



**Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council  
Held via Zoom on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.30 p.m.**

**PCC Members Present:** Canon Roy Woodhams (Chair) Katherine Tuck, Michael Roberts, Paul Jenkins, Jeff Wood, Gabrielle Clarke, Nicola Craven-Smith, Steff Shepherd, Maurice Bowles, Gordon Cheesman, Susan Clarke, Howard Cherry, Georgina Francis, Frank Sole, Paul Dyer, Joan Connolly, Sandra Keeping, Judith Wedderspoon, Tim Oxborough, Margie Nursey, Revd Tim Clifford Hill, Revd Rutton Viccajee

**Apologies:** None

**Additional Attendees:** The Chairman had invited the following to attend: Revd Tricia Hislop, Sue Ansell, Michael Clarke (who were present), Chris Robinson, Nigel Lynn (who made their apologies), Revd Peter Poole, Revd Martin Booth and Jane Beet (who did not attend).

Roy led the Opening Worship and welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was to be devoted to a consideration of **Life at Nicolas' after the Pandemic.**

**Introduction**

Roy introduced the subject by reporting on the responses he had received to a Questionnaire sent out to every member of the Church Family. Almost 100 people had returned their forms, with a great variety of comments which he had attempted to put together.

Roy had colour-coded his summary as follows:

Red: 11 – 50 responses. Yellow: 5 – 10. Green: fewer than 5.

Sections in italics reflected Roy's own comments. He stressed that the numbers were no indication of the importance of the points made.

Roy had sent his summary to all PCC members and potential attendees, but unfortunately it had not gone out in colour. *(Roy has since discovered the reason for this and apologises.)*

Roy said that he had recently attended an Area Deans' Meeting, where everyone had agreed there would be no carte blanche return to the situation pre-pandemic in the near future. The Diocese has urged us to see this as a time for learning – an opportunity rather than a threat.

**Breakout Groups**

Everyone then went into Breakout Groups, led by 1) Gabrielle, 2) Katherine, and 3) Mike. The groups met four times, with discussion followed by a brief feedback after each session. The sessions looked at the responses to the Questionnaire under four headings: General Comments, Caring, Sharing and Daring.

In the following report the four discussions held by each group are taken together.

## Group 1

### **Session 1**

#### **Styles of service on a Sunday morning:**

- Subdivide the church into different services: whole congregation to be connected
- Zoom service appeals to whole range of congregation with a good pace of service and an opportunity for everyone to contribute
- SEA service using the church building. Family of God here together
- Concern about getting people to come back to church if there is still a service online
- Need for a service which encourages them to come back
- Concern that some people new to church since Covid would be wary about coming into the church building. How would the service reflect what they have seen online?

### **Session 2**

- Sharing of pastoral care responsibility
- Need for an explicit plan to reach out to the community in a structured way.
- Need for liaising with other communities
- Everyone needs to be aware of what is happening in church towards pastoral care.

### **Session 3**

- Outreach. Good Friday service, more services out in the village.
- Events such as Rectory fête, Christmas Tree festival and Flower festival very good .
- Carol singing in and around the village.
- Gate café at the lychgate or Rectory drive.
- A name badge when we come to church or go to a church activity.
- Senior management sharing with us what they feel would be helpful.

### **Session 4**

- Making the church building a more open, versatile space.
- New church rooms which are on the High Street.
- Taking church out into the community.
- Being more creative in our worship.
- Getting young people more involved in worship and church life.
- More involvement in the village schools and involving the schools in the church.

## Group 2

### **General Comments**

Katherine began by saying that we need to be objective, and focus on what's best for the church and the community as we move forward. We agreed on the importance of highlighting a small number of things that are urgent and that we can achieve.

Howard reminded us that we have an aging population, with the number of people coming to church (and the number of people contributing financially) reducing year by year. We need to do everything we can to encourage our younger members, but, in his opinion, now is not the time to change things – particularly with Gabrielle leaving in the summer.

Steff said that the youngsters need to see that things are being done for them if we are to keep them. Katherine stressed that we need to plan now for what we do when Gabrielle leaves, and Trish agreed. On the question of whether we are able to replace Gabrielle, Howard pointed out that we will struggle financially to do so (but Roy later stated categorically that Gabrielle will be replaced).

Maurice suggested that as a temporary expedient perhaps one of the clergy could take on responsibility for young people, although, as Susan pointed out, some of the clergy are part time or retired, and not everyone has the talents of a youth minister. Frank said that encouraging young people isn't just about having a leader but about the attitudes of the congregation. Trish agreed, and said that Gabrielle has brought about a huge change in attitude. She added that the older people are well looked after and they will return.

Steff pointed out the practical difficulties for young families, with time a big issue. She said that the children and teenagers need to feel needed – to have jobs to do and Katherine responded with the suggestion that some of them could become sidespeople. We need to look afresh at the jobs people do in church and provide job descriptions for jobs that young people might take on.

Rutton asked, 'What do young people feel?' Steff suggested that they don't see the church in terms of a building. On-line services have been good in making them feel involved. When they come to services in church, is it the best thing to send them out for most of the service? How can we involve them in the service itself? Rutton agreed, although he felt the youngsters will still need their own instruction.

### **Caring**

Katherine felt we had become a more caring church and cited as an example our phone calls to those who have been housebound. Howard agreed that much has been done by individuals, but what about the church as an organization? Does the community recognize that individuals who care are perhaps members of the church? Maurice pointed out that as many of us are over 70 we have been told to self-isolate. Susan said we shouldn't keep looking back. We must look ahead to what we can do. Rutton said that we have been doing lots of good things – we need to build on this. Tricia suggested that we recruit some new (young) pastoral assistants to follow up phone calls.

### **Sharing**

We felt that the current practice of greeting and welcoming people coming into church, especially newcomers, needs re-thinking. For some it can be intimidating. We should be sharing our church building more with the community. If we could remove some of the pews it would create space for other activities. Also, what about using Baynards during the week, for children's 'Story Time', like that at the Library?

Little was known about House Groups. How many are there? Are they open to new members, or do we need to establish new ones, once the lockdown is over? Rutton mentioned a Bible Course to be held on Zoom. Eight sessions are planned, four before Easter and four after. This course will be of interest to anyone, whatever their level of experience.

### **Daring**

We agreed that we need constantly to reach out and meet people where they are, rather than waiting for them to come to us. We need to ensure that we publicise our regular services and activities – not just the big events. We have already made contact with residents moving into the new estates – this needs to be continued, with regular invitations and information about our activities.

Is there any scope for further letting of the Church Rooms, for community use but also to generate income? Howard felt we need to have a long-term plan to possibly rebuild the Church Rooms and let them out to businesses and generate a big income. This gave rise to a lively discussion. Katherine and Tricia were both adamant that we need to remain 'God centred', concentrating on the immediate situation, and bringing people in. An immediate possibility is the idea of a café church.

## **Group 3**

### **Group Members**

Roy Woodhams (RW), Mike Roberts (MR) Chair, Nicola Craven-Smith (NCS) Scribe, Gordon Cheeseman (GC), Tim Oxborough (TO), Sue Ansell (SA) and Margie Nursey (MN)

### **Discussion 1 – General comments and Services**

From the document provided by RW the group noted that there was a clear sense that people have missed being in the Church in person and part of the community the Church offers. However the online provision has been excellent and should continue. SA & RW both commented that it is interesting that spouses/family members who would not normally come to Church have been joining in on Zoom at home. Is this because it is less intimidating than follow up phone stepping into Church in person, allows them to 'try before they buy'. How can we expand on this?

A clear need for shorter, informal, punchier, zoom-style services, aimed at engaging families and teenagers, to continue in Church. RW said we need to work harder to provide a diverse programme to accommodate everyone and GC spoke of ensuring integration within this as a lot of the older generation have missed worshipping with families and contemporary worship music too, the ability to mix is important.

MR posed the question 'Are we in an urgent need to change/develop now or do we take our time?' TO noted that those who have enjoyed and become used to the Zoom services this year do not want to return to the 'old' way of doing things. MN noted that we also need to be mindful of some people (perhaps the older generation) wanting some sense of familiarity upon their return, especially as they may feel nervous in coming back. Team agreed that we can't do everything at once but a clear priority list should be set out.

Briefly touched on the subject of service timings. Some had enjoyed the 11am time but it was agreed that when we return to Church in person this is likely to be a difficult time for those attending with children as it runs too close to lunchtime.

### **Discussion 2 – Caring**

The team felt, as raised by MN, that the Church and Church community have done, and continue to do a lot for the wider community, but perhaps we are not making enough noise about it. GC noted that a lot of individuals are doing a lot of community outreach and support but this is being done quietly and therefore may be going unnoticed by those not directly involved. MR asked 'how do we make it known?'

RW raised the question 'Should we be doing more to support the new needs (mental health, loneliness etc) arising from the pandemic?'. All agreed that this is an important point to action. MR agreed but also cautioned that some of these areas require specialist training and in the cases of children's mental health some schools have access to trained professionals. We should be mindful of boundaries whilst still offering Christian support.

RW asked MR to look into the note on 'learning how to pray' – [trypraying.co.uk](http://trypraying.co.uk) – which he will do.

### **Discussion 3 – Sharing**

MR asked 'Do we market ourselves enough? Should we be starting anything afresh?' MN replied that we do market ourselves well and people look forward to events such as the flower festival, rectory fete and Christmas tree festival. NCS said that we need to expand on those popular events with smaller-scale events throughout the year and on different days to draw in a variety of people consistently throughout the year. TO thought the 'gate café' idea was genius, team agreed, and would be something relatively simple to orchestrate.

MR noted that we have significant assets (Church building and Church rooms) and could we share them more? Taking the pews out was discussed as an ideal scenario (RW & TO) but this is currently prohibited by the huge financial cost involved. However RW said that we must make space somehow in order to achieve the things we want to do.

GC suggested smaller music events, lunchtime recitals that could be run as drop-in sessions in the Church. MR asked if us hiring out the Hall to external hirers is now inhibiting what we ourselves can use them for i.e. more community lunches/groups etc.

RW finished by saying that we need to treat the present time as an opportunity to do new things. E.g. we have been using the AV equipment/screens at 8am and they have loved them, which was unexpected. MN commented that she is thrilled that the AV equipment is now in use, despite being originally against the idea!

### **Discussion 4 – Daring**

Agreed there is always potential to be more daring.

MN said we need to be more open to people coming into the Church and more

welcoming. Removing some pews around the door would provide more welcoming space.

GC suggested resuming contact with the new incomers to Cranleigh as soon as possible (like the Christmas leaflet drop to new developments) They may feel cut off due to the current situation and this is an opportunity to use this time as a launchpad to introduce St Nicolas and our ideas for the future.

TO said that having a presence/stall at community engagement events such as the Cranleigh show and Cranleigh carnival would be a good idea.

RW felt that a big challenge for us would be that people have got very comfortable with staying at home and will need drawing back out or we need to find new ways to connect with them.

NCS noted that to be daring we have to commit to the new ideas and do them, not let them just be a topic of discussion.

### **Conclusion**

Roy rounded off the discussion by setting out a Way Ahead. There will be three Working Groups:

1 **Caring** – incorporating the current Pastoral Team, but drawing in others.

Convenors Tim and Tricia.

2 **Sharing** – incorporating existing Outreach & Mission Team, but drawing in others.

Convenors Mike and Rutton.

3 **Daring** (and including service schedule) – new team, ‘Vision’ orientated. Convenors Roy, Gabrielle and Katherine (and including her successor as Churchwarden).

Each team to meet twice – once in March and once in April – and report back to the May PCC with a suggested Action Plan.

### **Any Other Business**

The following resolution, proposed by Mike Roberts and seconded by Katherine Tuck, was passed, with all in favour: ‘The St Nicolas’ PCC authorize Michael Roberts, on their behalf, to sign the CES Lighting Scheme contract.’

The meeting ended with the Grace at 9.00 p.m.

**The next PCC meeting will be on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30 p.m. – via Zoom. ID 822 6229 4967. Passcode PCC**