

Minutes of Morpeth Parochial Church Council (PCC)
Date of Meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.00pm
Location: Meeting held in St James Church

In attendance: Simon White (chair) (SW), Julia Tasker (JT), Val Pope (VP), Jeannette Waters (JW), Sally Keith (SK), Annie Newlands (AN), Debbie Bass-Pickin (DBP), Pauline Young (PY), Bob Young (BY), Andrew Mowat (AM), Michael Daws (MD), Kathryn Irwin (KI), Richard Bishopp (RB), Carol Dixon (CD), Pauline Ferguson (PF) and Mary Steventon (secretary) (MES)

Apologies received: Rhona Dunn (RD), Andrew Cant (AC), and Sheila Short (SS),

Absent: Jeremy Cooper.

Item	Information	Actions
1	Welcome and apologies for absence. SW welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest/Confidentiality Members are aware that they should declare an interest as items come up, if appropriate. Members also say if details are confidential, so that minutes can be appropriate.	
3	Meditation SW presented a meditation on Joseph's dream (Genesis 37, v 1-3, 5,8-10), in which he considered the effects of Joseph mindset when telling his dream to his brothers, and asking forgiveness that we expect that everyone should be 'like us', and don't appreciate the great gifts of neuro-diverse people, and how they might fit into God's plan.	
4	Adoption of Minutes Minutes from the last meeting, 16 th January 2024, had been circulated to all members of the PCC and were accepted unanimously without alteration as a true record of the meeting.	
5	Matters Arising from the minutes: a. Accessibility and Inclusion Task Group Fiona Boyd had written a report on the work of the task group. They still have one more meeting, after which they will be ready to make recommendations (which will come to the next PCC). PCC members felt that the task group had shown great strength and insight into this complex issue. b. Ratify Tender Process and faculty for works at St James'. The PCC discussed the developed plan for glass doors at St James, and considered the resolution: 'This PCC approves the application for a faculty to remove the inner north door and the outer west door at St James and replace them with glass doors.' Proposed by BY, seconded by DBP, agreed unanimously.	

	<p>c. Update on the impact of Colin Davidson's death.</p> <p>There have been some offers from people to make contributions towards an honorarium for a new organist. The PCC were asked whether they were happy for approaches to be made to the families of Roy Beasley and Colin Davidson in regard to this. They were happy.</p> <p>AM has managed to put together a rota of temporary organists for April-June.</p>	
6	<p>Fabric Report</p> <p>The PCC were happy to receive the fabric report.</p> <p>On further consideration, after the meeting, the secretary realized that the fabric report had not been sent out, and so sent it out at the next opportunity.</p>	MS to send out fabric report.
7	<p>Finance Report: Please see report and January budget figures presented for full details.</p> <p>P1: Standing committee 20.02.2024 payments approvals requiring PCC ratification.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manchester St Project Fund £270 DGA Decorating. Exterior decorating Manchester St Hall 2. St Aidan's Fund £660 RF Henderson. Boiler work, replacement probe and safety board. 3. St Mary's Fund a) £266 Clockwise Audio Visual. Callout re fault and replacement mics. b) £601.20 RF Henderson. Repair pipe work leak. (Service is funded by General Account No Auth. needed) 4. General Fund £10pm + Vat EE Purchase of SIM backup for WhatsApp Messages. Has been added to ongoing EE Comms package. <p>There was a short discussion about whether the PCC needed to ratify these as they had previously delegated the authority to the Standing committee to authorize payments which need to be made before the next PCC (emergency payments). It was pointed out that the PCC could hardly refuse. None-the-less the info needs to be brought to the PCC.</p> <p>AM proposed the PCC agree, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>P2:2024 Budget -PCC Approval needed. The budget is a financial plan, once it is approved, we have sanctioned payment of key items. See budget and Jan figures document for details.</p> <p>AM proposed the PCC approves the budget, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>P3: 2024 Parish Share – Promised £65,000 in Oct 2023, would like to increase the promise to £70,000 and advise the Diocese. The full request was £74,480 for 2024. There was a short discussion about the parish share paid over the last 3 years, when the Diocese had supported us from the contingency fund. It was felt it would be good to pay as much as possible, authorizing the Treasurer and Book keeper to pay up to £74,480 at the beginning of 2025 if funds are available, with a 5% tolerance.</p> <p>AM proposed the PCC agree, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>P4: National living wage increase to £11.44 per hour from 1st April 2024.</p> <p>Accountants to be advised to put this increase in place for the salaries we pay our cleaners, Parish administrator's salary was set at 15.8% above the NLW, when the role was advertised in 2022. JW suggests that this difference be</p>	

	<p>maintained, and that it be retained for the future. AM proposed the PCC agree, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>U1: Budget update we do have Feb figures, which will go out with the minutes to PCC members.</p> <p>U2: Parish Share. The certificate issued is incorrect as MPC paid £70k, not £60. JW to inform the Diocese and ask for a new certificate. SW reported that we have had lots of positive feedback from Diocesan staff and Archdeacons as we managed to pay more than we had expected. SW plans to have 'generous June' again. Also hoped that people would tick the 'inflation box' on the PGS forms. SW: Well done with Parish Share! Many thanks to the Finance Committee.</p> <p>U3: End of year accounts. The accounts aren't ready yet, we have a scheduled meeting at 4pm on 26th March to look at them, please attend if possible as we need a quorum.</p> <p>U4: Contactless Machines. There was some feedback about the use of contactless machines, which has been increasing gradually over time. PCC is asked to provide feedback to the Finance Team.</p> <p>U5: Move from Barclays Bank has been slow as they haven't followed instructions. One 2023 accounts are closed this will be progressed as a priority.</p> <p>U6: PCC thanks for donations JW wanted to say thank you particularly to Mothers' Union for an additional donation of £100, and to PlayTime Plus who have donated over £200 during 2023. (Some individuals who attend PlayTime Plus also made donations as well.) PCC wanted to send thanks to MU and PP for these contributions.</p> <p>U7: Botswana Fund Closing this fund (still on-going) will be progressed during 2024.</p> <p>U8: Bequest from the late Jean Pringle. This legacy of £5,000 has been made to the Rector and Churchwardens of the Parish of Morpeth. The solicitor dealing with the Will has already said "As you can see, Jean has not given any specific intention for the legacy, so it is to be used in whichever way the Rector and Churchwardens deem fit". Rector and Churchwardens to confirm designation so funds can be apportioned.</p>	<p>JW to contact Diocese for an updated certificate.</p>
8	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>DBP asked that the PCC acknowledge the work of Vivienne Summerville and Nick Stratford who have been part of the Responsible caring Group and are now stepping down. Many thanks for all their work.</p> <p>The new PCC might find other people who would help with some of the administration which Safeguarding now requires. We are going to be required to carry out self-auditing to a national standard and will require to input data onto the Parish Dashboard (which remains at 100% at the moment.)</p> <p>a. DBP proposed to disband the responsible caring group, seconded by AN, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>b. DBP had circulated the Safer Recruiting Policy, which the PCC accepted: proposed by DBP, seconded by AN, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>There have been no safeguarding issues since our last PCC.</p>	

	AM informed the PCC that he had been involved in a Diocesan group picking up on work carried out by the University of Sunderland on Safeguarding.	
9	<p>Fundraising Strategy</p> <p>a.Church spaces policy (AM left the meeting.)</p> <p>SW presented this proposal that the PCC agree to allocate zero-rated rentals to some projects, and donated rentals to some charities. This would enable us to not charge our own projects (currently the Lamplight project and the St James' doors) for use of the buildings to raise funds, and to allow us to contribute to charities of our choice. At the end of the year we will be able to show how much this has cost the PCC, and how much we have contributed. The PCC could choose some charities each year, which we would support. BY made the point that when applying for grants funding it is useful to be able to demonstrate that we support community activities in this way. JW spoke explaining that we had been in a time of chaos re rental of our facilities, but that during this year we had developed a better understanding of who was using our buildings and when, and of how much this was costing.</p> <p>1. We raised over £1,000 for other charities in special collections and fundraised over £1,000 for Macmillan and Marie Curie in addition to £1,000 mission giving to Mustard Tree Trust and Morpeth All Saints School (see end of year accounts for full details).</p> <p>2. SW proposed that the PCC support the fundraising for the St Mary's Fund and St James' Fund and the Mothers' Union as zero-rated rentals, and Macmillan and Marie Curie as donated rentals, to be reviewed each year. Seconded by VP. A show of hands indicated that the PCC was in favour with one abstention. (AM returned to the meeting.)</p> <p>b.Lamplight project. AM: We have now raised £63,004 but the bad news is that we estimate we will need around £120k to complete the project. This may change as we do not have tenders yet. AM asked whether the PCC would be prepared to support the Lamplight Appeal? There was a discussion about using some of the monies in the Dark Lane and St Luke's funds, for projects, not for revenue expenditure. (As MPC is 3 churches and 1 parish, it was pointed out that these monies should ideally be used across the parish, and not for one church only.) JW pointed out that the income of around £1,500 meant that the funds are not growing, and their value in real terms is falling. The finance committee also considered that spending this money on suitable projects and not for revenue expenditure could be considered. The PCC agreed by show of hands that they were amenable to this in principle.</p>	SW to meet with MS, JW, AM
10	<p>Manchester Street</p> <p>SK reported that they are still in talks with the Lighthouse project. There was a short discussion about the way forward, and we expect that there will be more information at the time of the next PCC. The roof is leaking again. There is an invoice for £421.20 for work done in consideration of the next stage of the project, which RB proposed and SK seconded that the PCC pay. This was agreed unanimously.</p>	
11	<p>Energy Sustainability</p> <p>Alan Purdue has been looking at our energy usage and makes recommendations (see paper). When our contracts end, we are often given</p>	

	<p>very little time to make a decision on an offer (sometimes less than 24 hours), so A Purdue has requested and Finance committee supported that the PCC delegate responsibility for signing the contract for all 3 churches and for Manchester St. to the treasurer. Contracts are 2 years, but the delegation of responsibility to be reviewed annually. (There was some discussion about when the CIO will be ready to take over the Manchester Street contracts, and it was thought not before next January. So this responsibility would cover all 4 of the PCCs properties.) Proposed AM, seconded SW. Unanimously agreed.</p>	
12	<p>Deanery Synod Report</p> <p>SK: There was a development day on 10th Feb, when all the deanery planning groups came together. Morpeth Deanery's plan seems relatively well advanced.</p> <p>Deanery Synod on 24th Feb when the Deanery plan was discussed. Our deanery still needs to think about lay ministry in the deanery and how it will be deployed in future. The first task is to carry out an audit of our lay ministry (since the diocese doesn't seem to have any records of what we have currently). Then there is a plan to have a Lay discovery day for people who might be looking to get involved in lay ministry.</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>1. Electoral Roll: MS informed the PCC that 7 people on our electoral roll have died during the year, and we do not yet have numbers of new members. (Closing date is 22nd March)</p> <p>2. APMC is 5pm on Sunday 7th April at St Mary's. Please encourage people to come along. It will be only 1 hour, followed by evensong, and refreshments.</p> <p>3. GDPR: MS explained that this work is on-going. For this year new people coming onto the electoral roll have been told that they must opt out if they do not wish us to send information to them. Next year when we update the whole roll, everyone will be asked to fill in new paperwork regarding GDPR.</p> <p>4. Parish publication. We have now published 2 issues of the new magazine, Pathways, in collaboration with Collingwood School. There is no cost to the parish as we have a grant to cover 12 issues (2 years as it is bi-monthly). There has been advertising revenue, which has gone into the general fund. There has been a positive response to Pathways.</p> <p>5. Mothers' Union PY explained that at the last MU meeting Joan Howard the deanery lead for MU had produced a knitted figure of Colin Davidson, she makes figures of notable people in the Deanery. PY had brought it (him?) to show to the PCC and passed it on to AM for St Mary's. The figure certainly resembles Colin, and is absolutely charming. The PCC wanted to send thanks for such a thoughtful gift.</p>	
14	<p>Final Prayer</p> <p>Meeting finished with the grace, at 8.40pm</p> <p>Next meeting is 26th March 2024 at 4pm. To review the accounts.</p> <p>APCM is 7th April at 5pm at St Mary's, followed by evensong.</p>	

Minutes of Morpeth Parochial Church Council (PCC)
Date of Meeting: Tuesday 26th March 2024 at 4.00pm
Location: Meeting held in St James Church

In attendance: Simon White (chair) (SW), Val Pope (VP), Jeannette Waters (JW), Sally Keith (SK), Debbie Bass-Pickin (DBP), Bob Young (BY), Andrew Mowat (AM), Michael Daws (MD), and Mary Steventon (secretary) (MES)

Apologies received: Julia Tasker (JT), Pauline Ferguson (PF), and Pauline Young (PY).

Absent: Jeremy Cooper.

Item	Information	Actions
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence.</p> <p>SW welcomed everyone to the meeting. We require one third of the PCC to be present for a quorum, as the meeting had been advertised well in advance. The PCC has 19 members, so we require 7 members for a quorum, so the PCC was quorate, and we continued with the meeting, which was to discuss the Accounts for 2023, only.</p>	
2	<p>Treasurer's comments.</p> <p>Focusing on the general Account, the PCC made a loss (had a deficit) of £28 in 2023. However: compared with 2022 when we made a book loss of £12k and didn't pay all our Parish Share, we did very well, as we met all our commitments, and paid £70,000 (our full Parish Share promise). We were battling with a projected budgeted loss of £30,000.</p> <p>How did we do this?</p> <p>Income: At the APCM the response of some Parishioners was promises of gifts. We had a generous response to our 'Generous June' campaign. The ministry team, finance team and others worked hard to increase giving both of money, but also of time and talents. We've had some new booking of our parish spaces too. Many thanks to all.</p> <p>Expenditure: we spent money more wisely, not always taking the cheapest option, but trying to get the best deal. We've worked hard at maintaining our assets, getting a good job done, and challenging invoices and items of expenditure. The finance team has scrutinised and updated budget every month. We've worked hard to work together as a Parish, focusing on what's best for the whole parish.</p> <p>The way forwards: We need to continue this good work. We plan a Generous June annually. Parishioners ticking the 'inflation' box helps. We need to keep a firm hold on our spending, being wise, and controlling ourselves.</p> <p>Restricted funds and Fundraising: The work done here has been fantastic. Restricted funds of £49,751 were received from donations, fundraising and</p>	

	<p>Gift Aid. This sets us on a good path for many projects. Also £1068 was raised for the Macmillan and Marie Curie charities.</p> <p>So that's the story. Please share this with everyone in the Parish, not just the PCC, so we can all see where we are, and be part of the solution. We are all in this together.</p> <p>There's work to be done, but thanks to: our book keeper Geoff Morgan, income manager and Stats wrangle Dave Pope, Team Finance including the cashiers, Gift Aid Secretary, our Parish Administrators and the PCC.</p> <p>This parish was doing stuff before I came here, and it will be here when I'm gone. We have good people and the will in our Parish to make this work "so we can continue Christ's work in the world".</p>	
3	<p>Questions</p> <p>There were some questions regarding details, such as the income into restricted funds (which was not a balance of the funds, so for example there had been higher income into the restricted funds for St James in 2022, than in 2023 (but we haven't spent the balance!)</p>	
4	<p>Resolutions</p> <p>That the PCC accept the financial report and support taking it to the APCM: proposed JW, seconded AM, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>That the PCC continue using Wellway Accountants: proposed by JW, seconded by AM, unanimously agreed.</p> <p>SW proposed a vote of thanks to JW for all her hard work. Unanimously agreed.</p>	
5	PCC closed with the Grace at 5pm.	