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**Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council**

**Held in the Church on Wed 13th November 2024 at 6.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Roy Woodhams (Chair), Susan Clarke, Alan Walton, Alistair Smith, Paul Jenkins, Margie Nursey, Maurice Bowles, John Watson, Erik Heemskerk, Bill Rothwell, Sue Tresman, Joan Connolly, Richard Tuck, Steff Shepherd, Nicola Craven-Smith.

**1** Roy welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the opening prayer.

The Business Meeting was preceded by a Presentation by Adam Heiki, Inspecting Architect for St Nicolas’, on his plan for adapting the church to make it more accessible and more suitable for contemporary worship and other events. Tim Oxborough, a surveyor and member of our church family, was also present.

Following the presentation and once Adam and Tim had departed, the PCC had an opportunity to discuss the project and ask questions.

The PCC gave their unanimous approval that the process should continue to the next stage (proposed by Bill, seconded by Margie).

The PCC also agreed unanimously to the allocation from the Buildings Fund of up to £10,000 for the initial costs (proposed by Joan, seconded by Sue Knight).

The decision was made not to go public until after the January meeting of the PCC, giving time for the team to do more work with Adam. Members were asked, therefore, to keep the matter confidential for the time being.

Actions to be taken:- 1) Adam to advise Alan on the indicative costs of the next stage. 2) Alan to ask Adam for a) time scales from now until start of work and completion; b) indication of best costing including VAT and decoration.

**2 Apologies:** Bryn Jones

**3 Safeguarding:** Nothing to report. Nicola said she had put up the required notices for display.

**Please find attached as an appendix Brian Boxall’s Safeguarding Update Report, received too late to present at the meeting. This will be carried forward to the next meeting.**

**4 The Minutes** of the meeting 11th September 2024 were agreed and signed (proposed by Richard, seconded by Susan Clarke).

Matters Arising: No matters arising.

**5 Treasurer**

Alistair presented the Year to Date accounts – 2024 (October). He commented: ‘Overall we are in a good place - the total revenue being on budget for our expectations. The highlight is the revenue from car parking which is seven times our budgeted figure.’

He said that overall the giving schemes we are receiving meet with budget, but we need to investigate a shortfall on gift aid. Church collections are down, but the transfer to planned giving scheme makes up for this in part at least.

He pointed out that the reduction of our collective group is not reflected in funeral fees and legacies and also that we should probably do more to promote baptism and wedding fees.

Expenditure has been greater than expected, largely because of exceptional building repairs and the tree issues in the churchyard.

**6 Charity Commission**

Paul reminded the PCC that we are all Trustees of St Nicolas’ Church and drew attention to the email he had distributed from the Charity Commission.

He commented that Alistair as Treasurer is now authorized to complete the Annual Return which is normally due by the end of October for the previous year. The process has been delayed this year because of a fault in their system and a delay in getting Alistair authorized.

The list of Trustees needs to be updated to reflect the changes made at the APCM. Alistair confirmed that he will do this, if necessary with help from Nicola.

**7 Young People and Families Leader Appointment:**

Roy presented a paper, promised at the last meeting, entitled ‘Provision of Ministry among Young People and Families’. (For this item Steff left the meeting)

This outlines the proposal to employ Claire Jones for one and a half days per week to oversee the work we do on a Sunday Morning (Trackers and Discovery Service) and Steff Shepherd for one day a week to oversee the work we do outside Sunday Morning (schools work, Little Nics Toddlers and Youth Groups).

This will be for a trial period of eight months – January 1st to August 31st 2025, with a review in June.A Job Description is included for each employee, with scope for revision within the eight-month period.

Roy proposed and Sue Knight seconded that we make the joint appointment, and there was unanimous agreement. Alistair said that he would be able to help with the wording of their contracts.

(Steff was invited to return to the meeting)

**8 Team Reports:**

**Outreach & Mission**

A report of the Meeting held on 30th September had been distributed, which included the recommended allocation for Mission Giving for 2024:-

A Rocha £2,000

Rowleys £1,000

Jigsaw Plus £2,000

USPG £1,000

Hope into Action £1,000

Ride for Women £500

This would result in a total allocation of £7,500, with the suggestion that the balance be distributed in response to international crises as they arise.

These recommendations were agreed, with the added proposal that the balance of £2,500 be sent to the Disasters Emergency Fund for the Middle East (proposed by Alan, seconded by Sue Knight). All agreed.

Roy has already agreed to set aside two or three Sundays in the year for a speaker from one of the charities, with donations going to that cause. A Rocha has been approached and we are waiting to hear from them.

**Finance Team**

Richard, who is now the Chairman, had distributed the minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November. These included a list of the key functions and responsibilities of the team.

At Roy’s request the team had reviewed a proposal made by him to change the terms and conditions of the Church Administrator (while this was discussed Nicola left the meeting):-

From January the hours would increase from 20 to 23. The office would be open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 9.30 to 1.00, then working until 2.30 with office closed.

Job Title would change to ‘Director of Communications and Church Administrator’.

Pay would increase with inflation, plus 50p per hour for performance.

Roy proposed and Sandra seconded that the proposal be agreed. 14 voted in favour, with two absentions.

(Nicola was invited to return to the meeting)

**9 Car Park:**

Nicola reported that use of the car park was going well. A vehicle was parking overnight across the fire exit from St Nicolas’ Room, and she said she would look into this.

The income from the car park in September was £690, with £600 being the average.

The trees overhanging the car park have been cut back. We still need to improve the lighting.

**10 Churchwardens’ Reports:**

**Susan**

The Harvest Lunch went very well; a donation was sent to the Cranleigh Food Bank. The Social Team is planning a Quiz Evening for March.

The new portable sound system in the church rooms is ready for use.

We should hear about our grant application for the kitchen by the end of November.

**Alan**

1. Church Office and Rooms:-
2. Central Heating Boiler Hives and Wi-Fi (October 2024) - Thanks to Howard Cherry, Peter Etherington and Mike Roberts the Wi-fi connection to the router from the signal booster in the St Nicolas Kitchen has now been hard wired. Which has improved the signal fully throughout the building.
3. Gas Smart Meter – Fitted 28th October 2024 in St Nicolas Room Kitchen.
4. Soundproofing Office Door to St Andrew’s Room new door fitted Thursday 21st November 2024 0830 throughout the day until complete.
5. Trees Behind Offices and Church Rooms.

4.1 Ash Die back – 10 trees reduced to stumps by Clive Richards Tree Surgery - £2,200 inc VAT (1st October 2024).

4.2. AW inquired re church insurance claim – a claim could only be in the event of personal injury, or damage to property. Fortunately there was no injury, or property damaged. However, the insurers highlighted the claim must be accompanied by a Tree Survey, Tree Plan and annual tree inspection report.

Whilst the church does have a tree plan for the churchyard it hasn’t a plan of the area behind the offices and church rooms. Which will first require a tree survey.

AW actioning the above with quotes from arboriculturalists.

1. Mobile Sound System for Toddlers and Social Events has been purchased.
2. Electric Fired Oil Heater for the Small Office. In progress with Elite to install similar to the recently purchased one for the main office. These are App operated. It will replace 2 mobile oil fired heaters.
3. The Church Building:-
4. PAT testing by Pat-Test-Me UK (Steve Mathews) now completed for 2024 inc church building and church offices and rooms. Cost £213.80.
5. Gas Meter in churchyard (November 2024) – SMS Confirm it is an intelligent meter not a SMART meter. However it does provide readings to Total Energies. A SMART meter would require a power source. Which would be very expensive to install in the churchyard. It’s not a job SMS would undertake.
6. Elite (Justin) RCD Testing - 18th September 2024 church and church offices/rooms - £145.00.
7. Water Ingress Damage to 14th Century Pillar and Roofing Repairs Chancel and Nave.

4.1 Traditional Stone – Plaster work repair and external stonework treated with breathable waterproofing - 4th July - £3,677.57 inc VAT.

4.2 Bill Hales Roofing - Replace facia, adjust angle of rain gutter, unblock downpipes, repair to damaged roof tiles above Lady Chapel, ridge tile repair and re-mortar, replace mortar chancel/nave roof - £3,610.00 (Not Vatable).

1. Bell Frame and Stay Repair completed September 2024. Cost inc VAT + £2,068. The Tower Captain has secured a £900 grant from the Diocese Bell Restoration Fund.
2. Goodwin’s plumbing repairs - Flower Tap replaced - £287.97 / Choir Vestry toilet Leaking toilet repaired / Handywash water heater unit leaking - replaced – £264.00.
3. Diocese of Guildford – Net Zero Carbon Audit (inc advice on grant applications)- Wednesday 27th November 3.30. AW and ST will attend.

The VAT on the above repairs should be recoverable via the treasurer.

1. The Churchyard:-
2. Ben Nicholson Tree Services Ltd - 1st August 2024 - Reduction of large oak tree (right of Lych Gate) following large branch breaking off. Whilst the branch blocked Church Lane temporarily and narrowly missed the Lych Gate no damage to people, or property occurred (see also A4 above). Thanks to RT and EH for their help. Albeit the larger and heavier section of the branch rested on the wall. Cost = £3,540.00 inc VAT.
3. Peggy McManus’ family memorial bench replaced in October with new black metal 3 seater bench. Thanks to Tony Garstone/Peter Etherington/Richard Tuck for their work inreplacing the old wooden bench and installing the new bench.

**11 Eco Church:**

Sue Tresman reported that we now have a plaque to put up in church to say that we are an Eco Church.

Sue has produced a presentation on Eco Church as part of her Caleb Course.

A Rocha have now published their new framework setting out the requirements for achieving the Gold Award.

**12 1170:**

The Guildford Shakespeare Company performance of Romeo & Juliet went well, although they had some difficulties performing in church.

**13 Rector’s Business:**

1. Roy said that the poppy tin had been stolen from the church. Unfortunately this will be a loss for British Legion.
2. Roy expressed his sadness at the findings of the Makin Report and the resignation of Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury. He said that he would publish the Bishop of Guildford’s statement on this matter in the Sunday News Sheet.
3. This Saturday there will be a Deanery Vision Morning here in St Nicolas’ Church from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Alan, Susan C, Margie, Alison and Joan expressed an interest in attending.
4. Roy announced that incumbents had been appointed at Bramley & Grafham and Dunsfold & Hascombe, which would ease the pressure on him as Area Dean. In spite of repeated advertisements there had been no applicants at Ewhurst, so the decision had been made to implement an alternative Plan B:-

Acknowledging that combining Ewhurst with Okewood Hill and Forest Green has not proved to be a good arrangement, these two churches will return to their original position in Dorking Deanery.

Ewhurst will return to being a stand-alone parish in its own right and will come under St Nicolas’ for the remainder of Roy’s incumbency, with Roy as Priest in Charge. To assist Roy in both parishes, it is hoped to appoint a part time priest to occupy the Ewhurst rectory and serve on a house-for-duty basis.

This plan requires the agreement of the PCC. Roy proposed and Sandra seconded that it be accepted. All were in agreement.

**14 Any Other Business:** Sandra wanted people to know that places were quickly running out for the Nativity Festival. Erik and Sue Tresman will be running two new events during the pre-Christmas period.

**15 Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 8th January 2025, 7.30 p.m. in the Church Rooms.

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