

Church Council Minutes

7.30 pm 20 September 2022 Lower Mews

Present

Lore Chumbley, Jonathan Stead, Jane Nicholson, Brenda Wall, Jude Bishop, Malcolm Wall, Zoe Bushell, David Rawlings, Richard Gabe.

1) Apologies for absence

Pauline Swaby-Wallace

Lucy Humbert

Isaac Elliott

Zi Ling

Mark Elliott

2) Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct

proposed David Rawlings

seconded Jane Nicholson

3) Matters arising not otherwise covered

a) Publicity

(i) There are new posters now in the notice board.

(ii) Postcards for new arrivals. In Virginia's absence it was suggested these should include a list of 'who's who,' a note of regular services, a tear-off slip for the newcomer to provide their details. This should fit on a z fold leaflet. J S and DR would be happy to help VK design this. JS and DR to meet with VK.

iii) General publicity. D R recommended local publication, 'Pukka Bath, JS suggested, 'Newseum' as possible useful publications.

iv) '225' celebrations next year. JS and BW have not yet met but intend to do so in October. The plans would include activities during the year building up to a November 5th celebration. The Mayor, local MP, bishop and Fairfield House representatives to be invited.

b) Video ongoing

c) Website designer - no movement on this.

d) Website Content. All, but in particular LC, to advise Zoe of things to be showcased on the website.

4) Trustees minutes were noted

5) Worship

a) **Organ Scholarship.** We have been approached by a student with interest in an organ scholarship. It was agreed Mark Elliott as musical director and David Bishop will meet him and assess his ability. The sessional rate of pay for organists is £100. If he is able to play four or five times a term that would equate to £400 - £500 at current rates and be effectively cost neutral. ME suggested we offer him £500 per term. The treasurer suggested £400 per term in view of our financial position. The meeting agreed to offer £400 for the first term with a review in the New Year with a view to increasing to £500 if finances allow.

b) **Choral scholarships** - no movement on this. ME will follow up

6a) Finance Review and Projection Richard Gabe

Review and budget projection for 2022

Richard presented the 6 month figures for April to September 2022 which show we are within our budget.

Projected figures suggest as income for 2022 of £55,000 p.a. with projected expenditure £53,000

Budget projection for 2023

RG informed us that with inflation, overall costs are estimated to increase at 10% for 2023. Income inflation tends to lag behind costs, so projections are based on an estimated 5% increase in giving. That would give a projected income of £57,500 with expenditure £56,500.

RG suggested it might be appropriate to have a stewardship officer to campaign and ensure new people signed up to giving. This will be on the agenda of our next meeting for full discussion (LC)

b) Gas and Electricity

There had been concern about our energy prices for the coming winter in view of international rises in energy prices.

RG reported that the Trustees' treasurer David Bishop had had the foresight to arrange fixed prices for energy provision.

Gas We have fixed prices and a zero standing charge until 2024

Cost 3.72p/kWh

Electricity price is fixed until November 23

Cost: 17.10p/kWh Day rate, 15.78p/kWh EWE rate, with 25.00p/day standing charge

c) Social Action. If heating costs are generally high and there is a cold winter it may become appropriate to open either church or lower mews to provide a warm space. JB will look into the provision of thermal blinds to improve insulation in Lower Mews. David Bishop, together with RG will be asked to present a combined Trustees/Council budget forecast at the next meeting. (Action RG)

7) Charitable Giving

JS made the point that giving as a community is important for our identity as church. He reported on our rate of charitable giving over the past 4 years. Annual donations from individual giving in response to Christ Church appeals were as follows:

2018 £2300

2019 £5717

2020 £3300

2021 £2500

There are probably a number of reasons for the decrease in donations in 2020/21 including these-

During the pandemic we had long periods of small or absent congregations.

We no longer pass round a collection plate.

Many people no longer carry cash.

More people may be giving to 'Just Giving' and other online sites where it can be difficult to record the totals given.

We do already have the ability to accept card donations to council funds using the Sum Up App. It may be possible to expand this to include donations to a named charity.

R G will discuss with David Bishop the possibility of future charitable donations being passed through the council account bearing in mind the provision of our founding document. They will make a joint presentation to council.

8) **AoB**

a) **LGBT Carol Service**

The third combined inclusive Carol Service, organised together with our sister churches, St Stephen's and Oasis church will be held this year in Christ church. The date is yet to be determined. The question was raised of why an inclusive service is needed since all our services are inclusive. In response it was noted how moving the services in 2020 and 2021 have been with members of the LGBTI community commenting that they felt invited and included after decades of feeling excluded from church.

b) **Van Hire**

We are registered users of the St Philips church Minibus. If we are to continue to use it we require a Section 19 Permit for insurance purposes. It costs £11.00 and lasts five years. It was agreed that we should go ahead with this after taking advice from Peter Bowes on any possible legal obligations. LC to discuss with KM and PB

c) Daphne would like to have a **retrospective exhibition** of her art and poetry in Lower Mews on the weekend 14th - 16th October. Council agreed to this

d) **2023 retreat**. JS suggested that following our one day Ammerdown retreat we should consider another one day retreat and workshop to review priorities, perhaps in March 2023. LC to investigate availability.

e) JB reported that Julian House day centre will not be using Lower Mews as a drop in centre. Attendance has not been good enough to justify continuing.

f) BW suggested we should send a card from the church to Morny following Ian's death. JS agreed to do this.

g) LC reported that Ling was absent from council because she was at the Royal Ballet School, London, at the unveiling of her portrait of their founder - a commission she won in national competition.

Date and Time of next meeting

November 15th 2022

then

Thursday 12th January 2023