

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HOLBEACH

Tuesday, 14th November, 2023

PCC MINUTES

Present: Revd Sherine Angus, Marion Goodman, Michael Goodman, Kim Biggs, Jackie Sheldrake, Judy Kelly, Roger Jennings, Michael Barton, Gill Graper,

Apologies for absence: Kevin Dodd, Les Crowson, Martin Butler, Margaret Whaley, Lynne Barkes, Helen Drake,

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and reflections on this.

Review of previous meeting: The Minutes were accepted as being a true record and signed by Revd Sherine Angus

Vicar's Briefing:

As you will have seen, I have written to Bishop Stephen and others, we have had a reply from Bishop Nicholas which you should also have sight of. I am aware that we are by no means, the only church struggling with financial issues at present. I have been reassured, as I know our response from Bishop Nicholas does, that they are reviewing support for type 1 and 2 churches as it is clear that the cost of maintaining buildings hugely inhibits mission and ministry, in addition to what can be paid for parish share.

We now have a finance committee and we met for the first time last week. From that meeting and looking at the finances that Chris has kindly prepared for us, it is clear that we shall need to adjust our parish covenant for next year. The finance committee would like to put forward a proposal of £22,000 for the parish covenant for 2024. Whilst this is considerably less than we would like to pay, this is the realistic amount that we can afford at present. It is likely that there will be additional monies from Mary Bass that we can send to this and we shall obviously review again for 2025.

Chris has been finding it difficult to hear from Mark Rose accountant as we attempt to get our accounts signed off. The finance committee would like to seek approval from the committee that if answers are not provided shortly by Mark Rose Accountants that they can seek alternative provision for accountancy. Mark Rose did respond last night but the information was incomplete, Chris has again, requested further details.

Resolutions:

1. **That this PCC will pay a parish covenant to the diocese of Lincoln of a minimum of £22,000 for 2024, to be reviewed again next year.**

Proposed: Jackie Sheldrake Seconded: Judy Kelly All in favour

2. **That the finance committee may seek alternative accountancy provision if the information requested from Mark Rose Accountants is not received in a timely manner.**

Proposed: Roger Jennings Seconded: Michael Goodman All in favour

Funding for repairs/maintenance

Roger and I met with Matthew Godfrey from the diocese who takes the leads on buildings grants. He has not only supplied us with some useful information for how we can fund repairs to the roof, but is willing to support with grant applications as required. There are some new funds becoming

available in the new year and it is possible that we can get funding for emergency repairs whilst awaiting tenders etc. for the substantial work that is necessary to the south side of the church. Roger and I will be meeting with Matthew again once we have a clearer idea of where we are going and the best way to approach things.

The PCC agreed that this sounded a very positive way forward.

All Saints

Since the issues around our finances have been raised I am aware that there is some unrest in the congregation, a sense that we are perhaps not forward thinking enough; comments that I have taken too many days' leave; that we are unfriendly and that children have been making noise in services. I suspect that the root of a great deal of this is people feeling unsettled as the extent of our financial situation has been revealed.

It is essential that the PCC provide a confident and bold stance in this, as the leadership of the church. I understand the uncertainty and the sense of unease around our situation. However, we are in a strong position. We need to have confidence that what All Saints does is what we are called to be as church in Holbeach, that does not mean that we refuse to explore different ways of doing things, but it does mean that we accept what we are in the context of a small market town. We need to embrace and build upon the many opportunities and gifts that we do have: an adult and junior choir; an ALM team that ensures that each care home and the hospital receive a service every month; a youth worker for the deanery; a gifted PCC and church wardens each bringing a range of gifts and the ability to lead All Saints into all that it can be in 2023 and beyond.

Instead of seeking to be something we are not we need to be confident in what we are. So much has laid hidden for so long and the opportunities for the PCC to actually take leadership were challenging previously but now this is the time. It is our opportunity to lead All Saints, to present a confident and courageous approach to exploring all that we can possibly be.

PCC members expressed both sadness and surprise at some of the criticisms and unrest, but PCC members are determined to ensure a positive and successful way forward. This will hopefully embrace every member of the congregation and in the wider community, encouraging challenge, change and community spirit.

Advent Courses

There will be 2 advent courses running, Wednesday 6th December during the day and Thursday 7th December in the evening, both in the MBR. The theme for the course is the cry from the manger using material produced by Pray as you go. It will also be available on our facebook page and website for people to follow at home.

Finance:

Some members of the PCC had responded to the suggestion, at the previous meeting, that we should all be thinking of ways to reduce our deficit and raise much needed funds, as well as encourage more community involvement to ensure a financially secure and viable future both for the church building and worship and pastoral support for the community.

Many ideas were forthcoming and all the suggestions are listed in a separate document on the PCC area of the website. It was decided that there should be an events committee formed and all these suggestions revisited at a separate meeting in January. This would be advertised to all members of the congregation, and at a later stage it would be beneficial to encourage the support of others in the community.

The initial meeting will take place on Sunday, 21st January after the morning service.

Treasurer's Report:

PCC members had received the Financial Statement for the year up to 31st October and also a Record of Income/Expenditure for 2021/ 2022, the average amounts and a Budget for 2024. Based on these figures the PCC had agreed, earlier in the meeting, on the proposal to pay a minimum of £22,000 in 2024 as the Parish Covenant to the Diocese.

The documents are available on the PCC area of the website.

Churchwardens' Report:

Roger Jennings

- 1) I have met with the Loss Adjuster acting on behalf of our insurers regarding the water ingress due to the recent storms following my submission of two claims. His feeling was that the damage caused to the lead lining to the nave roof gutter by the winds of 10th September and resulting water damage over the choir vestry would probably be covered under the terms of the insurance however the rain water damage sustained by the organ due to excessive rain may not be covered as that is considered accidental damage and he was not sure whether our policy included for that. I am awaiting the outcome of their consideration of this matter. The south aisle roof has been further inspected by the lead worker and also by a stone mason and I am awaiting revised quotations from both prior to submitting them to the PCC and our insurers for consideration. I have notified the Diocesan faculty team regarding the damage, our potential proposals for remediation etc and the formal submission will be made once we are in possession of all the relevant quotations from the lead worker and stone mason.
- 2) The Parish Council have agreed that the beech tree adjacent to the south porch is to be cut back to reduce the windblown leaves on to the roof. Similarly a robina tree on the north east corner is to be cut back away from the church.
- 3) West window. I have made a request to the Clerk to the Diocesan Registrar at The Bishop of Lincoln's Registry, Westminster for the Faculty granted in 2019 in respect of the works to the tower, including the west window at that time, to be extended to cover the proposed works to the west window now, rather than a new faculty application being necessary and the indications are that this is being favourably considered. I have therefore returned the 2019 Faculty document to them for amendment. The Mary Bass Charity have very kindly agreed to assist us in the funding of the project and it is currently intended that the works will commence in mid-January for completion in time for ascension day in May. I shall be informing the Parish Council of the necessity to erect scaffolding outside the west window which will be on the public footpath. There is a potential cash flow issue regarding the funding to the project however our Treasurer is aware of this and he is seeking to provide access to the necessary funds to enable the project to proceed.
- 4) The Payaz machine unreliability saga is continuing despite disconnecting it from the Wi-Fi within the church and running it on its SIM system only, as Gedney Church do, and I shall be in further discussions with the supplier and Parish Buying regarding this.

Contribution from Les Crowson

- 5) I attended the art and crafts at Fleet church the other weekend and am really pleased that quite a few of the stall holders will be at our Christmas tree festival on December 2nd. Real quality items were being sold so hopefully having good quality things for sale will bring in the punters. Thanks Gill for getting them on board.
- 6) As you all know, due to work commitments, it is sometimes hit and miss with my attendance on Wednesday morning service and on Sundays, also not on a par with Roger on building

works. However, I do have a very good ear for listening and a caring pastoral nature, therefore if you need to chat I'm always on the end of a phone, if not straight away, leave a message and I will return your call.

Roger was thanked for the huge amount of work he has undertaken in his efforts to sort out the problems with water ingress. An update is that J M Spinks may visit the church this week to assess any damage to the organ.

'It is proposed that J M Spink be asked to install the polythene sheeting to the underside of the south side roof over the organ pipe and Sacristy area with a suitable down pipe attached to it thus enabling any rainwater that permeates through the roof to be safely collected in a suitable receptacle that can easily be emptied. The quotation received for this work from J M Spink, including the necessary supporting beams, is in the sum of £825 + VAT'

Proposed: Kim Biggs Seconded: Roger Jennings All In favour

We discussed it is hoped that this expenditure will not be necessary depending upon the results of the nave roof gutter inspection but if extensive work is required to the gutter then this Resolution will be adopted to prevent further rainwater damage to the organ pipes etc.

Safeguarding:

No incidents have been reported. Sherine reminded PCC members about the necessary training that has to be undertaken on line and it is hoped that everyone will have completed this.

A.O.B.

The meeting closed at just after 9.00 p.m. with the Grace being said.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 9th January 2024 at 7.30 p.m.