

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council
of St Nicholas Church Shepperton**

Virtually on Zoom on Monday 26th July at 8:00pm

Following the Opening Worship

Apologies for absence were received from Kathy Hodge

Present: Margaret Bennet, Guy Blythman, Sylvia Carter, John Child, Jo Child, Hilary Dyer, Alan Green, Maggie Hammond, Alastair Naish, Doris Neville-Davies, Simon Sheldon
Mark Steptoe, Lynn Sutton-Bunnell.
Janice Wetherell in the Chair.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 21st June.

Regarding the fund-raising lunch held on 25th July, Mark Steptoe raised the point that it had been minuted as to be held in the Rectory garden but had actually been held inside the Parish Centre which he thought might be considered both unwise and unauthorised. John Child pointed out that the Minutes read “possibly in the Rectory garden”. He then said that the decision has been taken because of the unsettled weather predicted, and Simon further defended the choice as all precautions had been taken with widely spaced tables, open doors and the option of seating on the terrace.

John Child requested the insertion of the words “to interviews of” in the second line to clarify the account of the appointment process for the new Rector. Thus amended the acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by John Child and seconded by Mark Steptoe

2. Matters arising

Doris Neville-Davies suggested that for future reference events in aid of the Milange school fence should be described as raising money *towards* the total.

Card Readers

Janice had done further research and found that Zettle is not suitable, but Sumup might have more encouraging possibilities. However, it would soon be possible to draw on Carole’s experience of parish administration when making a final choice.

Repairs to the boundary wall

The Archdeacon had replied that it did not require a Faculty but had supplied clear instructions on the correct procedure. Hilary Dyer recommended a specialist, whose work she had recently seen on a wall of similar age.

Simon gave a brief background to the Milange appeal lunch, explaining that the school cannot open until the security fence is in place. He was grateful for the support he had received and felt that the lunch was not only a financial success but an opportunity for fellowship and a chance to re-visit and revitalize the Milange link. Janice thanked Simon for the talk he had given, to great effect, at both services.

3. Safeguarding

There were no issues that Janice was aware of.

4. Financial report

Kathy sent a short report and despite the drop in income we were keeping our heads above water, as our expenses were correspondingly less.

5. Deanery Synod

Jo Child reported that Fr Joseph had welcomed everyone to the meeting on 23rd June via zoom and congratulated Rev Carole George on her appointment as Rector of St Nicholas Shepperton. He introduced a talk by the Archdeacon who likened the spiritual and the administrative aspects of church life to the vine and the trellis that supports it. He offered suggestions of ways to avoid paying too much attention to the trellis, at the expense of the vine.

6. Response to lifting of restrictions

Having studied Bishop Sarah's letter and the Church of England's advice and guidance, the wardens had proposed a number of steps which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

1. All the pews in the main body of the church be once again open for use, with kneelers and seat coverings re-instated.
2. The socially distanced chairs in N & S transepts remain as they are for those wishing to retain a social distance of a least 1.5 metres.
3. We should continue our "no singing" policy at 9.30 services at least until the end of August when we have both more understanding and details of local infection rates which will help us make an informed decision in September
4. We would encourage all members of the congregation to continue to wear face coverings and use hand sanitiser
5. We would continue the practice of receiving communion in only one kind in our seats and giving a wave at the peace
6. People no longer will be required to pre-book seats but will still need to give contact details on entry to the church
7. We should continue to stream our services but need to build in holiday relief for Sally Passingham
8. This policy be kept under review by the Standing Committee until the next meeting of PCC
9. As a result of these proposed changes, the office in August reverts to 3 days a week, Mon; Wed & Fri with shortened hours 10 - 12.

The feeling of the meeting was in agreement with the cautious approach embodied in the proposals. A few points were raised: the re-distribution of office duties, the possibility of

singing through a mask, (it was noted that Carole would like singing at her Induction), the re-instatement of the children's area, particularly for families attending the 9.30 during August, and the rationale behind the removal of the requirement to book a place.

Mark took the opportunity to praise the good behavior of a certain children now attending the more demanding 9.30 service. He also pondered on the difficult balance between the wish to return to normal and the effort to reduce infections that would bring that about.

Margaret Bennet enquired if the church could be open but this necessitated a person to unlock and lock up and could be more suitably managed when the new incumbent was in residence.

John proposed an unpublicized working party to refurbish the church with kneelers and seat cushions, manned by the congregation after the 9.30 service on 1st August.

Doris enquired if people were aware of the simplicity of obtaining a covid test and agreed to John's suggestion that she should write an item for the Notices, giving details.

Sylvia Carter proposed the acceptance of the Wardens' plan for the lifting of restrictions and it was seconded by Simon.

7. Services in July, August and September

John Child reported on the successful visit of the Bishop on 18th July. He thanked Peter Davis for streaming the service to the people in the Parish Centre. The Bishop had spent time in the garden and talked to everyone.

It had been agreed that there would be no 11.15 service during August

8. Carole's Induction on 19th September

The Wardens were dismayed by the number of invitations that were required to be sent to people such as the MP, the Mayor and the Patron, who is the Bishop of London. The reception could not be held in the Parish Centre as that would have been filled with the overflow congregation. St Nicholas School, used for the Installation of the Rev Chris Swift, was not suitable and John had considered the Warren Lodge. Margaret Bennet proposed the Village Hall. The simple open space would allow people to circulate more easily. Catering could be done professionally or Parties-R-Us could be approached. Enquiries would be made about booking. It was further noted that Carole would like a Eucharist in her Induction service. The unusual word "Collation" on the invitation was queried and John informed the meeting that this was used when the Patron is the Bishop of London.

John asked Margaret when she proposed to start the 11.15 service and it was agreed on 5th September, when it was hoped that the service would be back in the Church.

Doris enquired if there was to be an 8.00am service in future. The matter, and the 6.30pm service, were still under discussion between Carole and the Wardens..

Until she is installed as Rector Carole is forbidden to attend PCC meetings, even as an observer, but she may receive the Minutes. Though it might appear that the 8.00 service had not been touched upon, it had in fact been agreed at the beginning of the interregnum that the retired clergy taking our services could only be asked to do one, and therefore the 8.00am Eucharist had been in abeyance

9. Bereavement Café

Sylvia reported on the first session on 12th July. Angie and Sylvia were the Listeners,

Margaret greeted the visitors and Julia made the tea. In advance of the café Margaret made a Risk Assessment. There were five visitors, one who attended in support. All the visitors were very engaged. They appreciated the opportunity and shared very personal and difficult feelings. Some may come back and we will send reminders of the next date. Princess Alice will brief us about other cafes opening, so we can offer our visitors alternatives. The Risk Assessment raised the question of the need for DBS checks. It was agreed to ask the PCC and their advice was to consult Father Joseph and the Archdeacon. The check may not be necessary as the engagement is not one-to-one, but in a group, and this meeting was out of doors. The Wardens would investigate and report back immediately, should the check be required.

Hilary Dyer queried whether the risk assessment formula used on this occasion was a generic one that could be applied to the board games afternoons.. Margaret said her assessment covered Covid and general risks and was built on experience in other areas.

10. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received

11. Churchwardens' Notices

Janice reported on the Thursday working party for the Rectory garden borders. John, Jo and Janice had made a start, but much more needed to be done, in the borders and the almost invisible sunken garden at the front of the house.. It was agreed that another working party would be announced in the Notices, for Saturday 7th August from 10.00am – 12.00noon. Sylvia would bring her stone washer.

12. AOB

Guy Blythman raised the question of the restoration of the Slaves' grave in the churchyard. Five years ago planning for this work had reached quite an advanced stage but in the absence of Chris Swift the impetus had been lost. It was agreed that the matter should be held over until Carole was able to consider and prioritise it. The restoration of Margaret Love Peacock's grave is in the same situation, Janice suggested it should be an agenda item for the PCC Meeting after the next one.

At the request of the Chair Sylvia reported on the recruitment of a new Head at St Nicholas School. Insufficient applications had been received and, guided by the Diocesan Board for Schools and Surrey County Council, it had been decided to conduct no interviews and advertise again. The Governing body had full confidence in Mrs. Cook and she was to remain as Acting Head for the foreseeable future.

**Date of next Standing Committee meeting will be 9th August
In the absence of Mark Steptoe, Doris Neville-Davies will stand in for him.**

Date of next PCC meeting will be 23rd August

The Grace