

CROMER PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on 04 February 2021 at 7.30, via Zoom

Those present:

Revd W Warren	Revd J Hodgkinson	Mrs J Austin
Mr D Loades	Miss A Cottingham	Mr D Orsborne
Mr D Anderson	Dr R Beare	Mr P Bennett
Mrs J Boyle	Ms A Coghlan	Mr J Hodgkinson
Mr R Hopkins	Mr R Loten	Mr T Morton
Mrs A Orsborne	Mrs M Pallister	Mr J Platten
Mr S Purslow	Miss S Wells	

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The meeting was chaired by the Vicar.

Apologies were received from Mrs M Howard.

2. OPENING WORSHIP

The Vicar began the meeting with prayer and a reflection on Psalm 43. He commended Psalms 42 and 43 to those who were finding the present season difficult.

a) The Psalmist's strategy was to praise God and to pray to God:

- God is the Psalmist's refuge.
- God is his joy.
- God is his salvation.

Ultimately, as Christians, our hope is in God.

b) The Psalmist prays to God to deliver him and direct him. We should be asking God to deliver us from the pandemic and to intervene and direct us in our current church circumstances.

Opening Business

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST NOT PREVIOUSLY RECORDED

As a Town Councillor, Mr P Bennett declared an interest in item 17, Correspondence and Dates, Floodlighting.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STANDING AND FINANCE ON 09 DECEMBER 2020

The PCC Secretary had circulated some amendments to item 5, Accountancy system – correspondence from David Orsborne. The reason for the amendments was because the original version didn't accurately represent David Orsborne's email and that it erroneously suggested that he had advocated the use of Sage. The amended minute was as follows:

a) An email had been received from David Orsborne suggesting that, with a change of Treasurer, this might be an opportune time to review our accounting systems and consider moving to a standard, cloud-based accounting package.

b) Although the email had not mentioned a specific system, the Treasurer said that he didn't support this, considering that SAGE in particular was for larger businesses and that the present system worked well for Cromer Church and provided information for the Independent Examiner. He also said that the Finance Assistant was unlikely to support a change of system at the present time.

c) With year end and preparation of the final accounts coming up, S & F did not consider that this was a good time to change the accountancy system.

The minutes were received, with the amendment.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STANDING AND FINANCE ON 13 JANUARY 2021

a) A report had been circulated from the Project Group which had investigated Live Streaming equipment. The Group had made 2 recommendations to PCC. David Orsborne and his team were thanked for their hard work on this project. In response to a question from Revd Jennie Hodgkinson regarding the possible need for faculty, David Orsborne said that it was the experience of AED, the recommended contractor, that Schedule B permission was usually acceptable. The Vicar would check this. David Loades said that we had received List B consent for the Lighting Scheme.

1. After careful consideration, the Project Group is recommending the AED system to PCC for consideration. We believe that it offers significant benefits, and that those benefits will more than offset the additional cost over the lifetime of the system. We also believe that the specialist nature of the work, from a well-established local company, with significant experience and attested to do good work in this field, might allow PCC to waive the normal requirement to obtain multiple quotes for the work.

2. The Project Group also seeks PCC's agreement to undertake preliminary work, in consultation with AED and others, to explore whether this would be a good time to replace the projectors, screens and associated software - whether with new projectors or LED monitors - in order to take full advantage of the new system's capacity to improve the quality of visual presentation in the Parish Church and, if so, to determine the cost of doing so.

Both recommendations were agreed by show of hands and were ratified electronically in accordance with Church Representation Rules.

b) John Hodgkinson said it would be good if we could progress the scheme as soon as possible so that it would be ready when we were able to reopen the church building.

- c) David Anderson said he hoped that the subject of live music in church would not be forgotten as some people valued the choir and organ. The Vicar said that, at this stage, we didn't know when congregational singing would resume.
- d) David Loades said that Schedule B would require technical drawings and other information. It would be good to have them ready for when the application was submitted. It was agreed that David Orsborne and David Anderson should work on the first recommendation, and the rest of the Project Team work on the second part.

The minutes of S & F of 13 January 2021 were received.

8. NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES LEADERSHIP TEAM 07 DECEMBER 2020

- a) The Vicar said that the children's work had been seriously affected by the pandemic. However, it was good to see that there was some fresh thinking on how we could move forward when it was possible.
- b) Richard Beare informed PCC that the Open the Book stories were being used in schools.

The notes were received.

9. GENERAL SYNOD NOVEMBER 2020

- a) The report had been kindly provided by Caroline Herbert.
- b) Vision and Strategy: David Orsborne said that the website referred to in the report was very useful and provided opportunities for people in the parishes to participate. (www.churchofengland.org/vision)

9. FINANCE

- a) Financial report overview: the Treasurer said that there was a typo on the last page which should have referred to "unrestricted" rather than "restricted" funds.
- b) The full figures for January 2021 would be reported to the next PCC.
- c) Mission Partners: Gift to Go and Gift Aid had resulted in £5,500. There was also a sum of £8,200 from 2019.
- d) Staff costs, property costs and Parish Share: the Parish Share was good value as it gave us good support from the Diocese. This had been demonstrated most recently when the Cromer Community Association had submitted an application to NNDC that the Parish Hall should be designated as an Asset of Community Value. This meant that, if we decided to sell the building, we would have to offer it to the community group first. The legal owner of the Hall is the Diocesan Board of Finance, but Cromer PCC are the beneficiaries. The Diocesan Registrar had written to NNDC with objections that had legal standing, including our status as a charity and the availability of other venues in the town. As a result, NNDC had dismissed the application. The solicitors' fees will be paid by the Diocese.
- e) Rental from 17 Meadow Close: the previous Treasurer believed that the income received should go into the property fund. Before this could be done, the terms of the original gift would need to be investigated. Simon Purslow, Revd Jennie Hodgkinson and John Hodgkinson explained that the house was bought through one-off gifts from congregational members. There was no specific restriction on what might happen if the property was vacant. Income from rental used to go into a Youth Minister's fund

because, at the time, our general funds were in good order. The Treasurer said that it was currently put into the General fund.

- f) Capital expenditure: figures needed to be added for heating updates and live streaming equipment. Our restricted funds could cover all expenditure and PCC had already decided to fund the lighting scheme from the Clarke Building Fund.
- g) As trustees, we were charged with preparing a balanced budget and it would be imprudent to pay our Mission Partners. It was necessary to ask for increased giving to fund expenses.
- h) The Treasurer thanked Brian Wigg and Sharon Lewin for their help. He was sorry that Sharon was leaving and proposed that a gift should be given to her.

Questions and Discussion

- a) Heating system and lighting scheme: Simon Purslow said that Fabric Leadership Team (FLT) would be meeting on 15 February when capital works would be discussed and prioritised in light of the budget. It would be best to concentrate on the heating system as only so much could be done in one year. Nick Claridge had negotiated with the manufacturers to bring the system back up. This should keep it going for 7 years and was the most cost effective option. The lighting hadn't failed yet although it would eventually. It had been postponed for 3 years for different reasons. One of the issues was the cost of the scaffolding. If we had no pews, we would be able to use a cherry picker. The lighting might need to be put on hold until we'd considered our Vision.
- b) Revd Jennie Hodgkinson said how grateful she was for the Treasurer's notes explaining each line of the budget.
- c) The Vicar commended the summary on the back page of the report. We had to reduce expenditure or increase income. It was hard to see any areas where expenditure could be cut. It was necessary to be honest with the congregation about our finances. Alison Orsborne observed that some people were ignorant of the state of our finances and that giving was related to discipleship. David Loades said that since 2016 giving had significantly decreased and Mary Pallister recalled the Vicar saying that half of those who attended church didn't give. Although it was understood that some church members were on low incomes, the issue still needed to be addressed.
- d) Revd Jennie Hodgkinson said that some people thought the Church of England was funded by the government. She suggested explaining from the front that we get no income except what is given. Visual aids could be employed to help people see the problem.
- e) Ray Loten agreed that some members of the church family weren't fully aware of the state of our finances. He suggested using a link in livestreamed services which would enable people to give.
- f) John Hodgkinson said that if the Gift to Go appeal for the Mission Partners (a subject which people felt strongly about) had only raised £5,000, it was unlikely that a campaign for increased giving would help. We needed to make cuts in expenditure – the obvious one being Mission Partner payments. David Loades agreed, reminding PCC that staffing costs had already been reduced and that we couldn't give to Mission Partners out of a deficit. He commended the Treasurer on the transparency of the figures. It was important that we should be open and transparent with the Church Family.
- g) Revd Jennie Hodgkinson expressed concern that there'd been a lot of

correspondence from church members about the Mission Partners but none about having to let our staff go, even though they were church family.

- h) The Treasurer suggested that the decision to pay 10% of our giving to Mission Partners should be reviewed. David Orsborne made the following points:
- PCC could revert the policy.
 - We could demonstrate our sincerity to the church family by only doing what we could afford this year.
 - We must believe that God has a plan for us beyond this and communicate the Vision to the church once we're sure it has God's blessing.
- i) Jackie Austin said that we needed to carefully consider our buildings and facilities at this time.
- j) We must set a balanced budget and decide about the Mission Partners.
- k) The Treasurer was thanked for all his hard work up to this time.

10. MISSION PARTNERS

- a) PCC had taken the original decision, which had arisen from a document called Godly Giving Guidelines, in the time of Canon Dr David Court. Previously, giving to mission had been somewhat ad hoc so it was decided to choose 6 nominated Mission Partners (this later became 9). PCC could reverse the decision if necessary and it had been some years since it was made.
- b) Simon Purslow supported what had been said about the Mission Partner payments in the earlier discussion about the Budget and agreed that we couldn't give what we hadn't got. He suggested aiming for a balanced budget and, if there was a surplus at the end of the year, reconsidering Mission Partner payments. David Loades supported this and said that the current policy was unsustainable.
- c) Anna Coghlan asked if it was possible to keep Gift to Go going and separate it from church giving. Mary Pallister explained that Mission Partners could be promoted during their focus months but if we kept Gift to Go going it could dilute giving to church. Revd Jennie Hodgkinson feared that we might be doing Gift to Go to make ourselves feel better. A lot of people gave privately to Mission Partners.
- d) Anne Cottingham said that we needed to be honest in presenting the decision to the church family. Everyone should understand that we couldn't give what we didn't have and that there was no income from Cornerstone, the Bookstall or small donations. Everyone should understand that we had to pay our essential bills. Gift to Go could be an annual event.
- e) The Vicar said he was reluctant for us as a PCC not to give to Mission Partners, but we were in very unusual circumstances.
- f) The following proposal was made by David Loades and seconded by Simon Purslow: **We change the PCC policy of giving 10% of our giving to the Mission Partners and, at the end of each financial year, we look to see what surplus we have and divide it between the Mission Partners of our choosing.** A show of hands indicated a majority in favour. This was ratified electronically afterwards, according to Church Representation Rules..

A time of prayer followed.

11. STAFF PAY AND PENSIONS

At the start of each financial year we were committed, as a PCC, to pay our staff the Living Wage. This year the increase would be 2.1%. It would be backdated to the end of January.

It was proposed **to pay our staff the Living Wage with an increase of 2.1% backdated to the end of January.** A show of hands indicated a majority in favour. This was ratified electronically afterwards, according to Church Representation Rules.

12. VISION PROPOSALS

- a) The Vicar reported that there had been 86 responses from the survey and some returns on paper. A mixture of comments had resulted, but definite areas of agreement were emerging. These tallied with areas already considered by PCC and suggested that the Lord was in it. It had been a positive procedure so far and people had said that they appreciated being involved.
- b) Alison Orsborne said that the information that had been received should be shared with the wider church. The cost of doing each thing should also be communicated.

13. LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- a) The current Leadership Team membership was presented to PCC for information. Membership had decreased significantly, and this needed to be considered in the context of the APCM.
- b) Following a request from Simon Purslow, the Treasurer agreed to join FLT.

14. SAFEGUARDING

Alison Orsborne advised that there was little to report. A new Confidential Declaration Form had been received from the Diocese. She would send it to everyone on her list and this would identify those who no longer wanted to be involved.

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff changes would need to be considered regarding Health and Safety.

16. ELECTORAL ROLL UPDATE

The number on roll was 294.

17. CORRESPONDENCE AND DATES

- a) Floodlighting: Cromer Town Council was seeking consent via a List B application for the replacement of the current floodlights in the Churchyard with energy efficient LED lighting and a new Astro timer. PCC was asked to consider this matter and minute their decision to support the scheme. It was proposed **to support Cromer Town Council's List B application for the replacement of the current floodlights in the Churchyard with energy efficient LED lighting and a new Astro timer.** A show of hands indicated a majority in favour. This was ratified electronically afterwards, according to Church Representation Rules.

- b) Revd Jennie Hodgkinson asked if it could be made clear and public that the Town Council was paying for the floodlighting scheme and not the church.
- c) Cameras had been fitted on the roof. This would significantly reduce our insurance premium. The Diocese had paid for the cameras and we had paid for the installation. There was no access on the roof now for anyone. David Loades was thanked for all his hard work on this project. Responding to a question from David Anderson, the Vicar said that there were 3 or 4 named persons and the alarm also went through to the police if it went off.
- a) Future meeting: Thursday 25 February at 7.30.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.21 pm.