

Minutes of Church Council Meeting 8 September 2004

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

Apologies: David Bishop, Jenny Wright, Sylvia Ayers

Chris Gladstone chaired the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting, held on 13 July were approved, and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Jobs and Actions for the next 3 months

- i. Book of Prayer
MWE has spoken to Chris Munday. A book has been purchased and so this is progressing.
- ii. Telephone Prayer Network
David Marles had written an article in August's magazine. No response yet, but he is undeterred.
- iii. Greeters
Sarah Martin and David Bishop are working on this.
- iv. Written Copies of Sermon Notes
Will be made available when possible. No preacher will be expected to produce formal notes where this is not their customary practice.
- v. Porch Area
New estimate for kitchen roof is being sought. The original architects are no longer registered with the Diocese, but we have permission from the Archdeacon to progress. Once the new quote has been received this matter will progress.
- vi. External Communications
New leaflet is progressing, more news at the next meeting
- vii. New Press Officer
No-one forthcoming, anyone interested should see Nicky.

Remarks from the Officiating Minister

Antony was pleased to inform the meeting that Mark Elliott has been accepted for Readership Training. Mark was assured of the continued support of the congregation.

In the magazine, Antony had made reference to the Deanery Conference which is to be held on Saturday 6 November. Some radical reorganisation of the Parish Structure is proposed, and it is important that Christ Church should be well represented at this conference, to which we can send 8 people. Anyone wishing to go should speak to Nicky.

Antony has also received material concerning First To The Lord 2004. It was agreed that this will be examined in the first instance by Standing Committee.

For many years, Margaret Silver and Dorothy Twissell have co-ordinated the flower rota. They will now be stepping down. Thanks were expressed to Dorothy, and will also be conveyed to Margaret. An appeal must be made for their successors, and anyone interested should see Dorothy.

Cyril Selmes has completed his Bible reading marathon in the magazine, and this achievement will be marked by the presentation to Cyril of a book token on Sunday.

Remarks from Agenda Setting Group

None. The group will re-convene to set the agenda for the next meeting.

Deanery Synod

Met at the end of June. A report appeared in July's magazine. The document relating to the Deanery Conference on 6 November is available from Emma. Emma is now on the Standing Committee for Deanery Synod. The next meeting will be later this month.

Churches Together in Bath

A meeting was taking place on the same evening as Church Council.

Services and Worship

Mark Elliott introduced this item. It was stressed that "worship" takes many forms, but is of paramount importance to the life of all Christian communities.

The following questions were discussed:

How can our existing acts of worship be improved?

- Festivals and special occasions are very good and effective. Always re-considered and improved. There is little complacency in this area.
- Organisation could be improved. If someone is on a rota, they need to understand that their role is valued and that this commitment should be taken seriously. But how can this be stressed? In some traditions, one person is in charge of making sure that everything runs smoothly, checking rotas, etc. Should someone be doing this? The meeting agreed that it would be valuable to approach all existing sidespeople and check that they are still willing to carry out their duties. This would enable each sidesperson to be reminded of what these duties entail.
- Non-attendance cannot always be construed as a fault on the part of Christ Church. Not every member of the congregation feels a commitment to attend every week.

Should our existing pattern be changed?

- Should all the services be Eucharistic? This can be confusing to a newcomer unused to the service. However, Christ Church is a liturgically-based church and this will not be easy to change. An important point is accessibility. Is the service too difficult to follow?
- New family services have been successful – taking the existing service structure but at the same time introducing something new. It was felt that this is a useful model. We are not trying to change what Christ Church is, but to draw on our strengths in order to improve what we do.
- Some services have a rapidly-dwindling congregation. How should this challenge be addressed? It was suggested that Antony should be free to make a final decision on these services.

Should we be offering more?

- Do we feel that we are meeting God in our worship? Generally felt that the answer to this difficult question varies, but that the heavily-structured format is helpful at times when one feels distracted for any reason.

Other Forms of Fellowship

Sarah Martin introduced this topic. She addressed the issue of "small groups" and asked whether Christ Church should make more use of these. What could small groups achieve?

Small groups haven't really been a part of what Christ Church does. Why?

- Already groups in existence, maybe these provide a forum, so people don't need another group?
- The language associated with small groups (eg, "house-group" "nurture group") is perhaps alien to Christ Church as it seems to be more rooted in an evangelical tradition.

- Involves work, asking more time of busy people.

HR is the new youth group working with our young people who are growing out of Junior Church, aged around 13-18. It had been a new and exciting opportunity to talk to these people about faith and their beliefs, and could serve as a valuable model. New younger members of the choir are always encouraged to join the group.

In the interests of simplicity and ease of organisation, it was suggested that a once-monthly social group may convene in a local pub. Any member of the congregation aged 18+ would be most welcome to join in, and it would give us something to which we could invite new members of the congregation. This may in turn lead to other opportunities to meet and discuss church matters. Nicky will implement this idea.

The meeting noted the value of Church sales as a social event rather than a fund-raising opportunity. This must not be lost in the process of re-thinking our fund-raising efforts.

It was felt that while social events were of value, a more formal opportunity to meet and discuss "big issues" may also be welcomed. This matter will be carried forward to a later meeting.

Any Other Business

The Ven. Bob Evens is to become Bishop of Crediton. He is having a leaving service at Bath Abbey on Sunday 31st October at 3.30, and would be pleased if members of Christ Church would attend.

An appeal was made for helpers for the forthcoming USPG Book Sale.

Date of Next Meeting Thursday 4 November

Date of AGM Sunday 10 April 2005

The meeting closed with prayers.

Summary

Items to go forward to Trustees / Standing Committee

- First to the Lord 2004 Documents
- Kitchen roof estimate
- "Dwindling" services

Items to be discussed at a later date (referred back to Agenda Group)

- Discussion forum