

Minutes of the Christ Church Council Meeting 14 October 2014

Present: Margaret Burrows, Matthew Jones, Sarah Kerr, David Rawlings, Sharon Rawlings, Andrew Sillett, Alex Soboslay (acting secretary), Angela Soboslay, Canon Angela Townshend (chair).

Judith Bishop, Brenda Wall and Malcolm Wall were present for most of the meeting but were also on duty for the Toppings event in the church.

1. The meeting opened with a prayer. **Apologies** were received from Judith Anderson, Morny Davison, Mark Elliott and Bob Siderfin.

2. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting (2 September 2014), with one amendment, were accepted and signed (proposed David, seconded Sharon, passed without dissent). There were no matters arising not already on the agenda.

3. Trustees' Report

(1) Roof safety rail, internet connection in Mews building, and safeguarding policy are all being carried forward.

(2) Diocesan contribution. The Treasurer will make payment as decided by Council. A representative of Council should communicate with the Diocese to indicate what further payment we might make this year.

Action: who?

(3) Fire and Health & Safety assessments are to be carried out.

(4) Choir vestry lighting. Trustees have been looking into upgrading the lighting in the choir vestry. Work of this small scale can be undertaken with the permission of the Archdeacon instead of needing a full faculty, and Canon Angela has been in contact with him.

(5) Heating system. The new boiler is working, but the system is not yet perfect; it seems to need bleeding, and one cracked radiator needs to be replaced. The second phase of boiler work at the west end of the church has been deferred because it would have caused too much damage to the floor and carpet; it will be done with the proposed works at the west end.

(6) Trustees propose weeding and tidying-up at the church entrance.

4. Pastoral care

How can we ensure that members of the congregation who fall ill or are in hospital receive a visit or other support? We need some way to find out who's in need, especially if they're not in church.

Action: Judith B to insert a notice in the notice sheet and Alex one in the magazine advising people that if they hear of anyone who would like a visit or has been taken ill, please contact Canon Angela. Angela to contact those who used to visit the sick.

5. Cedar Tree

Keri has written to say she will be stepping down from managing the Cedar Tree café, but is happy to discuss what is needed with anyone interested and can continue to the end of January if need be.

There are some regular helpers, plus others who assist from time to time, but two main supervisors are needed every Friday, and we have few people who could commit the time every week. We might need to give further consideration to how the work is shared. Could we invite other local churches to help, particularly our LMG partners and St Mary's RC? Andrew mentioned that St Stephen's Tuesday Club is not currently meeting either.

Action: We'll ask in church, the notice sheet and the magazine. Margaret offered to talk to Pat at St Stephen's.

6. Parking control

Alex introduced a proposal he had presented to the Trustees, who have asked for the views of Council. Following some problems with unauthorised cars left in the car park during the summer, Alex suggested it was time to consider enforcing parking restrictions. He outlined a possible scheme using a company called FlashPark.co.uk, who provide legally-enforceable warning signs and would enforce any penalty notices we chose to issue. He said the advantage would be that this avoided confrontations but left it to our discretion to penalise flagrant or persistent offenders; the warning signs themselves would be enough to deter most potential offenders, which was the primary aim. A potential disadvantage was that it could be seen as unwelcoming (or even unChristian, not forgiving trespassers), but management of the car park had to be conducted on a business basis.

Andrew expressed reservations, asking whether we are likely to get adverse publicity from an OAP being pursued for payment or defaulters being charged usurious rates of interest. David worried that we'd just be providing a very good income for the parking company; if the aim is to deter, we could simply put our own signs up and send a letter to owners of cars parked without authorisation. Others pointed out, though, that we do not have access to the DVLA database to find the owners. Brenda said she liked the fact that the proposed system is non-confrontational, and we should hand things over to the professionals. Some members suggested we should take the same approach as people who put up fake alarms or dummy CCTV cameras and put up signs but not pursue offenders.

After further discussion, the consensus arrived at was that Council are

reluctant to adopt too harsh an approach before attempting to tighten up the system we have in place. Accordingly, Council recommends to Trustees as follows:

(1) Write polite letters to our parking tenants (Queensberry and especially Youth for Christ) reminding them of the importance of keeping the gates locked and briefing them on the problems caused when they're left open.

(2) Change the padlock code from time to time to reduce use by others who might have gleaned the combination or used the car park ad-hoc.

(3) Put up more prominent signs – particularly at the entrance and on the railings outside the Cottages – emphasising that the car park is private and there is no parking for museum visitors, deliveries, etc.

(4) Instead of leaving polite notes under persistent offenders' windscreen wipers, stick notices on their windscreens.

(5) Pursue the possibility of authorised users displaying physical permits on their car dashboards. (Queensberry have resisted this in the past as too much trouble, but they might be persuaded if they can see how uncontrolled usage impacts upon the facility they are paying for.)

7. Buildings

(1) Foundry visits. Those who had visited the bell foundry to see the casting or take a tour reported how interesting and enjoyable the experience had been.

(2) Heating phase 1 completed; see 3(5) above.

(3) The bells.

a. Dedication of the bells. Canon Angela reported that the new Bishop of Bath and Wells is now not coming to Christ Church for our patronal festival in November, but he will be coming to preside on 21 December, and will dedicate the bells, which will have arrived on 8 December and be on display around the church.

b. A query was raised about handbells for use in the service.

c. Insurance. Ian Hay Davison has been in touch with Ecclesiastical Insurance, who have confirmed that the bells will be covered by our insurance before they are taken up into the tower.

(4) Other works around the church.

a. Roof access. The architect has confirmed that direct access from the tower into the roof space is not feasible because the structural timbers

would obstruct any entrance. Getting to the existing side entrance involves inching around the edge of the roof, where the parapet is quite low, hence the need for a safety rail (see 3(1) above).

b. Porch, entrance and toilets. The architect reports that BANES' planning department has responded positively about the proposed interior work at the west end, and he has presented alternative proposals for the disabled access ramp. Council welcomed the architect's plans and pictures warmly, but noted that we still want to see more done with the toilets. There was some discussion about options for the glass inner doors (after the wooden inner porch structure is removed): David asked whether these should be sliding doors which close automatically and help keep the heat in.

Further discussion followed about priorities. There was general agreement that the entrance and west end were the first priority, then the east end reordering. The idea of a screened-off area at the back of the church was felt to be less pressing.

c. Garden wall.

BANES has refused our planning application to demolish the old garden wall to the north of the church. Andrew asked whether we have appealed: if it's just a matter of a hundred pounds or so, he said, it would be a pity not to. Margaret asked whether the Trustees have discussed our options with Georgina Bowman.

d. Chancel and east end reordering.

Let's have a joint meeting with the Trustees in the church and make some decisions. Alex will bring a model to help people visualise things.

8. Children in Church

(1) Junior Church. Canon Angela will have a meeting with the Junior Church leaders.

(2) Children receiving communion before confirmation.

A search has revealed mention in the minutes for 29 March 2004 of six children "who had been among the first admitted to the sacrament" going forward for confirmation. This verifies that we have admitted children to communion before confirmation at Christ Church in the past (although this seems to predate the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006 currently in force, and no trace has been found of a register of children admitted, as required by these regulations).

David argued that if we do wish to continue (or revive) this practice, it needs to be controlled. Canon Angela said she would propose admitting only children of the recommended age (rising 7) whose parents wish them to be admitted. Sharon asked whether children would have an

understanding of the Eucharist, but Canon Angela asked whether anyone does. Alex suggested that Canon Angela set out the guidelines and procedures she proposed, in order to set everyone's minds at rest.

Action: Andrew and Margaret will check the records they have for any information about exactly what arrangements the admissions at Christ Church were conducted under. Canon Angela will contact the Bishop's Palace in Wells to see if they have any record of official permission.

9. Outside Events in Church

Canon Angela reported that the programme of Toppings events in church is on course to bring in over £3,000 this year.

On the question of a premises licence, Alex reported that he had been in touch with BANES and with the police licensing officer about the application process. We would be classified as a "community organisation" and could therefore apply to have a management committee (such as the Church Council) instead of an individual Designated Premises Supervisor, who would need to be someone with a personal licence. Alex undertook to bring the matter to the Trustees.

10. Any other business

(1) Christmas programme. Canon Angela outlined the calendar of events for Advent and Christmas.

(2) Fundraising. Margaret suggested we hold some events between now and Easter to raise money for our building projects. Ideas mooted included pancakes, a raffle, and bingo (David has experience as a caller).

Action: As an initial step, Margaret to write to the Hospitality Committee.

(3) Proposed dates of Council meetings for 2015:

Tuesday 13 OR Wednesday 14 January (to be confirmed)

Tuesday 24 February

Tuesday 24 March

(AGM Sunday 19 April)

Tuesday 12 May (first meeting of new Council)

The meeting closed with prayer at 21:30. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 November.