

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council of St Nicholas Church Shepperton  
held in the Parish Centre  
on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 8.00pm**

**Present:** Rev Carole (Chair), Julia Jelley (PCC Secretary)  
Guy Blythman, Sylvia Carter, John Child, Jo Child, Hilary Dyer, Alan Green, Maggie Hammond,  
Kathy Hodge, Alastair Naish, Doris Neville-Davies, Mark Steptoe, Lynn Sutton-Bunnell, Simon  
Sheldon and Janice Wetherell.

Apologies were received from Margaret Bennet

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**2. There were no Matters Arising**

**3. Safeguarding**

Janice Wetherell condensed a report from the Safeguarding officer to the effect that new appointees to the Diocesan Safeguarding department had brought a fresh energy to the group and she felt optimistic about its future. The current Statement of Safeguarding Policy was signed by the Rector and Wardens. A copy of this document will be sent out with all future booking forms for the Parish Centre.

**4. Financial report and decision on Common Fund contribution 2022**

The Interim Financial Statement 2021 and the Interim Restricted Funds Summary 2021 had been circulated before the meeting. Kathy reported that the accounts to the end of October showed a General Fund surplus of £10,000 though this was likely to be a smaller sum by the year end, depending on Christmas collections. The Stewardship income had fallen by about £4,000 less than the previous year. The Parish Standard cost, at £85,200, was as before. Clergy costs having increased by 1.6% to £56,550 the Diocese had therefore reduced training and support costs to keep to this figure. Our Common Fund offer will be based on 2020 accounts as it has to be submitted by the end of the current month. In 2020 the total income from Stewardship, collections, donations and tax recovered (though not legacies nor the results of fund raising) amounted to £68,835, and the PCC had previously agreed that the Common Fund offer should not be more than 75% of this figure, a sum of £51,600. If the contribution was kept the same as the current year, £50,000 would only be 72% of regular income. To cover Clergy Costs (which include stipend, pension & housing costs) we would have to offer approximately 82% of the total income, well above the 75% cap previously set by the PCC. Doris Neville-Davies enquired what our own total costs were but it was not possible to provide a clear answer as so many variable factors were involved. Mark Steptoe hoped that the Diocese might be making economies in the same way as they wished the parishes to do and in their defence the Rector pointed out that, to cover the shortfall caused by the pandemic, various diocesan assets had been sold. The Rector suggested that an offer of 75% of our total income should be made to the Diocese and if circumstances permitted, increased at a later date, with the aspiration to cover, at a minimum, the clergy cost figure of £56,550 in this next year. Proposed by Janice, seconded by Doris Neville-Davies, approved unanimously. John Child offered the thanks of the meeting to Kathy for the presentation of the current figures.

The Rector introduced the subject of the Contactless Card Reader and thanked Kathy and Janice for the time they had spent with her in research and trials of various systems. She drew attention to the posters in church with a QR code. These can be scanned with a mobile phone, and would connect the user to the St Nicholas website giving the opportunity to choose a sum to donate to the church. There is also an App called Give a Little which will direct the user to the same site via a tablet, enabling a contactless “tap”.

These systems will recommend themselves to the congregations at occasional services such as weddings and baptisms. The systems can be monitored to see how much is being given through each. The system has been acquired through the Parish Buying Site and requires no monthly fee. Other refinements include the ability to Gift Aid a donation after which all contributions would be treated similarly. A receipt can be e-mailed to the donor. After practical experiments with the donated Android tablet, the pilot group found that this set-up was much easier than some others previously attempted. The security of the tablet was questioned and some kind of secure fixing could be designed to protect it.

## **5. Archdeacon’s Visitation**

The Rector invited John Child to outline the preparation. An inspection of the conduct of parish affairs was normally carried out every three years, but the previous one had been cancelled because of the pandemic. John listed the matters that would be raised, such as work done following the last Quinquennial Inspection. All works for immediate action had been attended to and larger operations would be dealt with later, as funds permitted. Faculties for items such as the Vestry roof were listed and a new matter was the introduction of a PCC Budget. All Users of the Parish Centre were to supply proof of their insurance, a Risk Assessment for their activities and compliance with our Parish Safeguarding Policy. In the Parish Profile the need for a Mission Action Plan had been recorded and a number of Policies regarding our operations needed to be created or re-drawn. Mildly disconcerted initially by a Visitation so early in her ministry, the Rector had come to regard it as a positive benefit, giving us a clear starting point and guidance. She added that a policy on the implementation of General Data Protection Regulations was needed and was very pleased to announce that Mark Steptoe had offered to undertake this as Compliance Officer. His appointment was unanimously approved.

## **6. Current restrictions: a review**

The Rector proposed that no major changes should yet be made. Paying heed to the Prime Minister’s remarks about conditions in Europe and also observing that two Astra Zeneca vaccinations left a person five months later with only a 46% level of protection, (though this would rise to 96% after the booster), she felt that the situation was still too volatile for further relaxation. Alastair Naish spoke of his anxieties about the possibility, not so much of catching but more of transmitting the disease. He reported the case of St Mary Magdalene Church in Littleton, recently opened, only to retreat under restrictions once more as figures rose alarmingly. The only changes this month would be the re-introduction of teas and coffee in the Parish Centre after the 9.30 service, starting on Sunday 21st November.

## **7. Services**

The Rector announced that from Advent she would open the church for Morning Prayer at 9.00am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on Mondays and Wednesdays it would be live-streamed from the Rectory and also available later on a recording. The Advent Carol service would be in church on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm and the Nine Lessons and Carols in church on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December, also at 6.30pm. There would be Midnight Mass on 24<sup>th</sup> December at 11.30pm.

On Christmas Day there would be an 8.00am Said Eucharist and at 10.am a Family Sung Eucharist. Both Halliford School and St Nicholas School were bringing individual Year Groups to church for their carol services and the Nursery was making arrangements to join with Carole for their Nativity.

After much discussion in Standing Committee it had been decided not to hold the traditional, very crowded, Crib services in church. So many children in close proximity, who would within hours be mixing with elderly relations, made too dangerous a scenario. It was hoped that the static Nativity would be re-created with help from the parents at the 11.15 service

To replace the traditional Crib Service Carole proposed to design a remote version. Pre-recorded readings by children could be spliced into the service conducted by Carole and others and the finished recording made accessible via Face Book. For those wary of Facebook, Carole agreed with Maggie that she could investigate the technical possibilities of putting the finished video on Youtube, via the church website.

## **8. Rector's Proposals**

a) The Rector proposed that, from Advent, she would open the church all day from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Portable treasures would be removed and a plain wooden cross placed on the altar.

b) Simon Sheldon was thanked for his sermon and asked about the A Rocha Eco Church programme for parishes to work towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Two people are required to register with the programme, answer the survey questions and report the result. As a Warden, John Child volunteered to deal with the survey and Simon Sheldon agreed to work with him. Simon queried the heating system in the church and the Rector reported that a new boiler was under discussion which, were it to be replacing like with like would not require a Faculty. Guy enquired if solar panels had been considered or possibly a wind turbine. Such otherwise admirable innovations would come up against the restrictions imposed on a Conservation Area.

## **9. Correspondence.**

No correspondence had been received.

## **11. Churchwardens' Notices**

Janice wished to record how very well the Service of Remembrance had been received by the large number of people gathered at the War Memorial, including families with children. She expressed her thanks and appreciation of Carole's first public service, perhaps for many people their first opportunity of hearing and meeting her.

## **12. AOB (Previously Notified to the PCC Secretary)**

Hilary Dyer raised the question of the running of the Winter Fair, now in abeyance for a second year. The Winter Fairs for the earlier two had been admirably run by Sally Passingham, and Hilary was pleased to hear that her action plan for managing the Fair would be made available to her successor. Hilary also enquired about the Spelthorne Deanery Day of Prayer which she had co-ordinated for some years. She reminded the meeting that it was always held on the first Friday in March. She hoped a successor would be found to organise the event.

Sylvia Carter provided a brief update on the Bereavement Café, now in its sixth month and due for a review of progress. A generous donation had been received from Rotary and its use was to be considered. So far only women had visited the Café and the group were looking to find a way of offering similar support to men. The options so far included **Men in Sheds** and **Walk and Talk**; both could be perceived as less intrusive than a face-to-face conversation. Guy felt that seeking comfort in distress did not fit the accepted masculine stereotype, which perhaps discouraged them from attending. However there had been one male volunteer who proposed to take the PAH training and this was very welcome. A further two people had expressed an interest in the training and their details had been passed to PAH.

Maggie Hammond asked for photographs of church officers for the website and Sylvia agreed to take these.

### **13. Future Dates**

The dates of the next Standing Committee and PCC Meetings having already been fixed, the Rector had planned the dates for the rest of the year and these would shortly be circulated. She concluded with an invitation to a PCC drinks party in the Rectory on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December from 7.00 - 9.00pm

**There being no further business the meeting closed  
with the Grace and the Lord's Prayer at 9.30pm**