**The Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Marcham with Garford**

**Minutes of the committee meeting held on**

**Wednesday 22 February 2023**

**Present**

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| Ruth Atkins (RA)  Bryan Eccles (BE)  Carolyn Whiting (CW)  Sue Lawton (SL)  Tim Jack (TJ)  Chrystal Poon (CP)  David Lunn (DL)  Chris Nutman (CN) | | Rev’ d Nick Weldon (NW)  Barney Stevens (BS)  Danni Grady (DG)  Neil Rowe (NR)  Tamsin Gilbert (TG)  Alison Lyndon (AL)  Pamela Carter Moore (PCM)  Caroline Manders (CM) | |
| **Item** |  | | **Action** |
| 1.  1.1  1.2  1.3 | **Welcome and opening prayer and Bible reading**  The meeting started at 19:47  NW read Psalm 63 and gave his reflections as we start this period of Lent.  Prayers were shared. | |  |
| 2.  2.1 | **Apologies for absence**  Apologies were noted from: Anne Southwell and John Boardman | |  |
| 3.  3.1 | **Conflicts of interest**  There were no conflicts of interest. | |  |
| 4.  4.1  4.2  4.3 | **Approval of minutes from the meeting held on 25 January 2023**  The minutes were approved with the following correction:  6.6. Add in Skipp after Ben.  NW then signed the minutes. | |  |
| 5.  5.1 | **Matters Arising**  There were no matters arising. | |  |
| 6.  6.1  6.2 | **Pastoral order concerning Fyfield with Tubney Parish annexes near Garford**  Diocese of Oxford is consulting about proposals affecting the parish of Marcham with Garford*(Marsham with Gifford)*; and the parish of Fyfield with Tubney.  Many of you will be aware of these proposals from informal conversations that took place last year. For those who are not yet familiar with proposed changes, it may be helpful to note that there are no church buildings or Licensed Places of Worship in any of the areas of either of the parishes under consideration.  You will see that I am asking for replies, if any, by Friday 17th March 2023.  Approved by the PCC. | |  |
| 7.  7.1 | **Marcham Centre rate for Friday Club**  MCC is offering a reduced rent for the room which is used. This was welcomed by the PCC. | |  |
| 8.  8.1  8.2  8.3  8.4  8.5  8.6 | **Staff team report**  Staff team are Jill Rowe, Kate Jackson, TG, NW and Rob Finch.  The team meet at least three times a month on a Monday morning. Always review the week before – the services and events, what has worked etc. and look at the week ahead. Check-in with each other and how their ministry roles are going and other roles they may have.  As the need arises will review ongoing ministry programmes e.g. children’s, women’s and men’s. At a recent meeting spoke about the Easter services at both churches and the church weekend away, the Coronation weekend.  Will update on current pastoral matters – confidential to this group.  NW is discussing succession planning for Kate’s role as she plans to stand down (this is not a paid role)  TJ asked how bookings are going for the Parish weekend and TG responded 40 so far. | |  |
| 9.  9.1  9.2  9.3  9.4  9.5  9.5  9.6  9.7  9.8 | **Financial update –** BE  General update  Year end is closing well. Summary was shared at the meeting.  Core team of BE, John Scoble offering advice and support and Tracy Hibberd as book keeper.  Year-end summary:   * reduction in giving in the last year of approx. £6k. * near at breakeven   Bank balance is healthy.  2023 budget  BE suggested a breakeven budget.  Men’s breakfast, Tiddlypeeps and church weekend are generating income.  One area of concern is the process where we ask people to contribute is running out of steam. We may need to look imaginatively at other ways.  Our gas bill has increased through usage and not price (we are on a fixed price). Charles Gaisford is looking at the reasons for this.  Bank mandate needs to be reviewed and BE will look at this. | | BE| |
| 10.  10.1  10.2  10.3  10.4  10.5  10.6 | **Fabric update**  All Saints church path (NR)  Now have a faculty to do the resin part of it. This will be arranged with the company undertaking the work.  Gigaclear (Wif-Fi at All Saints) (NR)  This needs approval by the Diocese and will then be installed.  Genesis One Project (NR)  By the end of March, we will have created the plan for what we want to do. This will include hedgehog hotels, a child safe pond, firepit for sitting round amongst other things. There are plans to enhance the wild flowers. NR suggested each family planting snowdrops in the church yard area. This was well received.  The Genesis One Project items will be installed April to August  St Luke’s Church roof (NR)  The 25 affected tiles have been rectified and the damage from previous storm was not as bad as was originally thought.  Reordering Project  DAC visit is 23/2/23 and is a formal visit. | |  |
| 11.  11.1  11.2 | **St. Luke’s**  - CW  Architect has not visited to review the path. Christian has shared a few thoughts and the Diocesan Disability Advisor has requested a video and photos of the access and she will be able to advise.  Installation of a light - still to be actioned. | | NR  NR |
| 12.  11.1  11.2 | **Safeguarding update** - RA  There are two on-going cases.  PSO working group for the Dioceses – RA will be attending a meeting on March 13 2023. These are held in alternate months. | |  |
| 13.  13.1  13.2 | **Health and Safety**  A notice has been installed to advise people on the best ways to access the church – which path to use.  TV stand was not heavy enough and a wheel fell off – recently the screen fell off. A new TV has been claimed through insurance and will go on a new trolley / stand which has already been purchased. | |  |
| 14.  14.1  14.2  14.3  14.4  14.5  14.6  14.7  14.8  14.9  14.10  14.11  14.12  14.13  14.14  14.15  14:16  14.17  14.18  14.19  14.20  14.21  14.21  14.22  14.23  14.24  14.25  14.26  14.27  14.28  14.29  14.30  14.31  14.32  14.33  14.34  14.35  14.36  14.37  14.38  14.39  14.40  14.41  14.42  14.43  14.44  14.45  14.46  14.47  14.48  14.49  14.50  14.51  14.52 | **Discussion: The Bishops’ Proposals and General Synod vote post Living in Love and Faith**  NW and the wardens have recently shared their views on this by email and in-person at All Saints and St Luke’s.  NW feels aggrieved that this is having to be decided at parish level. This is going to be divisive across the churches.  NW - there really is a welcome to all in our churches of all people and this include LGBTQIA+. NW does not feel this follows on to a blessing of same sexed couples in our church.  Synod – nothing has changed until the Pastoral Guidance has been approved at the July Synod.  Since Sunday (19 Feb) NW has had about 10 messages confirming and supporting what he has said, and he has received an email from an individual who is unhappy with the decision – this email was read out by Nick but kept anonymous.  Question was asked if NW will not bless same sex marriage could another vicar in our parish? Will not get clarity on this situation until July 2023.  PCM: At St Luke’s Rosemary Siebert said she would be happy to bless same sexed marriages. NW – need to wait for the Pastoral Guidance.  SL: this could take a longer process and may not even be clear in July 2023.  PCM: response from St Luke’s – NW and the church Wardens are giving one view, and this is not representative. PCM read the following out on behalf of her and CW:  “The positive vote on the proposal that the Church of England would enable same sex couples to come to church after a civil marriage or civil partnership to give thanks, dedicate their relationship to God and receive God’s blessing.  “It is such a shame that Nick and the wardens felt the need to issue a statement on this without the advice and guidance on pastoral care that will be published by the Church of England.  “Surprising us at St Luke’s with Sunday’s statement, pre-empting this advice and guidance has caused unnecessary upset and pain for our congregation.  “At St Luke’s, we always welcome everyone to join our Church family, without judgement and therefore the statement is at odds with the way we have built up the congregation.  “Please let Carolyn and I know when balance of information has been restored and in the interim we would like the PCC take over the organisation for St Luke’s and its services.”  AL: PCC should have been advised that what was said last Sunday as it came as a surprise. BS echoed this. NW apologised for this.  CM: what is the purpose of the PCC if this decision has been made without our involvement?  DG: NW and the warden led well with this. With the aim of bringing balance.  CW: Only one position was presented. Feel like we were left out of this when PCC is meant to be leadership team of the parish. We all knew this was being decided at Synod, so more could have been done to prepare others. Feel that their (St Luke’s) voice isn’t heard. Small congregation with a larger proportion of gay relationships. This has hit their congregation hard.  CM: To have all three putting the case forward was divisive. It has been voted on, no matter about people’ feelings, don’t want to be pulled into a rebel group. Not balanced.  NW: It is within the gift as pastor to say what I believe.  BE: Three things. First, NW, like other clergy, is in an impossible situation. Second, NW has been making a good effort to bring Living in Love and Faith (LLF) in a sensible way. Thirdly, feel that Sunday’s announcement was a mistake. How can we have a debate that won’t take us in a difficult direction to do something that NW doesn’t want. Impression was that this is the way that parish is going.  CW: Not here to debate whether this is right or wrong. Decision has been made. Now waiting on guidance about what can/can’t be done. We need to wait.  AL: Was there pressure to make a statement from within the parish or higher up (Bishops).  NW: No, I felt that as licensed minister I wanted to say something.  CM: Moving on, how do we as a PCC present a balanced view on LLF that was projected by the congregation. How do we do this when our vicar and two church wardens are vocally on one side?  NW: Has received affirmation from people at St. Luke’s.  CM: There have also been extreme negative comments.  DG: We have voted for the church wardens as PCC.  CM: We had the LLF debate, but now not a balanced view. What do we do as a PCC?  AL: How did churches move forward with previous things. For example, female vicars/priests. Look to the past at how these decisions were made.  SL: Previously done quite differently. Voted as a church about where they stood. Took views and discussed on denary synod. Filled from the bottom. When you talk about balance, it doesn’t really exist.  CM: Not talking about balance of issue, that has been made. Three people being so strong on one side it came as a surprise.  SL: Wasn’t a surprise as NW said the previous Sunday he would say something.  CW: We need to support NW in his views and find a way forward as a PCC. Immediate bosses going in a different direction and don’t know what likely path will be until pastoral guidance. We need to wait.  BE: Not our job to necessarily to support the vicar. We all pray, listen to God, come to our own decisions. NW has never sought to stop this. Talking about how the issue was delivered, rather than issue itself. There is a lot to be discussed on the issue itself. NW made clear that he would address those issues as softly as possible. It was unfortunate about how it was delivered. Need to look for some process about how we understand this. If this goes wrong, I will go somewhere else to pray. NW indicated was incompatible with all inclusive church.  CW: Bishops made decisions.  TG: There will be conscience clauses, which individual parishes may need to decide on.  AL: Synod left with very difficult decisions.  CW: Paragraph to be shared. Put in an impossible position, please could you let us know when balance has been restored. We can’t face our congregation with this.  TG: Sought clarity - you need us to open for services.  AL: Two things. Operational running of St Luke’s need to be taken on. Then told when balance restored.  SL: We welcome people of LGQBT+, we’re talking about issue of blessing their union.  NW: Two things, running of St Luke’s, and the theology of the issue. Making this about the running of St Luke’s not helpful.  AL: Operational is what’s needed?  CW: Perhaps a mix up. Not saying that not going to run St Luke’s because of what NW said. Prominent gay couples in congregation who feel they are not welcome.  BS: But are all welcome.  CM: Perception is that they are not.  AL: Best to draw a line, as issues that are being blurred.  NR: What was said on Sunday was NW personal views. And that of wardens.  AL: Concern is that personal views have been perceived as a church stance.  NR: Legally responsible for St Luke’s, need to be clear what is happening.  AL: This should be discussed in a smaller group.  NW: Suggest that working together doesn’t involve him.  CM: We have to find a way of working together going forward.  AL: I will be one of the people in this group.  NR: Would you like one of the wardens?  CM: That would be good.  It was agreed that AL would take a lead on meeting with PCM and CW to find out what needs to be done at St. Luke’s and organising volunteers to help with that and that PCM and CW would stand back until there is more clarity and balance on the issue. | |  |
| 15.  15.1 | **AOB**  Trustees Annual Report – draft approval  CN: proposed the draft is accepted  TG: seconded this. | |  |
| 16. | NW closed the meeting in prayer. | |  |
|  | The meeting closed at 21:55 | |  |

**The next meeting is on Wednesday 29 March 2023**

Further PCC meetings: 29/3/23 and 26/4/23

APCM: Sunday 30 April at 3:30pm