

Minutes of St Mark's PCC Meeting 16.11.20

Opening: Charlotte Mouzer read psalm 27 and Ben King prayed for God's presence to be at the meeting.

1. Apologies: None

Present: Ann and Peter Arnold, Ben King, Janet Bone, Michael Semuguruka, Yvonne Tiley, Ellen Kemp, Jackie Randall, Charlotte Mouzer, Mike Richardson, Sharon Yates, Barbara Lumsden and Jane Ridout.

2. PCC Minutes of the meeting 14.9.20 and Matters Arising: A correction of Michael's surname was noted and the minutes were then passed unanimously. There were no matters arising.

The minutes of the APCM of 19.10.20 were passed unanimously with no matters arising.

3. Appointments for the new PCC session:

- a. Vice Chair: Ann Arnold
- b. Treasurer: Peter Arnold
- c. Secretary: Jane Ridout

d. Terms of Office: We have had staggered terms so that the election of PCC members is on a rolling programme. Everyone now elected has been elected for 3 years until 2023.

NB: *This point was not discussed at the meeting but was discussed subsequently by the Standing Committee, because there was some confusion about the terms and how they operate. There is a revised terms of office accompanying these minutes as an attachment.*

4. Vicar's report:

a. Day of prayer: Thanks were given by Ben to all those who had helped and attended. It had been good to seek God in the way ahead both with our individual roles and the way ahead for the church. The most important responses seemed to be:

- Prayer and the Holy Spirit
- Technology
- Old people and young people
- Community

One member said that she was thinking very much towards the community and would it be possible to reach out by using the new kitchen, perhaps with a view to opening a homeless cafe? Another member reminded us that we are unfortunately sited in a back street, although it was pointed out that people do find their way to cafes tucked away under the railway arches. Ann Arnold reminded the meeting that we had opted to have an ordinary kitchen at the time of designing and building it, not one that could be used as a cafe.

The meeting noted that we have many seniors in church. Elizabeth had been very supportive of this group and has now passed away and Flo has retired as leader of the Nifty Fifties having given many years of faithful service.

Ben suggested that a monthly tea gathering, perhaps with a speaker, might be a good thing to do for older members.

It was felt by another member that there seems to be something about a new energy, renewing us to do a different job.

Ben said that there had been 24 respondents and 12 of them had mentioned Community. It is important that we pray into that while listening and re-imagining. We need to allow God to lead us. As we think about next year's motto (being the Body of Christ) we need to have a sense of direction and a vision.

Leadership: Ben said that it was lovely to see people responding to God's call of vocation and leadership. He said that the Race Steering Group had had a good meeting and would move slowly and steadily to help people use their gifts.

Peter asked what "designated roles" means (In the Vicar's report) Ben said that he wants to marry the various church roles with people's gifts. This is the beginning of discernment where he hopes that people will step up.

Ben reminded us that we also need to consider the building of St Mark's and its future use. How can we use it to the best?

One PCC member commented that this was brilliant and that we need to be open to discernment and how the Holy Spirit might show us our individual roles. In the end everything should join up as one, much of that may be new things which St Mark's hasn't done before.

Ben agreed that this needs to be radical thinking and that Jesus has called us to launch out into the deep...that's where the opportunities lie.

One member said that there is obviously nothing to disagree with but with no detail how will we follow through? Ben replied that he is speaking for now but that through prayer God will continue to speak with us.

Another member said that she longs to see a large cross on the top of St Mark's building so that it can be seen from some distance away.

Mike Richardson asked whether, apart from the minutes, there would be anything written for the church family to know about this vision for the future. We need to involve people in what the Lord wants and to give everyone an idea of the bigger picture. Ben readily agreed that this needs publishing more widely.

b.Worship: The latest lockdown has frustrated our plans for more live events in church. We have decided to create some variety in the Advent services and will have to wait and see what happens about December restrictions. The two Archbishops have called us to pray about the Covid situation and we are addressing this particularly in the Wednesday evening prayer meetings. Ben urged more members of the PCC to join with this and to pray about the way we can best move forward in these difficult times.

c.Alpha: A member attending said that it is going really well. There are several people attending who already come to church and one of the participants is already asking about the next one. Another PCC member said that those who are attending have already deepened their faith. Another PCC member said that it is brilliant for sharing testimonies and it would be a good idea to keep it going. Ben said that the Holy Spirit day had gone well.

A question was asked about those who are attending and are they all people from St Mark's? Ben said that one is a former member of the church and another is from the south coast apart from those church members who are attending and are already Christians. One participating leader said that it has been very much about deepening an already existing faith. Ben said that there will now be a time for reflection. He gave thanks in prayer for what has already happened and asked for God's guidance in releasing people to do the good work he has called us all to undertake.

5. Race Steering Group: Michael Semuguruka

This report had already been circulated and Ben asked Michael to do a summary of it.

- To overcome pockets of friendship groups who don't mix
- To create greater cultural involvement, to recognise other modes of worship and social events and to perhaps streamline our worship.
- Affirm BAME involvement. When people are reached out to individually they are more willing to participate and there is an appetite there. People feel empowered and are brought together through participation.
- Have a forum...Michael suggested that perhaps he and Radhika could have a discussion about ethnic views though at that point Radhika had not been approached. It was felt that some of the comments we'd had on the survey were maybe said through frustration.
- Encourage the BAME community to take up roles of leadership. Perhaps PCC members could explain their different roles. (Michael said that he had felt that joining the PCC was a calling and had then been approached by a member of PCC about joining) The group felt that this needed to be taken wider to others in the church community so that people felt they could be a part of this. This would help to relieve them of fears they may have.

One member agreed that people needed to have a personal approach, it is always the best approach to use. It was felt by another member that it is important that from this meeting something really needs to happen. Obviously social restrictions pose a problem at the moment but it was also suggested that experiences could be shared by setting up "rooms" on a zoom link where PCC members could share their experiences.

Ben proposed a BAME forum to talk about the wider vision of leadership. He will convene a Race steering group meeting to discuss inviting members of the congregation. It was felt by the meeting that this is something we need to get on with so that we have the views of the wider BAME community.

Ben told the meeting that he had spoken about what we've been doing with this Steering Committee at Transform Newham and that other church leaders had found it very encouraging.

6. Christmas Programme:

To approve a budget of £800:

Our live services will be on 25th and 27th Dec. During Advent our streamed services will be slightly shorter with seasonal touches. Martin Brown is going to organise a Nativity trail. Plans for a carnival style float telling the Christmas story around the parish are hopeful but as yet uncertain. There will be about 6 people who actually do this but it is not yet in the literature because of the uncertainty.

The boxes of comfort and joy are going to be distributed near to Christmas.

Advent boxes for children's craft activities are about to be delivered.

The budget for the Advent boxes is £500 and for the Christmas boxes, £300.

Ben proposed that we accept an £800 budget and the meeting was unanimously in favour.

Ben gave thanks to all those working behind the scenes.

7. Children and Young People: Sharon Yates

a.Update:

Sharon reported to the meeting that texts and conversations are going on and that all our younger members are still very much engaged with church activities. It had not been possible to do a distanced meet up at half term. Because of this Sharon wrote letters to them and also our young church families. Unfortunately our plans to have a physical Messy Church in the building have been thwarted by the second lockdown but Sharon will do a short streamed introduction to the boxes with activities.

Yvonne Tiley and Jackie Randall gave thanks to Sharon which the whole meeting agreed with.

b.To approve expenditure of Christmas boxes:

Sharon Yates proposed that the provision of Christmas boxes around the parish be 50. Money for the children's Advent boxes can be taken from the LOB grant. The meeting agreed up to £1000 could be spent. This was seconded by Jackie Randall and passed unanimously by the meeting.

8. Treasurer's Report: Peter Arnold

a. Income: Peter's report had been seen by the meeting.

The CBF has just under £50,000.

The current account is in a healthy state so £10,000 has been put into the deposit account. As at 30/6/20 the CBF investment account stands at £40,516 and so far in 2020 we have received three quarterly dividends totalling £910.

The lockdown has had an impact on our cash collection and is about half of our last year's collection. Overall our Giving income has stayed pretty much the same because of the stewardship scheme.

The 2019 accounts have gone to the Charity Commission and the Diocese as required.

The Energy Audit was completed on 3rd Nov and the report should be with Peter fairly soon. Peter felt it likely that we might have to spend in order to save.

The Hardship fund stands at £460.

Peter said that Covid is having quite an impact on the diocesan funds. There are currently some short term steps to keep the diocese afloat. Stipends take 62% of the Parish Share and 75% of the diocesan income comes from that Parish Share. It looks as though our share next year will be about £36,000.

b.Expenditure: We are up to date with the Parish Share and the major part of our expenditure is on services, magazines and youth work. We have spent £4,257 on utilities and a small amount on maintenance.

At the moment we have a surplus of about £8,300 but some L.O.B. money is unspent. We will almost certainly need to do more building maintenance next year.

c.Annual Giving; We are now in receipt of a large legacy of £369,000 from Helen Rigby's estate. This will come into our accounting for 2020 and is specifically designated for work among adults in the community.

Peter asked the PCC to pray about how best to use this money and to give God thanks for this special gift.

This gift will now push us over £250,000 pa and Peter asked the meeting if he could purchase a piece of software at a cost of £144 to help him with the larger figures. The meeting gave him unanimous approval to purchase this programme.

Peter said that we need to give away a further £6,460 in the current year in order to meet our 10% Giving target. He suggested that we think about Newham borough, London and overseas. Peter also suggested that we consider keeping the same charities as last year (see his report) Ben suggested that PCC members email Peter to say what they feel about the current charities by 30th Nov. Peter asked if we would also specify whether we wanted gifts to be within the planned 10% gifting or to be an adhoc gift.

Thanks were given to Peter by Ben on behalf of the whole meeting.

9. Churchwarden's Report: Mike had sent the CW report which covered the fabric of the church building and the days when it had been opened. There was nothing unexpected and there were no questions asked by the meeting.

10. Safeguarding Report and Annual Review: Ellen Kemp

Ellen told the meeting that it had been very useful to have the Safeguarding group set up and that the whole group is happy to continue. Ben King proposed to the meeting that Ellen, Ian, Barbara and Jane continue in these roles and this was passed unanimously.

In response to some queries from within the team:

Ellen assured the meeting that we have looked at the review carefully and that when we recruit we are using the guidelines as laid out in the review. We also have appropriate insurance from Ecclesiastical Insurance.

The display at the front of the church is not as noticeable at the moment but it will be updated when the building becomes fully used again.

The Safeguarding handbook can be located in the office.

Hire of church premises: we need to check whether we comply with hiring the hall for adult groups but we certainly comply with hiring for children's activities.

Ellen said that she has had no concerns this year. In the past we have been involved with known offenders.

Risk assessments **MUST** now apply to all activities in the future.

The meeting passed this to say **that we are responding appropriately to Safeguarding requirements.**

Ellen also asked for guidance as to what would happen if someone refused to have a DBS check. This was supported and passed: **The PCC expects everyone involved with children, young people & vulnerable adults be subject to a DBS check as listed in the guidance .**

Thanks were given to Ellen and the team.

11. Deanery Synod:

Ellen reported that in the Deanery Synod meeting it had been revealed that L.O.B money will now go towards stipends. Many churches who rely heavily on lettings and cash giving have suffered badly.

There is a new church at Three Mills- Christ Church.

Significant issues:

MMUs- There is likely to be some re-organisation between 2021 and 2025 with the possibility of money being diverted to group projects. Ben said that although the re-organisation process will begin in 2021, there will be no imminent radical changes.

There was considerable upset over no training facilities being available except in Chelmsford and with that in mind a new Vocations course is to begin in Newham. We could suggest 3 people to attend. Ellen suggested that it might be helpful to our church in finding out new gifts in our midst.

There had been discussion about a proposed new Detention centre called Warehouse K to be sited in Docklands.

There is one more place to be filled on Deanery Synod which would lead to that person being on the PCC.

12. Correspondence:

Living in Love and Faith is a newly published document which has just been released about human sexuality. Ben said he can send it out to anyone who would like it.

13. Conclusion and open prayer: Ben thanked people for agreeing to stand again and for their engagement in PCC issues.

Yvonne concluded the meeting in prayer at 9.40pm

Date of the next meeting 18.01. 21.