

Minutes of the Christ Church Council Meeting 2nd September 2014

Present: Judith Anderson, Judith Bishop, Margaret Burrows, Morny Davison, Matthew Jones, David Rawlings, Sharon Rawlings, Alex Soboslay, Angela Soboslay, Canon Angela Townshend (chair), Brenda Wall (secretary), Malcolm Wall.

Ian Hay Davison was in attendance for discussion relating to the bells.

1. Apologies were received from Sarah Kerr, Andrew Sillett, Mark Elliott and Bob Siderfin.

2. Opening prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer.

3. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting (22nd July 2014), with two amendments, were accepted and signed (proposed Brenda, seconded Morny, passed without dissent).

(1) Pastoral care: Margaret asked about arrangements for visiting members of the congregation who are taken ill or admitted to the RUH. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

(2) Canon Angela will write to Bob to express our thanks for all his work on the Buildings Working Group.

(3) Bell dedication. The new bells will not be here in time for the scheduled visit of the Bishop of Bath and Wells for our patronal festival in November. Canon Angela will see if we can get a bishop to dedicate them in December.

(4) Sarah Cade is not in the present circumstances able to produce the rotas any earlier in the month.

4. Trustees' Report

(1) Roof safety rail is under consideration.

(2) Bells work. The Trustees have agreed to the addition of a "dumb bell" for training. The dome in the ringing chamber has been removed and safely stored in the crypt, and a temporary flat floor is to be installed – refer to item 5(1) below. The final decision on the dome and floor will form part of the works on the porch.

(3) The work to replace the boiler and renovate the heating system has been agreed.

(4) The car park gates have been repaired.

(5) The rental agent for the cottages does not seem to have communicated requests for repairs and maintenance from the tenants to the Trustees. Trustees are considering their course of action.

(6) There has been an e-mail enquiry concerning a memorial plaque thought to have been in the former Christ Church Hall. No information has been found about this.

(7) Mark has said he will be standing down as a Trustee in the new year. The Trustees have been discussing how to fill the vacancy.

5. Buildings

(1) Work on the tower.

The builders have completed all the blockwork and the hatches. They are now cutting 12 chases for the bell frame to sit in. Steelwork has been installed for a lifting beam.

A temporary hatch is proposed to replace the dome in the ringing chamber floor. After discussion it was agreed that a raised platform would be a trip hazard, and a flat floor would be safer for users of the chamber.

(2) Bells.

a. Fifth bell. Proposed names for the fifth bell include Remembrance, Hope and Charity, but questionnaires returned from the congregation showed a majority favoured naming the bell "Peace". This was agreed (11 votes for, 1 against). Angela S. proposed that the inscription should be the peace used in our services: "The Peace of the Lord be always with you". This was agreed without dissent.

b. Casting. Four of the new bells are to be cast at 15:45 on 18th September at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Of the 10 places available for this, 4 are still free. An announcement is to be made at the Sunday service, and names drawn from a hat if need be.

A special tour of the foundry is taking place on Thursday 9th October starting at 17:30. Canon Angela will organise a coach from Christ Church and back. Up to 36 people can go; Ian will extend invitations to the Abbey ringers and others interested.

c. Fittings. Yellow and black ropes have been ordered for the bells, and a red, white and yellow rope for the dumb bell (training bell). There was discussion about carpeting and decorating the ringing chamber. Decision deferred for further consideration when the work is nearing completion.

d. Staffing. Will Willans has offered to be our Ringing Master. He and his wife (who could teach new ringers) will be visiting Christ Church after the 10am service on Sunday 7th September to meet members of the congregation.

e. Thanks. Ian Hay Davison received a vote of thanks (proposed by David, seconded by Alex, passed by acclamation).

(3) Dates for further projects.

The following target dates were proposed:

- East End reordering: decision date 1st March 2015
- Plans and faculty application: 1st July 2015
- West End (entrance porch and toilets): for the next meeting, we will want to consider recommendations of the Buildings Working Group from their last meeting, along with the most recent plans.

(4) Boiler and heating system.

Contractor has been decided. We are just awaiting the faculty.

(5) Garden wall.

BANES will refuse our planning application to demolish the old garden wall to the north of the church, because the Conservation Officer thinks the character of the area will be negatively affected. Georgina Bowman, who has considerable expertise in matters of planning, recommends that we withdraw the application and redraft it. This has been communicated to the Trustees.

6. Children in Church

(1) Junior Church is currently led by Chris and Chrissa Hopper, Sarah Jones and Emma Elliott. Becky Nicholson is leaving for university in Loughborough. There are normally about seven children attending.

(2) Children receiving communion before confirmation.

Canon Angela distributed copies of the Church of England regulations concerning admission of children to communion: following a resolution of a PCC, incumbents may apply to the bishop of the diocese for permission to administer communion to children who have been baptised but not yet confirmed (normally at least 6 or 7 years old).

Opinion was divided. Some members argued for the traditional practice of the Church of England, others for greater openness. Matthew said that some parents with children would take it adversely if this was not allowed. Alex asked whether children would be leaving the main service for Junior Church activities but then nevertheless receiving communion.

No decision was reached because there is some question whether Christ

Church might already have such permission in place, which remains in force unless revoked by the bishop. A search will be made of historic minutes to find evidence of any previous decision on this.

7. Outside Events in Church

Alex presented a report on how St Swithin's manage outside events. It was noted that St Swithin's has a full-time Operations Manager, and so does St Michael's Without, to oversee the type of events held and their conduct. Alex pointed out that if alcohol is to be served at ticketed events, licensing laws require us to have a premises licence (we have too many events taking place to use Temporary Event Notices; there's a limit to how many of these you can have in a year). Judith B will investigate, and draft a short (one-page?) terms & conditions document.

David added that in his experience, if food is also involved, we will require a Catering Licence and our facilities will need to be inspected.

There was some discussion about our charges compared to St Swithin's and St Michael's, but it was noted that these two churches employ people to manage events, and that our facilities are not (yet) to the same standard. We might review our charges after our renovation works.

8. Any other business

(1) Morny reported that one of the Portugese Laurels which used to stand beside the main entrance has recovered. It was agreed to return this to a position at the front of the church a little further down the hill.

(2) On 17th September Wessex Water will be digging up part of the car park behind the church. Disruption could continue for 10 days.

The meeting closed with prayer at 21:40. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 October.