

**DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS
PARISH OF ST ANDREW, BIGGLESWADE**

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2024 IN THE VICARAGE**

PRESENT: Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong, Rosemary Bentley, Lucy Dilley, (Vivienne Gayfer), Peter Giles, (Hilary Johnson), Rob Lackey, Claire Leeks, Ruth Marshall-Jones, Adrian Maynard, Chris Parker, David Pilgrim, Andrew Rutt, (Harriet Shannon), Judith Thatcher, Nettie van de Weerd.

() means not present

1. Welcome, prayers and apologies for absence

Rev'd Liz welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the opening prayers. She noted that item 6 on the agenda would now move to the end of the meeting. Apologies were received from Vivienne Gayfer, Hilary Johnson and Harriet Shannon.

2. To receive the Memorandum of Discussions of the Standing Committee held on 5th November

The meeting approved the Memorandum of Discussions.

Matters Arising

Finance: Reference was made to the proposal the SC wished to make to PCC to sent £500 to the DEC for the Gaza appeal. **Proposed: Andrew Rutt; Seconded: Rosemary Bentley. Approved by all.**

AOB: Rosemary had obtained a costing for nylon oil refillable candles. The proposed move to oil candles was due to the amount of candles we were getting through caused by the drafts from the new heating system. It was considered that we replace the four large candles (2"/9") used for funerals in the first instance at a cost of £95.94 per candle; other costs would be the supply of oil at £13.50 per litre and replacement filaments at £7 each. The total cost would be £383.76 plus the cost of the oil. Rosemary added that if we placed an order soon, we would receive a 5% discount. Andrew confirmed that the cost would be taken from the Donations pot. **It was proposed we purchase four nylon oil refillable candles at a cost of £383.76 plus any other costs incurred from the purchase of oil. Proposed: Chris Parker; Seconded: Nettie van de Weerd. Approved by all.** Rosemary said she would be happy to place the order as soon as possible. Rev'd Liz will inform our Sacristan, Jenny Blackford.

Lucy queried if the Archbishop of Canterbury would still be coming to the Diocese on 11th January 2025. Rev'd Liz said that we had not heard anything to the contrary from the Diocese; it could take up to six months for him to fulfil his obligations. She would keep us updated.

Rev'd Liz referred to the note about a nomination for Foundation Governor at St Andrew's School. Danielle Singh has come forward and would like to be considered for the role. The position is a DBE approved one and Rev'd Liz has endorsed her application which will go before the DBE at their next meeting on 21st November.

Lucy asked if we had managed to pass any bibles to the MU to send to Bedford prison. Chris confirmed that we are sending five.

3. To approve the Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 24th September and matters arising from that meeting

Proposed: Judith Thatcher; Seconded: Peter Giles. Approved by 11, 2 no votes.

Matters Arising

5. Group Reports (a) Finance: With regard to Generous Giving Sunday, Lucy asked what the thought process was in asking people to return their forms before 17th November

when we had asked people to return them on the day. Rev'd Liz said it was just if people knew they were going to be away or couldn't come on the day.

(b) Building & Grounds: Chris confirmed that we have applied for a faculty for the water butt and the Eco group will now put together a statement of need. We are waiting for the DAC to contact us.

8. Safeguarding: Rev'd Liz noted that the safeguarding page on the church website still has old information which needs to be updated. Peter will speak to Helen Tranter, our PSO to ask what needs to be amended.
11. Any Other Business: PCC Secretary: Rev'd Liz noted that Ruth had put a note in the pew sheet for the week of Sunday 24th November advertising the role with the offer to meet with anyone who was interested to provide further information and a job description.

Vicarage Quinquennial: Rev'd Liz noted the the kitchen works have been completed within the time frame given. There are a couple of snagging items which the Diocese will look at. Rev'd Liz noted her thanks to the Diocese.

4. **MAP Exercise**

The PCC had received a slide with the four words chosen for our Vision Statement under which were categorised the words chosen at the PCC Away Day placed into four columns. The PCC was invited to split into groups to prioritise and discuss how we would execute work on them with a view to the SC taking the results of the discussions to form a proposed MAP to bring back to the PCC in January. If then the MAP still doesn't sit right, further work will be done on it.

5. **Group Reports**

(a) Finance

Andrew spoke to the two reports circulated.

General Fund

- First draft budget will be discussed in January at the finance committee.
- In terms of income for 2024, stewardship income, rental income and fees in line with budget.
- Significant shortfall with regard to use of premises compared to 2022/23 which the Standing Committee will review in January.

Claire asked why the bookings had dropped and why Andrew had not known sooner. Andrew said that this was because Chris, who is in charge of bookings/invoicing had not informed him. Chris said that MIND who previously had two bookings with us had decided to go elsewhere but they have now partially come back which will help. Rosemary felt it would be a good idea to publicise our fees for lettings and Rev'd Liz thought that it would be good to have some sort of leaflet or flyer on the notice board. Chris added that the problem was exacerbated by the fact that the partition doors broke and had to be repaired at a cost of £2K. **ACTION: Chris to draft a flyer document with brief description, table of hire fees, contact details etc to be used to advertise our facilities with help from Mandy our Parish Administrator, if necessary. This will be discussed at the finance meeting in January.**

Budget

- Overall a deficit for 2024 of £9,800 is predicted which would leave general funds as at 31st December 2024 at £12K.
- Parish share has gone down by £1K to £76K
- Gas, electricity and water budgeted for £10K, down £1K on 2024. The contract was renewed on the 1st October through the Parish Buying Scheme and prices went down by 10% on the previous year.
- Income – regular giving. Adrian has received 39 replies to the Generous Giving Campaign which promises an extra £275pm – an increase of 5.99%.

Restricted and Designated Funds

- Have spent out on Heating Project and Team Africa.
- Designated funds are the EMF which stands at £1,717 following £500 donation to appeal for relief after Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean, the Major Fabric Fund which stands at £8,551, and the Donations and Legacies Fund which stands at £1,844 following

expenditure on the parish noticeboard. Monies will also be taken for the purchase of new oil refillable candles.

Rev'd Liz thanked Andrew for his reports and for arranging the finance committee meeting in January.

(b) Growth & Mission

- Chris noted that the book for use with the Advent study group, "Do not be afraid: The joy of waiting in a time of fear" by Rachel Mann is now available to purchase and a list is on the board in the Chapter House foyer for those who wish to buy a copy. The study groups will start in December.
- There will be two carol singing events; 16th December will be carols on the lawn outside the church, and 19th December there will be singing in Kings Reach square following by carols at Orchard Chase. A flyer will be created so that we can invite residents to join in with us.
- Nativity Tableau is on Saturday 21st December from 10:30-1200 noon. We need new costumes. Andrew mentioned that Anna has some material so we need to find a seamstress to make up some new outfits.
- Christmas Collections: the group considered various charities. **It was proposed that we support The Kings Arms (supporting the homeless in Bedford) and Christian Aid appeal for Gaza. Proposed: Chris Parker; Seconded: Lucy Dilley. All in favour.**
- Mission Payments for 2025: The group talked about the charities we might support. Lucy will create cards for people to make their suggestions and there will be a note in the pew sheet this week. We also need to consider our renewal of commitment to Hands at Work and the support we offer to our partner community of Mafambisa. The group will form a proposal for the January PCC meeting.
- Chris made a plea for more helpers at the Saturday morning coffee shop.

(c) Communications

- Social Media: Rosemary noted from Oliver that there had been a number of peaks and troughs with a rise around the time of the Country Fayre. The majority of people viewing our posts are non-followers and therefore it is people sharing the content posted which is crucial to our outreach. Oliver encouraged everyone to send him any content direct. Thanks were given to Oliver for his report and work on social media.
- Website: Peter referred to the report circulated and reminded people to be vigilant about receiving emails and to make sure their church password was secure.
- Rosemary referred to the meeting notes for the Pastoral and Visiting sub-committee circulated to PCC. She highlighted the fact that there are three residential homes which currently receive monthly communion; it is hoped that we might add Potton House to this in the future. There will be a note going in the pew sheet for those who wish to receive Holy Communion at home. Rosemary added that it is important that we link in with those who cannot come to church but we rely on people telling us of anyone they know of. She thanked those who attended the meeting.

Whilst the Building and Grounds team had not met, Chris noted that it would like to meet with our architect in order to understand and inform the PCC of the things that could be done with regard to Phase 2 of improvement works which may include underfloor heating and the north aisle roof repairs.

(d) Eco Church: there is a meeting on Saturday 23rd November when the group will be looking at the next steps for Eco Silver Award and what we need to do.

6. **Deanery & Diocesan Reports (moved to end of meeting).** Rosemary had circulated a document from Bishop Alan inviting PCC to reflect, discuss and pray about the complexities of assisted dying and providing his thoughts on the Assisted Dying Bill being presented to Parliament shortly. Those who stayed for this part of the meeting had a discussion. It was agreed that if there were those who wished to, they could send a letter (template provided) to Richard Fuller our local MP or send any thoughts to Bishop Alan either directly or through Rev'd Liz/Rosemary and these will then be emailed on behalf of Biggleswade PCC to Bishop Alan.

7. Churches Together

- Christmas Light switch on on Friday 29th November. Churches Together will be running a stall and require volunteers to help from between noon and 7pm.
- World Day of Prayer is being hosted by St Andrew's on 7th March at 7.30pm – more details to follow
- Next meeting is on 16th January.

8. Safeguarding

Rev'd Liz noted that Bishop Alan hosted an on-line meeting for a wider group to come together and talk. Attendees were invited to question him. If anyone anywhere has any concerns they can contact our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Jez Hurst and Bishop Alan also said that he was very happy to field things directly. The letter from Bishop Alan regarding the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury will be on the church website. It was discussed and agreed that it would be worthwhile publishing the sermon Rev'd Liz preached on Safeguarding Sunday. Peter will put this on the church website and a few hard copies will be printed to be put in the church.

9. Correspondence

None.

10. Any Other Business

In 2025 there will be a thanksgiving service for all Parish Safeguarding Officers which will take place at St Albans Cathedral – date tbc.

11. Closing Prayer

Rev'd Liz closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Standing Committee Meeting: Tuesday 14th January at 7:30pm in the Ivel Room

Next PCC Meeting: Tuesday 28th January at 7:30pm in the Chapter House.

(Chair)

Liz Oglesby

(Date) *28.01.2025*