

Minutes of the Christ Church Council Meeting 19 September 2017

Present: Judith Bishop, Georgina Bowman, Revd Lore Chumbley (chair), Mark Elliott (20:27 onwards), Matthew Jones, Sarah Kerr, Virginia Knight, Alex Soboslay (secretary), Will Willans.

1. The meeting opened with a prayer. **Apologies** were received from Penny Edwards, Rowena Hall, Janet Mahto, Jane Nicholson, Sharon Rawlings, Brenda Wall and Malcolm Wall.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting (3 August 2017) were accepted with some amendments as a true record (proposed Matthew, seconded Judith).

3. Matters arising

(1) Buildings. a. Mirrors etc.: Robin has this in hand but is very busy. Jude and Mark are continuing to look for suitable bins. The pedal bin in the choir vestry will be checked for damage.

b. Permissions have been received for repairs to the ringers' door and the upgrade of the sound system. The latter is now scheduled for 5 October.

(2) Pastoral. "Where to Turn", our guide to sources of advice and practical help, is now available. Thanks were expressed to Margaret Heath, Alex, Georgina, Virginia and all who contributed in any way. It was suggested that the PDF could be mailed out to our mailing list.

(3) Finance. The agreed payments to the Deanery have been made, and Lore reported that further information, as requested, has been received. She will forward this to anyone interested.

(4) "Welcome to children" document. Brenda sent a suggestion that for health and safety reasons we add a note that people are drinking hot coffee and tea after the 10am service and children need to take care. She'll send a suggested form of words.

Concerning the suggestion that we need a shorter form of the document that can be taken in more quickly, Matthew reported that Sarah Jones has added a precis at the start of the document.

4. Worship

(1) Music. Sarah noted that some of the hymns over August, when we didn't have the choir to lead the singing, were quite difficult. The feeling of the meeting was that next August, could we have very well known hymns? For those who can read music, can we have the music to hymns when available? We'll locate and put out the music for the service setting.

(2) All Souls service Thursday 2 November at 7pm or 7:30. Sunday service 5 November for All Saints.

(3) Lore proposed an extra service on Sunday evenings when there isn't an Evensong – possibly Taizé, a contemplative service, or non-choral evensong. Alex cautioned that our verger, churchwardens and others might be hard pressed to commit to more. Lore said she'll try it and see how it goes.

(4) "Visitor" for Holy Week. As previously discussed, it looks like this will be David Bruno. Discussion to follow.

(5) "New Term" service not well attended by students or young people – possibly it was a bit early for them to be back, given that Freshers' Week is only next week. Children's service 1 October.

(6) Service variations. Virginia was disappointed with a Eucharistic Prayer without the great Amen at the end. Sarah thought the lesson on 13 August was a curious one for a service involving christenings, but Lore noted that this was what the Lectionary laid down and we can go "off piste" only with agreement.

(7) Reordering. Lore said she'd received quotations for east end reordering ideas, sketches, plans and specs from Chedburn's (£5,510 plus expenses and VAT) and Hugh Conway-Morris (£6,370 plus VAT). Hugh would be happy to make the choir stalls as well. There was some discussion about which option we might recommend to the Trustees, and whether one or other of these might be asked to produce only sketch schemes first. We had no view.

(8) Credence table. There was discussion about the credence table being positioned on the south side of the chancel: is it stable enough? Did it make movement to the eagle lectern risky? It was pointed out that we are experimenting and any concerns could be addressed if made known.

5. Finance

(1) Georgina reported that at the end of June the Council account had a balance of £15K. From 31 July to 15 September, fundraising had raised £714.65, not including proceeds from the sale of roses and wooden objects (figures to come); expenses are to be deducted from this, such as the cost of materials for earrings. A new bank account is to be set up for fundraising income. The question was raised whether income from external events goes to this fund or general funds but there was no clear conclusion.

(2) Georgina could not say whether we have paid a Diocesan Contribution for 2017, or whether we've been asked for one.

6. Outreach, advertising and publicity

(1) Social media. Recent events have been promoted on Facebook and Twitter. Our Facebook group contains 30 people and is not public. On Twitter we have 139 followers.

(2) Posters etc. To promote the Open Day a large banner was attached to the sealed-up door on the Julian Road frontage in the south-west corner of

the building. There was some discussion about the effectiveness of this, given that there is not a huge amount of passing pedestrian traffic and the raised pavement restricts visibility from the roadway, but the consensus was that banners here show that we are active and this could be useful for particular occasions. Mark moved and Georgina seconded that we ask Trustees to consider fitting screws or some form of mounting to this area to enable banners to be affixed without damage to the fabric. Passed (8 for, 1 abstention). Is local council permission required?

Lore asked for two pull-up free-standing posters, one saying "Welcome to Christ Church" and the other showcasing our Advent Carol Service (without a date on it, so it can be used each year), which could be stood in the lobby when we host Toppings book signings or concerts. The motion was proposed by Jude, seconded by Sarah and passed (8 for, 1 against).

Georgina proposed and Mark seconded that we buy a new weather-resistant A-board to put out near the corner when needed to help call attention to things going on and direct people to the entrance. Passed (8 for, 1 against).

(3) Review of Deanery Mission Plan. We reviewed the Mission Plan drafted in July 2016 as requested by the Deanery. Lore said we are well on the way to one of the goals, having a plan for the east end of the church. Discussion focused on the second goal, making the community aware of Christ Church as an open, living community and not a closed building. Lore noted that the Saturday open mornings had attracted people from the local area to visit, and we've got a new bell ringer as a result. As part of our outreach to the community, could we forge closer ties with St Andrew's School (being sensitive to the links between the school and St Swithin's), and perhaps hold some kind of joint activity at Easter with St Mary's RC? It was noted that Burlington House, a local charity which we supported, seem to want to get more involved with Christ Church. Are there other local charities? Could we for example host art therapy or AA meetings etc in the Lower Mews?

Our Spirituality Course attracted a range of people. Next year we can do something similar, taking theology out of the church (provided we have people willing to do it without wearing them out). We should advertise it.

Can we renew our relationship with the University? It was recognised that ties are not likely to be as strong as when the University Chaplain was our Priest-in-Charge. Can we hold Open Mornings every Saturday through all of the long vacation?

Mark read a quotation from Percy Dearmer (publisher of The English Hymnal, among other things) advocating keeping churches unlocked and open. Alex noted that this matter came around regularly, was occasionally attempted, and each time proved unworkable in our area without staffing. He reminded the meeting of the recent arson in St Mary's RC church and their past experience with people defecating behind the altar and similar problems.

There was general agreement to trying to open for longer in the summer and to open in Advent (if there are people willing to staff the building).

7. Inclusiveness statement

(Will had to leave the meeting in the course of discussion of this item.)
Council was asked to approve a draft "inclusiveness statement" designed to reassure people who may not usually feel welcomed by the Church, such as the gay or divorced, that they are welcome at Christ Church. It was explained that to do this we need an explicit statement on display which not only says what we want to say but is itself welcoming in tone. There was detailed discussion of the draft statement and other forms of words, including one from Inclusive Church (to which we are not signed up) which the working group will meet again to take further.

8. Any other business

- (1) Charities. Georgina asked that the Royal British Legion be among the charities we support next year, perhaps for October/November 2018.
- (2) Virginia raised a concern about smoking in the church entrance and porch.
- (3) Lore announced that she and Colin are planning a Christmas Lunch in the Lower Mews.
- (4) There was discussion about changing the electric rings in the kitchen to gas, which would be much more controllable. To be referred to the Trustees.
- (5) Coming events.
 - a. St Andrew's School is planning a performance of "Jonah-Man Jazz" on 30 November. [Subsequently postponed.]
 - b. There is a "Parish Day" at Wells Cathedral on 30 September.
 - c. There is a Deanery meeting for PCCs on 30 September.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 21:58. **Next meeting** Tuesday 14 November 2017 in the Lower Mews at 7:30pm.