approval proposed by Simon Browning, seconded by Simon Cooper. All voted in favour.

Safeguarding Report from Julie Rowell (PSO) Parish Safeguarding Officer:

- Julie provided information about her role and duties to the PCC. A summary is provided below:
- Julie is ensuring new volunteers / employees have a DBS check and Safeguarding training (to differing standards dependant on their role). A record is also kept of renewal dates.
- The PCC members are required to have an intermediate level of safeguarding training and will update Julie as this progresses online for her records (as she does not get alerted automatically when training is completed).

- The PCC were informed about a new online module of safeguarding training on Domestic Violence. Julie will update the PCC when completion is required.
- The PSO is attending Diocese Safeguarding Meetings regularly for training and advice. When a Safeguarding incident occurs, the PCC are notified, and confidential records kept (according to GDPR regs).
- Church events – a safeguarding risk assessment needs to be carried out for events and approved by the PCC.
- A new dedicated safeguarding church email account will be active soon (safeguarding@stpetersbengeworth.org).

- A Safeguarding audit may be taking place at St Peter's Bengeworth in July 2024 (the church will get confirmation closer to the time) to assess the safeguarding culture of the church.
- In preparation for this, safeguarding details have been moved to a more prominent location on the church website to allow easier navigation. A link to the safeguarding page / contact, is also included within the weekly church e-mailer. Details will also be added to the weekly pew sheet.
- A link has also been sent out to mailer recipients asking for contributions to an online safeguarding questionnaire.
- The PCC then had a general discussion about how to improve the general safeguarding knowledge at St Peter's Church and suggested an invite for church members to engage in online resources / training several times a year within the church e-newsletter/pew sheet.
- Andy Smith thanked Julie (PSO) for her hard work and the progress she has made in this challenging role.

- Julie advised the PCC if the role / church continues to grow, she may like a deputy to help with the role. The PCC prayed for Julie and the continued development and success of safeguarding at St Peter's.

Update from the Standing Committee:

A meeting was held between the standing committee to discuss the spire wrap project (details will be contained within the Buildings and Fabric report below).

Vicar's Report:

- It has had a challenging few months at St Peter's, with the sad loss of several church members, Marjorie Crook and John Darby, and pastoral care. It was also noted that several families have left the church to attend other venues (for family reasons). Several new families have begun attending weekly services at St Peter's.
- There are ongoing challenges with Church house regarding building maintenance. However, the Church House team is growing: new treasurer Hannah Piff, grant application help from Mandy Taylor, building maintenance from Steve Humphries. Julissa Cooper has been a huge help with building cleaning, and users have been noticing the improvement in building cleanliness.
- Administration at the church has also been busy, with a steady stream of Baptism enquiries, funerals, and preparation for weddings.
- The recent Alpha course was successful and generally had great levels of engagement from attendees.
- The Younite Youth Group is continuing (this is a joint enterprise between several local churches). The group recently attended a youth event at the Barn at Bidford, which was successful and enjoyed.

- The Healthier churches grant bid (for funds towards a Youth Worker at St Peter's) was successful. Preparations are now underway, and the vacancy will be advertised online soon.

Cleaning (St Peter's Church and Church House):

- Simon Cooper left the room (declaration of interest - Julissa Cooper is involved).
- Julissa has acted as a volunteer cleaner in the main Church building and Church House since the resignation of the previous cleaner. She has been given a financial gift for her efforts as approved by Andy and has been doing a brilliant job. General standards of hygiene in the buildings have noticeably improved.
- The PCC had considered options for a long-term cleaning solution between hiring a professional cleaner or employing someone directly (in regard to financial sustainability and responsibilities).
- The PCC decided that it was more financially sustainable to hire a cleaner directly than outsource to a cleaning company.
- Julissa Cooper had indicated her interest in the position if it was available and there have been no other applicants. As Julissa has been doing such an amazing job to a professional standard, the PCC will offer her the position. This will meet the national living wage and be for approx. 5.5 hours weekly.
- The proposal to offer Julissa Cooper the cleaning position was proposed by Steve Bramley, seconded by Simon Browning and all in favour.
- New cleaning equipment will be sourced and provided to replace any missing / damaged items.

ARK Project Fund Conversation:

- The ARK fund is from a recent donation to the church of £5000 + gift aid. The private donors had a conversation with Andy about what the funds would be spent on as they would like to bless neighbours outside of the church walls.
- A team will be formed to guide the spending/ and resulting projects of this fund. Rev Andy Smith suggested Emily Holmes would be a good person to contribute. More thought will be given to potential members suited to help with this project and he will have a list ready before the upcoming APCM.

Finance Report (from church Treasurer Tim Clack):

- The church finance report has been taking Tim longer than expected to complete. An updated spreadsheet with works completed to far was sent to the PCC today.
- The church has higher funds available now than in records from recent years, reflecting general growth at St Peter's Bengeworth.
- Tim has produced a forecast of church giving. The Parish Giving Scheme now has around £2000 income per month and overall monthly income is now approx. £700 a month more on average (than this time last year).
- It was noted jumps in giving have corresponded with times giving has been mentioned in church services.
- Tim informed the PCC there are funds potentially accessible to the church for Christian education within the parish – approx. £47,000. A full financial report will be available at the APCM.
- Worcester Diocese have asked St Peter's to increase the ministry share paid. The church has been asked to pay £58,000 in 2024 to the diocese. As this is not yet financially viable, Tim asked the Diocese for support and agreed to aim to pay this share in full within three years. The church has

agreed to pay Worcester Diocese £36,229 this year – which is a large increase on previous payments.

- Andy and Tim have been in discussion with the Archdeacon, Mark Badger, who was supportive of the church and understanding that the church is still in the early stages of church planting and working towards increasing payments at a sustainable rate.

Committee reports:

(a) Buildings and Fabric subcommittee

- Spire wrap project – wrapping the spire was planned by the PCC as a temporary solution to prevent potential falling masonry. The survey needed to obtain approval for this wrapping was estimated at £6000 (which would double the cost of the project). The project is now considered unviable. Andy spoke with Mark Carter from the Diocese about this and explained the main point of this project was to reopen the main church doors, however people are now used to accessing through the side door and this is not essential.
- As the church has already purchased the wrapping materials, Andy had a conversation with the steeple jacks to see if a refund was possible, however only the wire could be refunded (approx. £311). The PCC will look into the potential for selling the netting to retrieve further funds from this project and reimburse the John Martin Charity (who financed the project).

Roofing Update –

- There are areas of damp areas in the church roof (leaks on both sides of the church).

- GM Roofing have been out to assess and advised in the areas of damp the old lead is cracked. They proposed repairs with a rubber membrane, however – Steve Bramley has been advised from another supplier to have the tiles lifted and replaced properly. This would be approximately the same cost.
- Roof repairs were proposed by Steve Bramley, seconded by Simon Browning, and all in favour.
- Steve Humphries will touch up paint work areas damaged by damp using damp proofing paint. Steve Bramley will look into this further and contact as needed.

Health and Safety Report:

- Steve Bramley is looking into providing fire extinguisher training to church members.
- The dog fouling situation in the church grounds has improved since Steve added signs and doggy bags to the church garden.

Church House Committee Report:

- Bookings are continuing at Church House.
- Perspex window coverings have been removed from church house by Steve Humphries – as pieces had been falling off and were a slip hazard.

Correspondence and AOB:

- Street Pastors: The Street Pastors association recently discussed contributions from churches within the local area. A donation of £200 per year from St Peter's Bengeworth was suggested by Andy and the PCC asked for approval. Steve Bramley proposed the donation, Sandra Cockram seconded, Simon Browning abstained (due to interest) all voted in favour.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 20th May.

DRAFT