

Minutes of Morpeth Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 21st May 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), Bob Young (BY), Michael Daws (MD), Kathryn Irwin (KI), Andrew Cant (AC), Richard Bishopp (RB), Rachel Anderson (RA), Lindsay Gilfillan (LG), Lyndsey Phillips (LP), Sheila Short (SS), and Mary Steventon (secretary) (MES)

Apologies received: Rhona Dunn (RD), Pauline Young (PY), Andrew Mowat (AM), Carol Dixon (CD), and Pauline Ferguson (PF)

Absent: Jeremy Cooper.

Item	Information	Actions
	Eucharistic Celebration We began the evening with a celebration of the eucharist, remembering St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, patron saint of buildings, whose saint's day this is.	
1	Welcome. SW welcomed everybody. We had three visitors, Fiona Boyd (FB), Vivienne Summerville (VS), and Guy Anderson.	
2	Declarations of Interest/Confidentiality SW reminded members 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. Members were also reminded that matters discussed at PCC are at first confidential. After the meeting Rachel Anderson pointed out that she is a Trustee of the Boys Brigade (national organization).	
3	Elections The PCC elected the following: Vice-chair: Andrew Mowat. Proposed AN, Seconded DBP, unanimously in favour. PCC Secretary: Mary Steventon. Proposed VP. Seconded SK Treasurer: Jeannette Waters. Proposed DBP. Seconded SS Standing Committee: JW (treasurer), SW (rector), two from churchwardens: MD, AM, BY, KI, RA (deputy warden) (to be agreed amongst themselves prior to meetings), PCC rep SK. There was some discussion about how big the committee could be before it was unwieldy, and it was agreed that 5 was probably ideal. Proposed AN. Seconded DBP	
4	Adoption of Minutes	

	<p>Minutes from the last meeting, 19th March 2024, (finance only) 26th March 2024, had been circulated to all members of the PCC, and were accepted as a true record of the meetings. Proposed JW, Seconded RB</p> <p>Minutes of the (extraordinary) 28th April 2024 had been circulated to all members of the PCC and were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed LP. Seconded LG.</p>	
5	<p>Matters Arising from the minutes:</p> <p>a. Accessibility and Inclusion Task Group</p> <p>SW welcomed Fiona Boyd who had come to present the report, and Vivienne Summerfield who had come to listen to the findings of the Accessibility and Inclusion task group. He pointed out that VS had already made some comments, which FB (Chair of the group) had accepted. FB spoke about the findings of the group (the report had been circulated to the PCC) pointing out that they had used the 'The Open Door' questionnaire to inform their deliberations. There was a discussion during which it emerged that all 3 of our buildings have some issues in common, and that a plan to deal with these would be the next step in the process. SW suggested that the group might meet going forwards to develop a spreadsheet of issues which could then be addressed (some very easily and at minimal expense). FB was keen that more people join the group to help work on these issues.</p> <p>There followed a more general discussion about the development of a 'Risk register', which would be helpful in allowing the PCC to be more aware of risk and encourage us to make plans in case of need. SS, who has some experience of risk registers, offered to be involved in developing a strategy for risk management, of which a risk register would be a part.</p> <p>The PCC were happy for the work on this subject to continue, and SW proposed that we adopt the policy statement:</p> <p><i>"The PCC of Morpeth Parish Church welcomes and supports the principles of 'The Open Door' designed to enable people with disabilities and older people to worship God in fellowship with other members of our community. We are committed to a programme of improvements to make our activities, events and facilities more accessible to all people regardless of their disabling condition. We will develop and monitor our wider church programme of activities to endeavour to ensure that accessible venues are always available for meetings held away from our own premises. We will ensure that all paid staff and volunteers are given training on disability issues to enable all who come to join us to be fully included as a natural and normal part of our ministry."</i></p> <p>The PCC voted, and with 2 abstentions, all others were in favour. FB now left the meeting</p>	
6	<p>Fabric Report</p> <p>The Fabric report had been circulated to all members of the PCC.</p> <p>St Mary's: MD spoke about the problems with the path, from the Lychgate to the south door (now normally in use) as it is too narrow for people with mobility issues (and in wheelchairs), and the sharp bend makes it very difficult to negotiate. Also there was damage done by a fallen tree, and its removal which has made this worse. (Information for the PCC to note.) The</p>	MS to send out fabric report.

	<p>standing committee has now decided not to try to board up the Watchman's hut, which has been repeatedly vandalized. Proposed Storyboards (Greater Morpeth Development Trust) having approached the Archdeacon, we have some questions to answer, about materials and sizes of boards, also we would like to see the content, although some of these will be like for like replacements. VP proposed that the PCC progress this as appropriate, and JW seconded this proposal.</p> <p>St James': BY spoke about the grass cutting lawn mower, which we have now purchased and used. This is to solve the grass cutting problems at St James'. So far all is going well. A rota of volunteers has been made, and so far the grass has been cut 5 times to get it low enough so that we can mulch (instead of collecting grass). Many thanks to all involved.</p> <p>Shepherd's bill: JW pointed out that it's now a long time since they worked here, even though the work isn't complete. She suggested that we pay at least some of the bill (half?) because holding out on payment over such a small issue isn't reasonable, and we will find it very difficult to get them to come back to do anything else.</p> <p>St Aidan's: SW explained that we have been approached by Morpeth Town Council about hosting a defibrillator on the outside of St Aidan's. This would be on the agreement of no cost or maintenance from us, except for minimal electricity to keep it charged. MS to investigate permissions. PCC was in favour (by a show of hands). Grass cutting at St Aidan's has come in this year at £65/cut (was £60/cut last year).</p> <p>JW spoke asking that we might have a grid of intended works giving info on what, when and how much, please. This would make financial planning much easier.</p>	
7	<p>Finance Report: See circulated material.</p> <p>S1 Standing Committee 16.04.2024 Payment Approval: Purchase of mower for St James' £466.85 from general funds. This replaces grass cutting contract at St James' (see above).</p> <p>P1 MPCC Manchester Street Project Fund – balance £4922.21 (16.05.2024) JW proposed that this be ring fenced in anticipation of legal costs in preparing a lease for the Manchester Street Property so that it can be leased by a third party. We haven't been able to get a quote as we don't yet know what we want, but it could easily be very expensive. The PCC were in favour of this idea. See discussion later under Manchester Street.</p> <p>There was a discussion about what is happening next with the CIO and the project generally, but nothing is yet decided. AC was pleased to inform the PCC that a (willing and able) Treasurer has been found who is in the process of learning about the project.</p> <p>U1 Budget The finance committee looks at the budget regularly, and we are at present on track to have a deficit of £6,000 by the end of the year. This, however, is assuming that we do not spend any money not budgeted for!</p> <p>U2 Contactless Income JW presented a table showing usage (both no of transactions and totals). Use of the contactless machines is progressing well, but please do all you can to raise the profile of Contactless giving.</p>	

	<p>U3 Barclays We are moving slowly on the process of moving the Barclays accounts over to CAF.</p> <p>U4 PCC Members, trustee responsibilities the 'Statement of Trustee Responsibilities' had been circulated to all members of the PCC, as detailed in the accounts. In short these amount to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sure we use our funds wisely • making sure we aren't giving opportunities for people to misappropriate money (we should ask questions to ensure control is there) • providing security for people handling cash so they are protected from suspicions. <p>U5 Fundraising and Gift Aid JW explained that there are rules about what we can claim gift Aid on, and it would be helpful if people doing Fundraising would come and speak to her first so that we do not breach the regulations. For example (but not exclusively) the Norwegian Organ recital: are these funds intended for the organ or the organist? (AM not being present, this was not discussed further.) Similar problem with the Big Christmas cards.</p> <p>JW requests that people consult first, and not bring things to the PCC cold!</p> <p>U6 New contracts with energy providers JW and AP have been working to get the 8 contracts for the 4 premises, and ensure that good value was obtained, the FMC agreed that quotes would be obtained from the Church of England's Parish Buying Scheme and from other sources.</p> <p>As quotes have a short offer time (the window of the Parish Buying Scheme closes at 16:15 for example) it was necessary to set a date and coordinate the various offers.</p> <p>Quotes were requested from;</p> <p>The Parish Buying Scheme</p> <p>Total (current supplier)</p> <p>British Gas (Current supplier)</p> <p>Bionic (Commercial arm of USwitch)</p> <p>(On the day one source did not provide quotes in a readable format, and did not respond to query.)</p> <p>Three sources provided about 100 quotes for various periods of time or other contractual differences, and in the case of the Parish Buying scheme from multiple suppliers.</p> <p>Quotes were compared on an annual basis and decisions made.</p> <p>SW thanked the Treasurer and Finance Team for all their hard work.</p>	
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8	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>DBP. Paperwork had been circulated regarding 4 safeguarding policies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The safeguarding policy (2024): has not been amended apart from removing the 'Responsible caring group' Acceptance proposed by DBP, seconded by LG 2. Code of conduct for volunteers and lone workers (and dignity at work): which is unchanged, proposed by DBP, seconded by AN 3. Safeguarding Statement: this was adopted again, proposed by DBP, seconded by SK. 4. Authorisation of 'Children and Vulnerable Adults Activity Programme': this is a list of activities happening in our spaces, DBP to check groups meeting in the Manchester Street Hall. Also needs to put up new posters there. <p>DBP reminded us that PY is still the DBS person, so if we have renewals we should contact her.</p> <p>Finally the Dashboard is at 93%, mainly because we have new members to be added.</p> <p>Safeguarding Sunday is 17th November 2024.</p>	
9	<p>Fundraising Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. North doors at St James': we have the money, but the faculty hasn't gone in yet. West doors: we still need more money. b. Lamplight appeal: we are now in the process of going out to tender. This will give us a firmer idea of how much it will cost (we currently think the estimate of £60k is wrong, and should be more like £120k) 	
10	<p>Manchester Street</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. We have a new treasurer coming on board: Angela Tregone. She has been to speak with JW and with NS. b. MM has agreed to continue as minute secretary going forwards. c. Water ingress problem hasn't been rectified by the work done, so we need to be getting on with phase 1 (£450k?) and fundraising. There was a discussion about how things are progressing (slowly) d. We need to have a lease for the CIO to lease the hall from the PCC (see in finance discussion). We need a memorandum of understanding which we could then expedite and use this for fundraising. SK to prepare the generic element, SW would do the presentation. Once done the group could seek a way forwards. e. In the meantime, we need to spend some money to inspect the undercroft. After some discussion it was proposed that the PCC fund this up to £500, and the remainder of the money be reserved for legal fees. This was unanimously agreed. 	SW to meet with MS, JW, AM
11	<p>Energy Sustainability</p> <p>New contracts with energy providers JW and AP have been working to get the 8 contracts for the 4 premises, and ensure that good value was obtained, the FMC agreed that quotes would be obtained from the Church of England's Parish Buying Scheme and from other sources.</p>	

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12	<p>Deanery Synod Report</p> <p>SK: A meeting is coming up.</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>1. DNA Films: Following our virtual vote on the resolution ‘the PCC resolves to apply for a faculty to allow filming of a sequel to 28 days later by the film company DNA films, under the direction of Danny Boyle, in St Mary’s church Morpeth during June and July 2024’. We had 16 yes replies, 1 no reply, and 5 abstentions. We have applied for a faculty. This will take 28 days for the public notice, and then the chancellor will decide. We have submitted all the information, but this is a contentious issue.</p> <p>2. Generous June. SW pointed out that this is happening again, but there is still some organization needed.</p> <p>3. Prayer Ministry: SW reported that there had been a very positive turn out to the meeting.</p> <p>4. Lifepath Donation. LG asked that the PCC donate £50 towards Lifepath (run through the Mustard Tree Trust). This was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.</p> <p>5. Organist recruitment. Although the paperwork had been circulated in January, members had not had it again. We might be looking for £8-10K to pay a new organist/musician, so we need to work out what we can reasonably afford. We need a strategy for the 3 churches going forwards, but perhaps a short term plan for St Mary’s (2 years?) LG proposed and AC seconded a proposal that we ask the finance committee to look at what is possible with the promises we have, and that this comes back on the agenda of the next meeting.</p>	MS to resend the paperwork
14	<p>Final Prayer</p> <p>Meeting finished with the grace, at 9.15pm</p> <p>Next meeting is 16th July 2024 at 7pm.</p>	