

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

**Virtually on Zoom on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at 8:00pm**

Following the Opening Worship

**Apologies** for absence were received from Sylvia Carter and Maggie Hammond

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

## **1. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July.**

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were approved.

## **2. Matters arising**

### **Repairs to the boundary wall**

The specialist in ancient brickwork had inspected the wall and advised that money spent now on small repairs would be wasted and serious repairs would need to be done in two years' time. He was also very interested in the work required for the repairs to the tower, and the boundary wall brickwork problems would naturally arise again if he were to be consulted later, on the tower. The Friends of St. Nicholas could be approached for a contribution to the cost when the wall repairs are undertaken.

## **3. Safeguarding**

Regarding the necessity of DBS checks on people involved with the Bereavement Café, Susan Smith had advised that they would be quite unnecessary as visitors would not be on a one-to-one basis and Father Joseph had confirmed that people involved in the Bereavement Café would not need DBS checks as their visitors would not be in a one-to-one situation.

## **4. Financial report**

Kathy reported a tremendous response of £2,700 to the Milange school boundary wall appeal. The target figure of £1,500 had been sent to ALMA and the surplus retained for future requests. The major gift, which had come from St Mary Magdalene, was identified as being from a single donor. The gift had been properly recognized and acknowledged.

Current Church funds stood with a surplus of £8,000, largely because our Common Fund contribution had been reduced. Costs would rise again if singing was re-introduced into the services as there would be a weekly sum of £70 for an organist. Meanwhile, for the first time in five years, there had been no need to draw on our reserves to meet running costs.

## **5. Lifting of restrictions: a review**

Janice listed the restrictions which need no longer be observed. The kneelers and seat coverings were re-instated and more chairs were placed in the transepts, a number having been added for the large wedding congregation on 21<sup>st</sup> August. Many of these had been used at the Sunday service, but there was still adequate space in between. The regular congregation had been notably co-operative over masks, sanitising and contact details, though these may not be necessary. (Masks had been

totally ignored by wedding congregation.) The service would continue to offer communion in one kind only, and a wave at the Peace.

The question of the continuation of zoomed services was explored in detail, which revealed its complexity. Those who can get to the church should be encouraged to do so, while not forgetting those for whom the zoomed service was a lifeline. Sally Passingham could not continue indefinitely as the mainstay of the system. The development of a technical team to take on the zooming duties was proposed. Margaret Bennet was willing to be a part of such a team, pointing out that the operator could not take any active part in the worship. In answer to Alan Green, she outlined the procedure. Simon paid tribute to Sally's outstanding devotion to the maintenance and quality of the zoomed services, week after week, which was unanimously endorsed. Janice said how much we all appreciated Sally's devotion to streaming, IT and music making at the 11:15. She had even arranged to return from holiday in order to ensure the zooming of Carole's Induction.

Sally had also alerted the PCC to the question of streaming and copyright. If we return to live music the new licence would not, as had been hoped, cover us to stream our own live singing but only a recording that we have purchased. If we continue to zoom the service we would be confined to singing only music that was old enough to be out of copyright. .

## **6. Singing at St Nicholas**

At the last PCC meeting the infection rate in Spelthorne was 472 per 100,000, in the last four weeks it had fluctuated round the 200 mark, and in the last week it was 295 in Spelthorne and 313 nationwide. Against this background the question of re-introducing congregational and choir singing was closely debated. Zoning arrangements at St Mary's Sunbury were quoted, with masked singers, unmasked singers and masked non-singers seated in different areas. For St Nicholas John proposed a version of the zoned approach, unmasked singers in the first four rows, masked singers in the four back rows and non-singers in the transepts. Singers could join in the first and last hymn, and the rest of the service would continue to be said. The words of the hymn as sung on the recording would be printed in the service sheet.

A variety of objections were raised to the original proposal, including the protection of visiting clergy, almost all of whom were in the vulnerable category. John therefore put a simpler proposition to the meeting: that from 5th September the congregation be allowed to sing the first and last hymn, wearing masks. Janice seconded the proposal and it was carried with two votes against. Dealing separately with the Choir, Simon proposed that they should sit in the chancel, if they so wished, and sing unmasked. To avoid the confines of the vestry it was agreed that they should robe in the Parish Centre. Carried by nine votes, with three against and one abstention.

## **7. Carole's induction on 19<sup>th</sup> September**

It was reported that a great many formal invitations were to be sent out, and until it became clear both how many had been accepted and how many personal guests Carole might invite from her family and previous churches, we could not begin to calculate how much space could be allocated to St Nicholas parishioners. The gallery would be available and the service was to be shown in the Parish Centre. Many possibilities had been considered for the reception and it had been arranged to hold it at the Warren Lodge. Alison Gordon was advising on ways of keeping down the costs and there was also the possibility of sponsorship from a local business. As donations towards flowers for the church had been requested, it was suggested that donations could also be made towards the cost of the reception. The limited number of seats for the service might be allocated through either a ballot or a booking system.

Doris Neville-Davies suggested that Carole's first communion service on the following Sunday could be the congregation's celebration. It was agreed that morning services would be as normal on 19th, but on the following Sunday, 26th September, there would be a single 10.00am joint service, followed by a Harvest Festival lunch to which everyone would bring a contribution.

### **8. Bereavement Café - Sylvia to report**

The volunteers were pleased to see the return of three visitors from last month, with an additional two new visitors. One of the listeners commented on the group's 'tender' approach to the distress shown by one of the visitors at the meeting. Mutual support is clearly helpful. To ensure that visitors do not become reliant on any specific listener, we are rotating roles to avoid that scenario. It should be noted that a minimum number of four volunteers are required to run the cafe effectively, and this may result in some challenges if volunteers are unable to attend for personal reasons, or are on holiday. We suggest following up with the Princess Alice Hospice to see if any new training courses are planned, so that we can invite more people from the congregation to join the team.

### **9. Correspondence**

No correspondence had been received

### **10. Churchwardens' Notices**

John asked Kathy to explain the situation with regard to the lightning conductor on the tower. Our insurance company had asked for confirmation that our lightning conductor had been properly maintained as otherwise our insurance would be invalid. The presence or otherwise of a lightning conductor on the tower was not clear, though Eric Pizzey thought that we might have a very old system. The Archdeacon was surprised to find that we did not have one. We were informed that if there is a system present it must be maintained or it will become more dangerous than not having a system at all. As we do not have a lightning conductor we cannot be at fault and are therefore now fully covered by our insurance.

Janice reported the gift of a picture which has been placed over the memorial book in the south transept. It shows the Irish Guards praying before going into battle and was given by Major Tony Hellier. The Hellier family have now been posted to Norway but wished to leave something that would encourage service families to feel welcome. No faculty was needed to place the picture and it was agreed that it looked well and very acceptable in that position. Janice would write to thank the family.

### **11. Any other business**

Doris reported receiving a message from the Interfaith group which she was asked to pass to other PCC members. Lacking a list of all members' contact details owing to Data Protection rules, she had not been able to complete the task. She was advised to send it to the PCC Secretary to circulate.

Date of the next Standing Committee meeting will be 20<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm via zoom

Date of the next PCC meeting will be 27<sup>th</sup> September. The PCC will meet in person in the Parish Centre. It will be suggested to Carole George that the vulnerable could join via zoom. Margaret Bennet volunteered to operate the zoom connection.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm with The Grace