

Minutes of Church Council Meeting 17 May 2004

Present: Nicky Gladstone, David Marles, Matthew Jones, Sarah Martin, Jenny Wright, Anne Nickels, Yvonne Morris, Emma Elliott, Mark Elliott, Dorothy Twissell, Antony Claridge, Margaret Burrows, Jane Fletcher, Bob Siderfin

Apologies: Sylvia Ayers, David Bishop, Richard Gabe, Chris Gladstone, Angela Soboslay, David Wrigley, Clive Tilling, Frank Twissell

Nicky Gladstone chaired the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by Antony Claridge.

Election of Secretary

Nicky Gladstone was appointed Church Council Secretary (prop Yvonne Morris, sec Matthew Jones).

Co-option of Student Representatives

Anne Nickels and Jenny Wright were co-opted as student representatives (prop Antony Claridge, sec Emma Elliott)

Report from the Chairman of the Trustees

A report from Yvonne Morris was received. The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees of 29 March 2004 are available on the "Church Information" noticeboard at the back of Church. No questions were raised.

Role of Church Council

Mark Elliott outlined the proposals already agreed by Council, the AGM and the Trustees and suggested that to implement these proposals the following four questions must be answered:

- i) Who chairs the Council meetings?
- ii) How are items raised for consideration for discussion at Council?
- iii) How is the agenda set?
- iv) How is communication between Council, Standing Committee, Trustees and the congregation to be improved?

The discussion took each question in turn. Question iii) was discussed before question ii).

i) Who chairs the Council meetings?

The size of the pool from which chairmen might be drawn for each item was discussed, with suggestions ranging from one person to the entire council. It was suggested that chairing a meeting requires skills that not all have. Antony expressed the opinion that neither he nor Yvonne, as chairman of the Trustees, should chair meetings.

Council decided that the chairman would be neutral, and would not have a casting vote (prop Bob Siderfin, sec Sarah Martin, nem con).

Council decided that a pool of three chairmen would be elected by a postal vote of Council members (prop David Marles, sec Jenny Wright, nem con).

Council decided that the chairmen would stand until the next AGM (prop Sarah Martin, sec Emma Elliott, nem con).

It was noted that since the AGM is the Church AGM, rather than the Council AGM, the chairman would continue to be the priest in charge.

ii) How are items raised for consideration for discussion at Council?

Dorothy noted that the Away Day and Restoring Hope in our Church video had both provided topics for Council to discuss. Council felt that anyone should be able to suggest a discussion topic, and the idea of having a suggestion box was raised. Antony remarked that this must be handled carefully – it would not be a box for complaints, which should be directed elsewhere as appropriate. After a brief discussion, it was generally felt that suggestions should not be anonymous.

Council decided that a suggestions box would be implemented in 6 months time in order to give a voice to the whole congregation, but noted that the topics arising from the Away Day and Restoring Hope in Our Church would be unlikely to have been exhausted by that time (prop Emma Elliott, sec Margaret Burrows, nem con).

iii) How is the agenda set?

Concern was expressed that if the agenda were to be set by a sub-group of Council rather than the whole group, a certain clique could come to dominate the Council's discussions. It was felt that by inviting Council to vote for an Agenda Committee of five people, a group could be formed that would be representative of the whole Council

Antony hoped that the new structure would both be flexible and take a long-term view of discussions, possibly setting the agenda six months in advance.

Council decided that the agenda for Council meetings will be set by an Agenda Setting Group consisting of five members of Council (prop Mark Elliott, sec Jane Fletcher, one abstention).

Bob suggested that the Secretary should be on the Group, but this was generally thought not to be required.

It was agreed that the Group would be responsible for ensuring that a short introduction for each topic was given at Council meetings. It was agreed that the Secretary would produce the full agenda for meetings. Neither of these points was formally adopted.

In discussing the running of the Agenda Setting Group it was felt that, although the Group would be flexible, such as to the deadline by which items must be suggested and in the amount of time given to selecting items, it must always remain accountable to Council. To this end, it was felt that Council must be informed of all items suggested to the Group and the following resolution was passed.

Council decided that a standing item on the Council Agenda would be "Report from and Questions to the Agenda Setting Group" (prop Antony Claridge, sec Bob Siderfin, nem con).

It was noted that it is Council policy never to discuss, or even to mention, pastoral matters at a Council meeting. This remains Council policy.

Council decided that the Agenda Setting Group will be appointed by a postal election of Council members (prop Matthew Jones, sec Mark Elliott, nem con).

Council decided that the Agenda Setting Group will stand until the next AGM (prop Nicky Gladstone, sec Yvonne Morris, nem con).

iv) Communication

This question was partly answered by the discussion of question iii). Nicky noted additionally that minutes to all meetings held since the AGM were available at the back of church, and that this practice would continue.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 13 July
Wednesday 8 September
Thursday 4 November
Monday 10 January
Tuesday 8 March

The meeting closed with prayers.