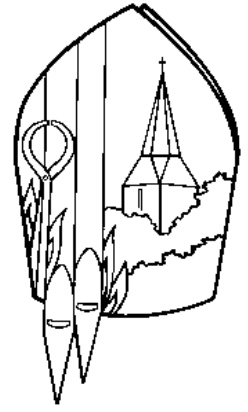


MINUTES OF MEETING OF MAYFIELD & FIVE ASHES PCC
Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at 7:00 pm in London House



Present: Father Michael Asquith Chairman
Deacon Di Blackden
David Whittall
Guy Mantoura
Karen Mack
Kate Sanday
Lindy James
Phyllida de Salis
Rachel Robinson
Robin Holliday Hon Treasurer
Stephen Blurton Church Warden
Sue Smith
Tim Reid

Father Michael welcomed all PCC members and began the meeting with a prayer.

1. Apologies for absence:

Emma Ryder Richardson
Karen Dines
Roger Salwey

2. Role of the PCC

Father Michael explained the process for the rotation of PCC officers.

10 Chairs – Blocks of 3. Each chair occupied for three years. If a chair is vacated early then the newcomer will only serve for the life of the chair. Of the five chairs renewed at the last election, three are for three years and two for two years.

David and **Kate** volunteered to take up the two two year Chairs.

Rachel, Tim and Roger would hold office for 3 years

Father Michael went on to summarise the key duties of the PCC:

- a. To map the direction of the Church
- b. To make strategic decisions – giving direction to life at St Dunstan's

Personal items like pay of staff is dealt with by Standing Committee. Urgent interim business is also managed by the Standing Committee for subsequent ratification by the PCC at the next meeting.

3. PCC Secretary

The PCC Secretary position remains vacant. The post can be filled by a person who is not elected to the PCC / is not a member of the PCC.

Action: Sue Smith to publicise in the June Parish News Letter.

4. Renewing Church noticeboard by War Memorial

Father Michael introduced the idea of replacing / updating the Notice Board attached to the wall of the deli.

We have two options:

- a. Update the board
- b. Change the Board so there is room for posters and notices of upcoming events.

Action – Father Michael to investigate options to return to the PCC.

Guy and **David** stressed the importance of something that would stand the weather and require minimum maintenance.

5. St. Dunstan's Churchyard (see attached paper)

In due course, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus will vacate Stone Court with the two remaining nuns due to move to Harrogate.

The Society is concerned for the historic burial area on the school premises and would like to see it incorporated into the St Dunstan's Church Yard.

Father Michael explained how the existing boundaries will change to isolate the area from the school (for safeguarding reasons). The hedge between the school and church yard will then be removed.

The land will be legally transferred to St Dunstan's at the Society's cost. A slither of land owned by the school will be purchased and also transferred to St Dunstan's.

The Society will meet all legal costs pertaining to the transaction. They will also make available a small endowment fund to support the maintenance of the area – a modest sum is envisaged.

Father Michael advised he has contacted to the Diocesan Registrar who will take the matter forward. The PCC now need to approve the process in principal.

Tim advised his conflict of interest given he is a Governor of the School.

Robin said the sum of money given should be sufficient to allow the invested capital to deliver a return to cover the cost of maintaining the area into the future. He was concerned that anything else would simply deliver a liability to the PCC into perpetuity and possibly prejudice the maintenance of the area.

Guy asked about the wooden crosses of which some are degraded. **Father Michael** said all the wooden crosses will be replaced with traditional headstones. These will also be maintained by the Community.

Karen asked if the wider parish can use the space for burials. Father Michael confirmed the new slither of land could be used for parish burials.

Proposal approved by the PCC.

6. How can St. Dunstan's respond to the concern, expressed by a number in the village, that it is "too stuffy"?

Father Michael introduced this subject advising we are seen as "the church for everyone in the village"; but we are seen by many as being too stuffy.

Stephen said he did not want to ask us to examine our navels. We are evolving and our style will change to meet the needs of our congregation / not the people who do not choose to join us.

Tim said the challenge is talking to people who do not believe in coming to Church. He did not see why we would change – we reflect who we are.

David said he did not see us as stuffy.

Phyllida pointed out the Gospel Choir was popular as part of the Mayfield Festival. Does this give direction as to what people want to see? Also mentioned there was a less formal 5pm Sunday Service at her former church in Tidebrook which was popular and well attended.

Kate suggested maybe a more diverse / youthful welcoming committee.

Rachel – pointed out Mayfield is quite a High Church which is not for everyone. She also pointed out Messy Church was popular; but did not bring in new members of the congregation on Sundays. Rachel believes we are friendly. She also explained that it is the nature of Church at this time – the Church of England is seen as irrelevant in the eyes of many.

Guy – explained his wife does not like our services because they are too high by comparison with her Church of Scotland experience, whereas he does. Each of the four Churches in the village offers a different worship style and he would not wish to cannibalise the other Churches.

Father Michael explained an idea he picked up from Wales was for a "15 Minutes with God Service" – much less structured than a normal service. This has covered publicity in the National Media and he wondered about trying the idea in Mayfield?

Tim challenged the idea here because statistics tell us that Christianity is not universally popular. Pointed out that in Mayfield we reach an above average number of people compared to the national average.

Sue explained how when she first came to Mayfield she found the service formal. This has changed with time. She would like to see a more middle way between us and Colkins Mill.

Father Michael suggested some ideas like being more welcoming / more polished in our welcome.

Lindy suggested we do more networking / welcoming before the notices prior to the start of the service. The moment of quiet comes later after the notices.

7. Work with children and young people

Father Michael thanked everyone who went out to the different groups in the village to collect our surveys.

Funding for any initiative could come from the Nicholson Trust. However, **Father Michael** advised the PCC of a dispute with Hadlow Down Church who believe they have missed out on monies to which they are entitled. Whilst there have been no funding requests; they feel they have been side lined.

As a result the Diocesan Registrar has asked no money is distributed from the Trust until such time as he has had the opportunity to review / investigate (established / set up giving such as Bibles for Year 6 students can continue).

Robin pointed out there was always an understanding that the Nicholson Trust funds could be for used to fund projects beyond the Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish. For this reason, the figures are not included in the St Dunstan's annual accounts.

Father Michael will follow up with Diocesan Registrar. If progress is not made we will consider an escalation to the Bishop.

Robin – said we should continue to firm up our ideas as to what we want to do as a community. Once the dispute is resolved he anticipates there will be pressure from many sources for funds.

- a. Money for a Youth Worker
- b. Annual Grant from Trust to St Dunstan's to fund work in the Parish - £6000 in 2023.
- c. Hymn books

Father Michael advised Lucy Piercy wishes to involve more young people in the Choir / Church Music. She has already approached the Primary School and Mayfield Girls School with ideas which have been well received. This recognises our strength as a Parish in the musical field.

8. Disposal of previous PA systems

Intention was to sell the old system when the new system was installed. Despite best endeavours this has not been possible to date.

Father Michael proposed further efforts be made and if this do not work we should dispose of the old system before the Autumn

Approved.

9. Fabric Matters

a. Scotch Pine By Stone Court

Stephen reported Graham Dale, the investment landlord of the three shops at the end of the High Street, has raised a County Court Claim against the PCC in respect of alleged damage to his roof from pine needles from our Scotch Pine in the South Eastern corner of the Church Yard – total claim amount £2,245.00

This is being treated as a Public Liability claim and is being handled by our insurers – Ecclesiastical. They have instructed Clyde & Co to represent them.

An update will be provided at our next meeting in July.

b. Aynscombe Memorial

A Faculty is required in order this project can proceed.

Before arranging this we need to understand if Glass Doors can be installed without causing damage to the Aynscombe Memorial which is close to the South Doors where we are considering the installation of glass doors.

Once this matter is resolved **Tim** volunteered to process an On Line Faculty application.

c. Hand Rail to Choir Area

A quotation for a second hand rail by the Choir stalls (South side) is being sought. As soon as figures are to hand PCC approval will be sought.

This project is being progressed to address health and safety concerns when people move between the choir stalls and the main body of the Church.

d. Glass Doors

Stephen to seek the Architects advice – costing approved at the January 2024 PCC meeting for the preparation of initial drawings and concepts for the Fabric Committee / PCC to consider (cost approved £1750 + VAT).

10. Safeguarding

No actions to report.

11. Health and Safety

No actions to reports.

12. PCC Meeting Dates

All PCC Members happy with the 2024 – 2025 meeting dates proposed.

13. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 March, 2024

Meeting minutes approved.

14. Matters arising:

a. London House LH Flat

Sold.

New owner has had contractors in painting and decorating.

b. London House and CDO2

PCC confirmed we should enter into a new three year lease at £6000 pa to let the first floor office space.

Business Rates – Robin advised that London House was deemed to be rateable by the Valuation office once the substantive rental (their view) had been agreed with MAYFACS but conceded that prior to that date it was not to be included in the list of buildings to be rated. (Buildings for C of E use are excluded). As a result, a Charty use grant of 80% from Wealden had been applied for alongside a discretionary top up grant to 100%; these have been forthcoming. During this process bills in the sum of £26,000 has been raised to cover a three-year period but have now been withdrawn.

c. Hymn Books

Cannot proceed due to the Nicholson Trust dispute.

Father Michael confirmed the new book will be smaller and will fit better on the pew shelf (Ancient and Modern Hymns for Refreshing Worship).

Guy – suggested an application is put to the Nicholson Trust now.

The estimated cost is £2500 with a limited time 25% discount.

170-word copies

20 Large Print copies

1 Organ copt (two volumes)

Choir Music copies (Four part voices)

Congregation Music copies (Melody only)

Robin advised an application should be made to the Nicholson Trust now in view of the 25% discount available to us now.

The PCC endorsed the preparation of an application.

Action: **Tim** to write letter of application to the Trust.

d. Minutes of APCM held on 7 April, 2024 (for agreement and signature)

Approved.

15. Any Other Business (please inform Fr. Michael by email or verbally by Sunday, 14 July 2024)

Father Michael is in conversation with an interested party to take up the Second Church Warden post.

The Mayfield Festival has now ended. **Father Michael & Stephen** will have a de-brief with the Organising Committee, and asked if any thoughts or comments could be sent to him soon.

a. PCC Meeting Coffee Rota

Stephen Blurton	16 July 2024
Guy Mantoura	24 September 2024
Vacant	26 November 2024

b. Date of next meeting – Tuesday, 16 July 2024

16. Closing prayer

After a moment of quiet, FM closed the Meeting with the words of The Grace.

17. Date of Next Meeting:

Tuesday, 16 July 2024 at 6.30 pm for 7.00pm in London House.

Coffee / Tea: Stephen Blurton

Signed as an accurate record by:

Name:

Date:

Dates for your Diary