

Minutes of the PCC of the Parish of Moseley

Tuesday 10 December 2024 7:30pm

Attended: Rev'd Angela Hannafin (AH), Rev'd Magdalen Smith (MS), Neil McLeod (NM), Angela Brown (AB), Rob Brown (RB), Fran Rowley (FR), Danielle Edwards (DE), Pam Rhodes (PR), Jean Lindley (JL), Jenny Daniels (JD), Kate Stocks (KS), Stephen Alabaster (SA), Karen Gray (KG), John Gray (JG), Jill Adams (JA), Bridget Langstaff (BL), Sabrina Bealt (SB)

Non PCC Members – also in attendance: James Langstaff (Organ Committee) and John Clarkin (Treasurer)

The meeting was opened by AH and it began with a prayer.

The committee then took a moment to remember the life of Mike Midgley and to give thanks for the contribution and support he had given to PCC and to our wider church community.

1. Apologies

Received from Scott Smith, Janet Thorne and Tom Brodie

2. Minutes

Minutes of the last PCC meeting – 16 October 2024

The minutes of the last PCC were reviewed.

Members noted that the names 'Hanafin', Bridget' and 'Sabrina' were spelt incorrectly.

RB drew attention to Section 9 Organ Update He said that the sentence reading "*This is different to the Vision 13 money which is held in a designated fund and has been attracting its own interest*" did not reflect what he said and was inaccurate. This sentence should be removed.

AH asked whether PCC were happy to agree the minutes subject to the amendments noted above. This was unanimously given.

Matters arising not on the agenda.

i) CCTV Policy

A draft CCTV policy had been circulated to PCC members in advance of the meeting. NM explained that he had updated the previous policy document and that the content now reflected current provision and procedures for ongoing management and reporting. The final document will need to be formally approved by PCC.

One current policy is that any requests from third parties for CCTV data (such as from the Police) should be referred to PCC for approval. NM queried whether it

might be more prudent for a specific person to take this responsibility, such as the data protection officer. AH suggested that the clergy could be named for this purpose. This was agreed.

SB asked where the CCTV cameras were going to be installed. NM confirmed that all cameras are already in place and have been operational for some time.

RB asked for assurance that the policy only allows for *exterior* surveillance of the residential properties. NM confirmed this was the case.

ii) Non Alcoholic Wine

By way of update following the last PCC meeting, MS explained that she had taken some soundings from clergy colleagues and cathedral staff – and also checked out the cost of non-alcoholic wine. On balance, reflecting both cost and practical considerations, she had reached the view that this option should *not* be offered for the time being.

RB asked if there had been any requests from the congregation for non-alcoholic wine. MS advised not yet. No other comments were raised by PCC members.

Based on this feedback, AH suggested that we park the matter for the time being. But, mindful of our commitment to being inclusive and avoiding marginalizing anyone, PCC members may be minded to revisit this option in the future. All agreed.

iii) Parish Christmas Card

RB brought up the discussions held at the last PCC meeting when the decision was made to stop producing a Christmas card. He reminded PCC of the intention to use other means (social media, local magazines etc) to promote Christmas services to the wider community. He felt this action had not been followed through and he'd seen very little advertising. FR said it was a shame that last week's bulletin didn't list our Christmas services.

MS offered to speak to the office team about updating our Facebook pages and ensuring details were included in the next bulletin.

KS asked if a link could be shared to enable us to use our own networks to share details of services. JA thought this was a good idea and offered to share with groups such as the Moseley Society. KG felt that any link should include an image – not just text. AH asked if anyone could help produce social media links. MS said she was willing to be involved and also deliver a leaflet to local public places.

4. Resources/Recruitment

i) Site Manager & Cleaning

AH advised PCC that Richard Cooper has been appointed to the Site Manager post and is due to start on 7 Jan 2025, working 16 hours per week. Richard is very

practical with strong, varied experience – and his initial probation period will be 6 months. The precise structure of his week has yet to be determined.

With regard to cleaning, AB said she had received a very expensive quote from ‘Minster Cleaning’ to clean both churches. She had subsequently approached a Ukrainian cleaning company (suggested by JL) and received a more affordable quote of £16/hour. Having met with the area manager and checked out their reviews, she has now instructed the firm – they will undertake cleaning of both churches over 5 hours per week (2 staff) and start after Christmas.

SA thanked Angela for dealing with this matter. He asked whether the new Site Manager would be responsible for letting the cleaners into church. AB said that the precise jobs for both the Site Manager/the Cleaners hadn’t yet been determined – but it is likely that the cleaners will be given their own set of keys.

Treasurer

AH advised that a job advert had been placed in the church newsletter for a new Treasurer but no one had yet come forward. She urged PCC members to use our own networks and take opportunities ourselves to talk to the people we know or meet, about the vacancy.

JL asked if the accounts were managed using a software package such as QuickBooks. JC advised that it was just Excel based.

5. Finance

Property Update

RB referred to the note which had been circulated to PCC members in advance of the meeting, which set out the status of negotiations regarding the new lease terms for 25 and 25A St Mary’s Row - currently occupied by Amore. RB asked PCC to approve his recommendation that negotiations with the leaseholders should continue, with the aim of securing terms of c£17,000 pa.

SA asked who was doing the negotiations. RB confirmed this was being led by our property agents – Fishers.

FR asked whether RB envisaged any risks in holding out for higher terms. RB suggested the risk was very low.

MS felt that, as we are seeking a relatively small amount over what the tenants have currently offered, we should be optimistic about reaching agreement.

RB said he was fairly confident that an acceptable conclusion would be reached.

On this basis, PCC gave their unanimous approval to further negotiations, as recommended.

Budget

JC (Treasurer) drew attention to his Budget Report (Dec 2024) which had been circulated to PCC Members. He advised that the budget was an update to provisional figures which he had previously circulated to PCC last October – these indicate a combined loss for our Parish of c. £50k, for 2024 and 2025, on an underlying basis.

JC outlined some of the key items in his latest report

- Expenditure is expected to go up next year, compared to this year – impacted by the costs associated with a new site manager and two clergy.
- Parish giving has increased this year (a positive story)
- The flat refurbishment is now complete and has a 10 year payback period to recoup the costs
- £400K of funds have been liquidated this year to fund projects for both churches (including organ, flats, St Anne’s Hall). This will reduce our potential dividend income next year
- Next year, even without specific projects, we are forecast to have a continued underlying loss – and further funds will need to be liquidated.

Questions were invited.

AH asked about the Common Fund. JC confirmed that this had been reduced - it is now £85K for St Mary’s and £25K for St Annes.

JC mentioned Insurance costs which need to be investigated. There is scope to potentially find cheaper cover and reduce the costs for next year.

JC advised that there was £7.5K committed costs for the re-ordering project which has not yet been paid out. At this stage no other allowance has been made in next year’s budget for re-ordering works.

MS asked what was included in the budget for “other income” – was it funerals, weddings etc? JC said he would be happy to provide a breakdown.

AH asked whether we could investigate card readers for St Anne’s – and made the point that, during the re-ordering project when all services will be at St Anne’s, it will be particularly important. JC advised that, as there is no internet connection at St Anne’s we would have to investigate options to have a reader which can link to a phone or else have a device with an inbuilt reader. SA queried the cost of this and JC said he could find out.

JG felt that we should seriously consider WiFi at St Annes - this would make the buildings more attractive for hire to external users and also enable us (and other congregations such as Riverside) to livestream St Anne’s services. JC pointed out, that whilst it worthwhile exploring the cost of installing a WiFi connection, this option should only be pursued if we are confident, the revenue outlay is recoverable. JG offered to look into this further and report back.

KG asked if we were still investigating having a green energy supplier. JC confirmed that St Mary’s is already on the British Gas ‘Green’ tariff. AH reminded PCC that our office team are currently working with Parish Buying to compare suppliers, with a view to identifying a new provider to supply our churches.

RB noted that the figures in the budget for the organ project don’t currently tally with the figures kept by organ committee. He asked JC to liaise with him on this point prior to finalising the budget.

SB asked for clarification on how we were able to still operate as a church given that we are spending more than our income year on year. JC explained that we are fortunate to have investments which generate an income – and that he is able to liquidate funds, as necessary, to cover our shortfalls. RB also made the point that capital appreciation has covered some of our losses – and we have been able to use interest earned on our investments.

As the re-ordering project was raised at this point, it was suggested by AH that Item 7 (Vision 13) on the agenda be brought forward.

Vision 13

FR gave an update on Vision 13. She advised PCC that reports had been received from the Structural Engineer and Heating Engineer and that a further archeological report was expected shortly. AH and Becs Ray (our Vision 13 lead) have met recently with our architects APEC to discuss the reports. In summary, these have shown that the 'phase 1' works are now demonstrably feasible in technical terms and capable of being delivered – the next stage is to secure DAC approval and obtain cost estimates from the appointed Quantity Surveyor. Both these actions are underway and are expected to be concluded by the end of January.

FR advised that once we have cost estimates, we will then be in a strong position to consider the overall picture and move forward with fundraising and a project delivery plan. It may be that the Lady Chapel glazing could be instructed as a first phase and completed during 2025.

There followed some discussion about the merits of proceeding with the reordering project at a time when we are currently operating with a financial loss. JC noted that this was a holistic challenge. There was a need to clarify the benefits and potential costs of proposed works and ensure any decision to move forward has a sustainable footing. RB made the point that whilst the funds had been ring fenced and set aside for re-ordering, this action had been agreed at a time when we had an income and were solvent; times were different now. AH expressed a desire to press ahead with re-ordering and deliver what we have set out to do.

FR urged PCC to await the cost estimates and further advice from the Vision 13 group. She said that once the costs are in (and with support from APEC) the group would be looking at match funding opportunities and a fundraising campaign. She said this is a pre requisite to taking a decision in this matter.

MS felt strongly that we had to trust in God and move forward in faith.

AH brought the Vision 13 discussions to a close.

JC reminded PCC that they needed to give approval to the budget papers he had presented. This was unanimously given and AH took the opportunity to thank JC for his ongoing financial diligence and advice.

Building Hire Charges

AH presented a note to PCC members which compared hire charges of church buildings at a number of other venues. This concluded that that the hire charges for our premises were low and recommended an increase. She invited comments.

SA felt the proposed £30 per hour charge for St Anne's Hall might be too high – he drew comparison with St Agnes Church Hall which is £20/hr. SA had also obtained a comparison from the ballet school of the charges levied at other venues (which ranged from £14-£20). He suggested that a rise to £24/hr could be more palatable for St Anne's Hall and would be more likely to protect the ballet school's use. AH acknowledged the importance of keeping the ballet school.

JA said that, in the past, we had kept our hire rates at the same price for long periods. Ideally, we should have a regular review/increase – on an annual basis.

JG suggested we gradually re-align to more palatable rates, rather than do a big jump now. NM wondered if there was scope for new users to be charged different rates to existing users (to de-risk losing the ones we've got). JC made the point that our rates should at minimum, recover costs – he had previously calculated our St Anne's hire charge needed to be at least £24. DA noted that the heating in St Anne's hall, on Saturdays, could be adjusted to help save costs.

AH suggested we write to existing users to notify them of our proposed increase in hire charges, with an invitation to contact us in the event the proposed rise is a problem. This would give us an opportunity to discuss and potentially negotiate bespoke terms. SA concurred with this.

It was agreed that the proposed charge for St Anne's hall would be increased to £26 for St Anne's Hall – except for the ballet school which would be £24. Charges would take effect from April 2025.

KG felt that April might be too soon. BL felt that April was reasonable – in the case of the ballet school, she suggested the increased cost would likely be passed onto ballet users.

BL also made the point that, once the new charges are in place, details of all our venues and hire charges should be promoted through our website and that we should seek to increase awareness and maximise usage. All concurred.

6. Organ Project Update

JL drew attention to the Organ Update report which had been circulated to PCC members in advance of the meeting.

He confirmed that the asbestos (which had necessitated an urgent decision by PCC last month) is scheduled to be removed next week. As much as possible is being removed – but a small residual section will be treated and boxed in. The cost will come in slightly lower than the quote.

As regards the organ works, these are now well advanced and are close to being on schedule, JL explained that there are some additional works which *need* to be done and also some additional works which it would be prudent to complete at this stage. He asked PCC to underwrite an extension to the budget to enable the project to proceed to completion. Fundraising is continuing – such as the balloon race and organ pipe sponsorship which is expected to cover the cost of all the additional works, in due course.

JC said he was content to authorise the underwriting – although he flagged a small risk that, if we do not get all the VAT back, there would be a larger shortfall than currently forecast.

AH asked about the completion date. JL confirmed this would be Easter or thereabouts and that a July event was being planned to celebrate the new organ – once the new system had had time to settle in.

MS said it would be important to protect the organ during the re-ordering works. JL reassured her that Cleveland Organs have experience of this and would likely be appointed to advise.

AB proposed that the budget uplift for the organ project be approved. This was seconded by KS and unanimous approval was given.

7. Vision 13

See above under Item 5 Finance - Budget – *italics section*

8. St Anne's Church & Hall

SA reported that the building works had now been completed – with the exception of a hot water tank connection and the setting of the fire alarms. A safety certificate is now in place for the hall – and one for the church will follow.

SA thanked everyone who had helped to get the hall fit for occupation again to enable it to be re-used by external hirers – particularly BL.

AH noted that the group which had been formed to think about St Anne's strategic direction had met once. She asked for PCC to support them with prayers for the big decisions which will need to be made.

9. Churchwardens and Buildings Update

St Annes

SA advised there was nothing to report – other than a blocked drain!

St Mary's

AB advised that the structural engineer and Midland Conservation have a plan to stabilise the dropped stone in the North Aisle arch and to monitor this. They also need to check the stability of the stained glass.

There is a bad leak in the west aisle where rain water is getting in. AB is liaising with the Diocese as a matter of urgency.

There has also been some graffiti painted on the wall near the lynch gate. KS suggested that Izzy Knowles may be able to assist as part of Litter Busters work.

RB noted that an insurance claim was being made for the wall and window repair works.

10. Health & Safety

Reference was made to the Health and Safety record maintained by our office staff. This confirms there have been 5 accidents or incidents recorded during 2024 (to date) and none since the last PCC meeting. All had been dealt with appropriately and there were no outstanding actions.

There were no other Health and Safety matters to discuss.

11. Safeguarding

A Safeguarding Report had been circulated to PCC members. This included the risk assessments relating to the Choir's visit to St Paul's, Hockley, the Parish Walk to Digbeth (which AB noted had the wrong date – should be 11th Jan) and for Christmas Day Together. AH asked if a risk assessment had been done for the Christmas Fayre. AB confirmed that it had.

AH questioned whether a risk assessment was needed for St Mary's Christingle service. AB confirmed that this would be done – and that provision would be made for sand and water buckets in church, in case of fire.

There were no other matters arising.

12. Moseley Cof E

Admissions Policy

FR notified PCC that the Diocese Board of Education were encouraging their church schools to review their admissions policies with a view to removing, or potentially downgrading, the requirement for new pupils to demonstrate regular church attendance. Moseley CofE is expected to consult on this option – not immediately but at some point in the near future.

SA explained that one of the drivers behind this is to revert back to the original purpose of church schools – which was to enable poorer children to receive an education. The current policy may be considered to be exclusive.

AH expressed concern that, if the policy is changed, this would have a significant impact. It would likely reduce the number of families in our congregations and the connections between our school and church. She felt it would be very important to object.

OFSTED Inspection

SA advised that Moseley CofE had recently undergone an OFSTED inspection. The outcome is confidential at this stage and a full report won't be available until the new year.

However, he was able to confirm that the inspection had gone well and that staff and governors were pleased with the feedback given.

13. Reports

Oversight

AH said a productive meeting had been held with St Pauls, Balsall Heath and that our clergy were now taking a service there once a month. She advised that Anchor Church is merging with St Mary and St Ambrose church. She felt overall that, whilst it was early days in her oversight role, she was confident that relationships will become strong. She expects it to be a two way partnership - there will be lots that our partner churches can teach us and vice versa.

Charitable Giving

AB reported that the Charity Committee met on 18 November 2024. They decided that our charities for 2025 will be decided in the new year and that (in agreement with JC) 5% of St Mary's freewill giving will be allocated to our charities.

The Christmas fair this year was a success. The funds raised will be split 50/50 between our church/our charities – as agreed by PCC last year. For next year, AB suggested that we 'think outside the box' and perhaps have more external stall holders, selling a broader range of products.

Deanery Synod

SB reported that Deanery Synod had met on 17 October 2024. There were a number of staff changes. There was also a talk about 'Growing Gifts'. MS explained that 'Growing Gifts' is a programme aimed at enabling lay people to preach or lead worship. The programme is intended to be delivered over a short period of 6 weeks and may be suitable for someone in our parish.

Churches Together

JA reported that the group was fairly inactive now. With no Christmas card, there was very little by way of joint initiatives. AH felt that this connection was important to maintain and we should ensure it is supported.

Pastoral Team

MS reported that there was no 'new' news.

Although there were two new members on the team which is enabling more pastoral visits to be undertaken. Tuesday Teas is growing and developing – people who come are returning and word is spreading. Well done to AB for leading this.

14. AOB

1. AH proposed that PCC use 'ChurchDesk' to store, access and manage documents. This would negate large documents being circulated by email. PCC members would be given log in details to access the PCC folder, as and when they needed.

NM said it would be useful if ChurchDesk could automatically generate reminders of deadlines and dates for PCC.

2. MS raised the issue of a Ukrainian lady and her child (and possibly a small dog) who are in need of accommodation. She asked PCC to help if they could. BL said there was still a desperate need for hosts in our area.

AH brought the meeting to a close with a prayer and grace and thanked everyone for attending.

The date of the next PCC meeting was confirmed for Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 7:30pm.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.