

## Minutes from Extraordinary Council Meeting on Friday 8 January 2021 at 20:00 on Zoom

### A meeting to discuss continuation of live services or to withdraw to virtual

#### Present

Lore Chumbley: Priest in Charge,  
Janet Mahto (Churchwarden),  
Jane Nicholson (Churchwarden),  
Georgina Bowman (Council Treasurer),  
Jonathan Stead (Lay chair)  
Brenda Wall (Deanery Synod rep),  
Jude Bishop (Secretary),  
Zoe Bushell,  
Rebekah Cunningham,  
Mark Elliott,  
Richard Gabe (from 20:25),  
Virginia Knight,  
Sharon Rawlings,  
Alex Soboslay,

**The meeting started at 20:06 with a prayer led by the Priest in Charge.**

#### 1. Apologies

Pauline Swaby-Wallace (Deanery Synod rep)

#### 2. Bishop Ruth's letter dated 5 January 2021

Council was asked to discuss how Christ Church should proceed in light of Bishop Ruth's letter.

Lore began by setting out her opinion of two possible outcomes from the meeting:

1. Talk about it as a body to protect members of our congregation and to put aside live services; or
2. Do we want Christ Church as a space where we can continue to worship with a warning to those who travel and to those who consider themselves vulnerable?

Council members were invited as individuals to give their own views.

**Virginia** – public services should cease:

- Our congregation is scattered, and travel is involved
- Rules concerning social distancing were not, on the whole, being observed
- I personally have not felt safe

**Rebekah**

- Services should cease
- The BANES Public Health lead to stay at home in solidarity with secular groups
- Would support private prayer

**Georgina**

- Services should cease as distances are difficult for people to adhere to
- Christ Church should take Bishop Ruth's recommendation
- Ultimately, it's Lore's choice as it's where she works
- Thanks to Mark and all those involved in the broadcasting of the services

**Janet**

- Agree with others that live services should cease
- As a churchwarden she finds it difficult to manage the back of church

**Jude**

- It should be what's best for all, but we should look at who is being disadvantaged most by cessation of services

**Mark**

- Torn in two directions
- Prevailing infection rate is a factor
- Loss of live worship felt deeply together with a lack of ability to take sacrament
- Thinks we should be able to operate safely
- Opinion seems to consider essentials shops and places of worship as a privileged club

**Richard**

- Services should discontinue
- Infection rate is going up very quickly
- Christ Church has a lot of outsiders involving distance travel
- As with Mark, torn in two directions

**Zoe**

- Small number of people will be disadvantaged
- Safe and responsible to stop

**Jonathan**

- 688 cases of infection
- We should consider the profile of the congregation and those who are vulnerable
- Positive – we have technology
- Err on the side of caution

**Brenda**

- Difficult decision but easy as she has felt very scared
- Grieving for what we have lost
- Lore should continue from chapel at home

**Sharon**

- Duty of care to our parishioners
- Lots of members travel

- Discontinue and continue on-line

**Jane**

- Saddened
- Agrees with Janet - struggling to keep distance especially at the back of church
- Would like Thursday eucharist to continue
- We should cease live services

**Alex**

- Torn
- After talk of being a 'beacon of hope' it's a pity to not offer this hope in a physical form
- People don't have to come who have to travel
- Systematic and sincere risk assessment should be done
- Ceasing of services taking away from people who need it
- Spiritual health and wellbeing – it would be a pity if we abandoned that

**Lore**

- Agrees with Alex we should be there for those who need it
- Worst scenario would be that we stay open and people died
- Would favour staying open
- Locking doors would not be right
- Communion from home would not be appropriate

A discussion continued:

Jane – stricter rules in place if we do continue

Virginia – if we continue, all members should leave without conversation and close groups outside should be discouraged

Richard – more difficult to adhere to rules. Private prayer would be easier

Alex – smaller numbers would be easier to enforce restrictions

Lore – we could write to everyone. If we stay open, we could just have local people who can walk to church which would reduce the numbers. Streaming could be done by local people.

Alex – we should perform a Risk Assessment and make it clear what the guidelines are. People should make their own decision.

A vote was taken by show of hands:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. All services on-line         | 9 |
| 2. Safely deliver live services | 4 |
| 3. Abstentions                  | 1 |

**There being no other business, the meeting ended with a prayer for Epiphany at 21:09**

**Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 19:30.**