

Present – Lis Burns (Chair) (LB), Derek Lancaster LLM (DL), Edgar Samuel (Deputy Honorary Churchwarden) (ES), John Lord (Treasurer) (JLd), Ray Levy (DSyn Rep) (RL), Jacqui Brierley (JB), Mark Johnson (MJ), Jean Johnson (JJ), Sue Lord (DSyn Rep) (SL), Barry Titchen (DSyn Rep and Dep Treasurer) (BT), Elizabeth Martin (EM), Barbara Bowman (BB)

Minutes: Lynda Titchen Moorcroft (LM)

Ex officio: Jo Norman (Safeguarding Officer) (JN), Philip Wayne (Acting Director of Music) (PW), Philip Wharton (Diocesan Organ Advisor) (PWh)

1. Welcome from Chairperson.

LB welcomed everyone and particularly Philip Wayne and Philip Wharton (agenda item 2).

The opening prayers were led by LB.

Apologies/did not attend: Jennifer Cartledge (Churchwarden) (JC); Revd Jackie Lock (JLK), Robyn Connelly (Children's Minister) (RC), Sheila Doig (SD), Dawn Segrue (DS), Philip Hynard (PCC Secretary) (PH), Lauren Harvey (LH).

2. Organ Renovation

PW opened the discussion regarding the proposal to progress plans for the restoration of the organ by providing some history and context, with particular reference to the fact that the instrument dates back to the 1930's when the organ was constructed by the renowned Henry Willis. PW went on to explain how the current state of the organ is affecting the quality of its output and the extent to which it is detrimental to the performance of the instrument, emphasising the urgency of the need to address and progress the restoration/maintenance of the instrument.

PW introduced Mr Philip Wharton, Diocesan Organ Advisor, who tabled two reports, both written following a site visit and inspection of the organ on 10th March 2023: one report by PWh himself and one by Bruce Buchanan, a retired organ builder with extensive knowledge and expertise in the subject.

The report by PWh provides a detailed summary of the provenance and work to date on the organ and the extent of the repair work needed, which is clearly very extensive. In conclusion, the report provides clear advice to the PCC and Churchwardens: to seek quotations from 3 reputable organ builders and pursue a bid to the Lottery Fund.

Mr Buchanan's report focuses on the estimated cost of doing a full organ restoration (approx. £800k) and how an application to the National Lottery could be undertaken (with reference to a similar bid by St Mary's, Portsea) and emphasising the need, should the PCC opt to go down this route, of engaging a respected consultant.

PWh spoke at length on the significance of the instrument from musical, historical and heritage perspectives and strongly advocated for the PCC to consider a full restoration of the instrument and application to the National Lottery.

There followed a question and answer session and discussion regarding the options available to the PCC:

- Partial restoration at a much lower cost - approx. £300k - £400k (but would not attract Lottery funding so would have to be financed in its entirety by the Church).
- Replacement by a modern electronic organ at a cost of around £80k. Benefits: sound production is almost as good as the original instrument with any difference in tonality only discernable by the expert ear. Cost: the

cost of a replacement instrument would be only approximately a tenth of a full restoration of the original organ.

Cons: there would be a loss of heritage and the sense of stewardship in preserving the instrument for future generations; electronic instruments have a significantly shorter 'life span' (probably only 15 – 20 years as opposed to possibly 100 years for a pipe-organ - assuming interim maintenance – although advances in technology could very possibly enhance the life-span of an electronic instrument).

- Should the full restoration go ahead, the work would take approximately 12 months when an alternative organ would be needed: either the electronic organ currently available or by hiring in a larger, most versatile instrument (at additional cost).

It was agreed that the PCC should consider all options but with the consensus favouring progressing towards a Lottery application to achieve full restoration.

Philip Wayne and Philip Wharton were thanked for their informative and comprehensive input and left the meeting.

3. Safeguarding

JN presented a report (circulated in advance) prepared by the National Safeguarding Team – *Domestic Abuse: PCR2, Recommendation 26* - examining the issue of domestic abuse (DA), its prevalence both inside and outside the church and developing a church-led strategy for addressing the problem.

JN emphasised the need for much greater awareness, the preparedness and ability to refer victims appropriately and in a timely manner and for a support network within the church readily available and visible for those suffering abuse.

It was proposed that church officers are specifically trained on this issue and that there is a PCC and church-wide willingness to engage in tackling DA and developing a strategy to meet the needs of our church and wider community.

It was suggested that, in the first instance, strategies already drawn up by other churches are looked at as a starting point together with tried and tested suggestions made in the paper itself. It was proposed that church officers start to consider a parish DA strategy and how to raise awareness.

JN agreed to keep the PCC informed of progress by the PCR group and to send the contact numbers to be publicised on DA posters to the Church Office. LB requested that the information on the posters make it as easy and clear as possible for a person to make contact.

Safeguarding Training Update: 4 people to date have completed the Foundation level.

Action: all PCC members who have not yet completed the Foundation Safeguarding course to do so and forward certificates to the Parish Office.

4. New Rector

The Revd Father Anthony Searle of the parish of Corby has been appointed as Team Rector to All Saints, High Wycombe. The service for his installation is expected to take place on Friday 3rd November 2023 in All Saints at 7.30pm. The PCC expressed its thanks to Lis and Derek and all those involved in any way with the appointment process and looks forward to welcoming Father Anthony in November.

The Churchwardens are currently in negotiations with the Diocese regarding costs for getting the Vicarage 'fit for purpose'. The Diocese has committed to cover the cost of repainting parts of the Vicarage. The Churchwardens will be seeking quotations for the repainting of the remainder of the Vicarage but will also be seeking further diocesan financial support for this. Fr Anthony would be asked to fund any additional repainting but it was proposed that All Saints would contribute to any additional costs.

5. Deanery Synod Report

As the meeting only took place the night before this meeting, a verbal report was presented by BT and RL. The focus of the meeting was on youth work in the deanery with five youth workers presenting to the meeting on their churches' youth ministry. Robyn Connelly (Children's and Families' Minister) is also working with this team but was unable to attend the meeting herself. BT has agreed to share the minutes and presentations with RC when they become available.

The Representatives reported that a new method for calculating the parish share is to be implemented from August onwards.

It was also reported that the Deanery Mission Fund has been increased to a limit of £2k.

6. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

LB had two minor amendments which were approved unanimously and the minutes of the meeting of 17th May 2023 were approved.

7. Matters arising from the minutes

- Churchyard project: it was agreed that £15k promised from the Council should be used to complete the necessary surveys and the invoices forwarded to the Council for payment. DL agreed to progress this.
- Lighthouse: a donation of £1k was given to Lighthouse from the special collection and Mission Funds.
- Buildings and Fabric: a team of volunteers painted the toilets on the Saturday prior to this meeting with just the accessible toilet remaining to be done.
- Tower stairs: these are now fully funded and it is hoped that the work to replace the steps can be expedited.
- Sound, Light, Space Project: PCC members were reminded of the action points for each member to take responsibility for following the in-depth interviews with stakeholders and namely:
 - To approach at least one member of the congregation to find out what they can do and what they could offer to the Church in terms of service
 - For each PCC member to be linked to an external/internal organisation or mission partner to ensure contact, support and to attend their meetings as appropriate and needed.
 - To enhance training for Welcomers, to enable them to have a more defined 'chaplaincy' role.
- Sofas: these are to be removed as they are now beyond repair and the single, comfortable chairs from the North Chapel are to be brought down to replace them.
- Wooden chairs: all the wooden chairs are to be treated for woodworm with the chairs being stored in the North Chapel (once the comfortable chairs have been removed) for treatment. This will take place during August.
- Rats: there has been a slight improvement in the churchyard since one bin has been removed. The Church is working with Wetherspoons, Costa, The Lunch and BidCo to apply pressure to the Council to do further work to mitigate the rat problem in the town.

8. Team Reports

There were no specific comments or questions raised on the following reports, which had been published in advance:

- 8.1 Worship and liturgy
- 8.2 Pastoral matters (no verbal report due to the absence of Revd Jackie Lock)
- 8.3 Children, Youth and Families
- 8.5 Buildings and Fabric

There were brief comments on the following:

- 8.4 Stewardship and Finance: JL expressed the continuing concern regarding the decrease in planned giving.

There is one fundraising event scheduled prior to the next PCC meeting: Afternoon tea and Cream Teas (9th Sept).

LM raised the possibility of running a 60's/70's/80's disco in the autumn and agreed to obtain further details and/or a Sewing Bee type competition: LM agreed to contact Helen Cousins to discuss the possible support of the Craft Group.

- 8.6 Communications: there was a suggestion to create a webpage dedicated to roles within the church that require volunteers to step forward with a brief outline of what the role entails and the name of a contact person for further information. SL agreed to gather information and details; LB will then build the webpage.

9. Churchwardens' Report

As most matters have already been covered in the items and reports above, no further report was given and there were no comments or queries.

10. Oakley Hall Management Committee

It was reported that a window on the upper floor of the Hall recently fell out (inwards) narrowly missing a member of staff from WHC. It has been repaired by a glazier but cannot now be opened. A survey was done by the glazier of the other windows which, he felt, appear to be sound; however, it was suggested that, although the tenancy agreement is ambiguous as to whose responsibility the windows are, a full, professional survey should be done by a qualified Buildings Surveyor to mitigate any possible health and safety risk.

11. Any other unplanned business

The installation service of the Revd Gareth Morley will take place on 24th August – details to be confirmed.

12. Meeting Ends

LB closed the meeting with prayers and the Grace.

The meeting ended at 21.30

Next meeting date:

20th September 2023

Future meeting dates:

SLT – 6th September 2023

SLT (Strategy) - 13th September 2023

PCC – 20th September 2023

SLT (SC*) – 8th November 2023

PCC – 22nd November 2023

APCM – Sunday 28th April 2024 at 11.15.

All meetings will take place in Church on Wednesdays commencing at 19.30 unless otherwise stated.

* SC = Standing Committee