

Minutes of Church Council Meeting, 8 March 2005

Present: David Marles, Chris Gladstone, Mark Elliott, Sarah Jones, Matthew Jones, Bob Siderfin, Clive Tilling, Antony Claridge, Yvonne Morris, Jane Fletcher, Dorothy Twissell, Sylvia Ayers, Angela Soboslay, David Bishop.

Apologies: Nicky Gladstone, Emma Elliott, David Wrigley, Frank Twissell, Jenny Wright

The meeting was chaired by Chris Gladstone

Minutes of the last meeting, held on 10 January 2005 were approved and signed.

Matters Arising

1. Jobs and Action for the Next 3 Months

Book of Prayer – no progress to report.

Telephone Prayer Network

David M apologised for the delay and said that the e-mail section of the network would be starting on Monday 14 March, with the text message and telephone sections starting on the following two Mondays.

Greeters

People not in the choir are more suited to this task.

Porch Area

This work has been delayed due to clarification being requested from the Diocesan Advisory Committee. It is hoped that this will not push the start of the work beyond April.

External Communications

(i) Student Leaflet
This item is now closed.

(ii) Hotel Leaflet
No progress to report.

Press Officer

No-one has been forthcoming.

2. Chalice Assistants

Licenses are due to be sent shortly.

3. Christmas Fair

The fair will be held on 10 December 2005 and organisers are needed. Clive Tilling offered to help with the catering.

Remarks from the Officiating Minister

Given the main topic for discussion, Antony made no remarks beyond exhorting those present to be faithful in their observance of Holy Week.

Remarks from the Agenda Setting Group

The group have not set agenda items for future meetings. Charitable Giving may be put forward. The Christmas Fair, having been discussed briefly at a previous meeting, is not being considered.

Deanery Synod

Local Ministry Groups (LMG) were discussed at length at yesterday's Deanery Synod. Our proposed LMG is the only one to have made a presentation to the Pastoral Committee in person. Synod members were asked to consider whether certain groups were developing in accordance with the Bishop's proposals for LMGs. Christ Church, St Mary's and St Stephen's was one of these groups. Members were also asked to consider how the loss of a total of three stipendiary clergy could be accommodated. There was some confusion as to how Deanery Synod will be approving the various LMG proposals. Mark pointed out that it is Synod which must officially approve all of the LMGs, and yet there is not another meeting of Synod before the proposals are due to be finalised.

Churches Together in Bath

The Central Zone AGM was held on 16 February 2005. There are now 18 churches involved with CTB, an increase of two over the last year. Recent CTB events have included the Open Christmas for 200 guests at Kingswood School; the CTB Epiphany Service at Holy Trinity Queen Square; the Mayor's Call to Prayer in January and the Mayor's multi-faith event in February. A number of future events are listed in the magazine. The next meeting will be held on 21 April.

Local Ministry Groups

Antony introduced this item. Council had already received a draft version of "A Proposal for a Local Ministry Group for the North of Bath." This document introduces the three churches (Charlcombe St Mary, Bath St Stephen and Christ Church) and states their desire and intent to work in partnership to build God's kingdom and be the Church in the community of northern Bath.

Antony invited Council, which has already expressed its approval of the formation of an LMG in principle, to consider the implications for Christ Church, both welcome and challenging. Christ Church would change as part of an LMG and must be ready to meet the challenge that this would bring. For example, what are the implications for the status of our incumbency? Currently, the Trustees have patronage and the incumbent is approved by the Bishop and the Rector of Walcot. What would be the reaction to the (stipendiary) minister of St Stephen's becoming our part-time incumbent, effectively removing the Trustee's patronage?

Antony asked what concerns there were, and how the matter of LMGs could be presented to the wider congregation. He reminded the meeting that the Bishop has suspended all appointments to livings until the matter of LMGs is resolved, such is their importance.

Mark pointed out that although we could ignore LMGs, the Bishop could stop licensing our ministers. The Deanery Synod's Pastoral Committee had asked if it was envisaged that the Priest-in-charge at St Stephen's would become Priest-in-charge, thus relieving Christ Church of the burden of finding a priest.

It had been stated that this was not the intention, and that in faith, Christ Church held the belief that it would continue to have its own priest.

It was asked why the Bishop would refuse to license a non-stipendiary priest, when it doesn't cost anything. Antony pointed out that it did in fact cost the diocese the resource of a non-stipendiary priest who could not be deployed elsewhere.

The Pastoral Committee had also asked why St Swithin's were not involved, and the point was raised at Council that Christ Church might be invited to include them within the LMG. The reply to the Pastoral Committee had been that relations have been strained in the past and that our traditions are very different. Although relations with St Swithin's are now friendly, neither side is of the opinion that this would make for a profitable working relationship. It is hoped that the Rector of St Swithin's, who is an ex officio Trustee, will attend the next meeting.

The LMG will not be legally constituted due to the constraints of the Trust Deed. In fact, it is likely to be fairly fluid and is in any case for an initial trial period of 12 months. The meeting hoped that moving so decisively early on means that Christ Church will be able set precedents about the way LMGs work.

Council were concerned that the LMG should have the full backing of all the Christ Church clergy and that the congregation should be reassured that this was not a plan to merge the three churches.

Proposal: Council welcomes the Local Ministry Group paper and supports moving forward with the proposal it contains.

Proposed: Bob Siderfin, Seconded: Matthew Jones. All in favour.

Clive Tilling found the paper to be very impressive, well laid out and informative. He was happy, having read it, to relay its contents to the 8 o'clock congregation. Bob Siderfin also thought the paper was excellent and suggested a simplified version for the congregation. The meeting felt that the full document should be presented.

Proposal: That the working group (Antony Claridge, Nicky Gladstone, Mark Elliott) plan a timetable to present the information to the congregation along the following lines:

- **A presentation is made in place of a sermon.**
- **The proposal is sent to the congregation.**
- **The congregation is given opportunity to respond to the proposal.**

Proposed: David Bishop, Seconded, Bob Siderfin. All in favour.

Proposal: That Mark Elliott co-ordinates the preparation of the presentation.

Proposed: Sarah Jones, Seconded, Sylvia Ayers. Mark Elliott abstained.

Clive Tilling offered to make copies of the proposal for distribution.

AOB

There will be a Church Picnic followed by Evensong at Orchard Leigh on Sunday 3 July. Further details will follow.

The next meeting will be the AGM on Sunday 10 April.

The meeting closed with prayer.