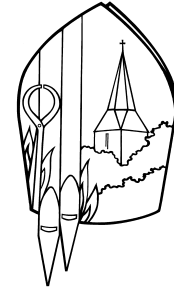


MAYFIELD & FIVE ASHES PCC



Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 28th November 2023 at 6.30 for 7.00 p.m. in London House

Present: Father Michael Asquith (Chairman)
Stephen Blurton (Churchwarden)
Stephen Lawrence (Churchwarden)
Robin Holliday (Hon. Treasurer)
Emma Ryder Richardson (Secretary)
Deacon Di Blackden
Karen Mack (Deanery Synod)
Tim Reid
Roger Salwey
Sue Smith

1. Father Michael welcomed attendees and opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Karen Dines, Anne Clayton, Denise Packham , Lindy James and Guy Mantoura
3. **2024 Finances**

Before discussing this Agenda matter, FM outlined the situation concerning the recruitment and appointment of Director of Music which had also been announced in church on 26th November. Unfortunately, despite wide advertising there has been no response. The Standing Committee met to review the situation and are amending the recruitment information pack for further advertising in January 2024.

a. Fees for weddings and funerals

A summary had been circulated denoting statutory fees that cannot be changed and the fees that St. Dunstan's can alter as appropriate. Where fees have been raised there is a comparative figure from 2023.

All were in favour of the changes proposed.

b. Parish Share

The Diocesan Parish Share proposals had been circulated with the Agenda which showed a suggested increase of £79.00 for St. Dunstan's in 2024. After discussion concerning the situation for St. Dunstan's it was agreed that £73,609 would be paid as requested. Although there is unease about the system and Diocesan spending and budgeting, SL pointed out that if the Parish Share is not paid annually, or is reduced significantly from the suggested sum, it is quite possible that when appointing an incumbent in the future we would be forced to join a benefice (group of churches) rather than having an independent priest. SL has discussed the situation with Archdeacon Dowler who informed him that this could be a likely outcome. It is acknowledged that although running at an annual deficit, St. Dunstan's is still very fortunate in benefitting from the Walter Podger legacy and paying the annual Parish Share is still achievable albeit using investment income.

SB proposed that £73,609 should be agreed as the 2024 contribution which was seconded by SL and all agreed.

4. Working with children, young people and families

Before making an application to the Nicholson Trust to finance the salary of a youth worker, thought must be given to the aims and objectives of the post and exactly what is needed to support it and how it can develop to enhance the services we want to achieve to encourage these groups to have a regular association with St. Dunstan's. The Youth and Families worker must be well managed and supported and encouraged in the work undertaken.

To achieve this FM proposed that there should be thorough research into all that the village offers these groups at present. It would serve no useful purpose to repeat what St. Thomas's and Colkins Mill are already offering, similarly other organisations such as Mayfacs, Mayfield Band etc. He asked the PCC to undertake this work by meeting with them to discuss what they do, where there are gaps St. Dunstan's might fill, joint projects that could be launched etc. With this research the congregation can then be consulted and with the results of that a meaningful job description can be produced. FM will compile a list of organisations and asked that two PCC members meet with each of them to discuss needs for the future.

5. Christmas at St. Dunstan's

3 rd December	Advent Carol Service (mostly sung by choir)
19 th December	Carol Service (candlelit and mostly congregational carols)
24 th December	10.15 Said Eucharist
	5.00 Christingle Service
	11.00 Midnight Mass
25 th December	10.15 Christmas Day Service

Further dates:

10 th December	10.15 Bishop Nicholas Reade to dedicate the statue given by the Flower Guild in memory of Sheila Humphreys. We will be joined by the Five Ashes congregation.
15 th December	7.00 Performance of Handel's Messiah
17 th December	10.15 Jack Gonzalez-Hardings last official service (a presentation will be made after the service)

6. Churches in Mayfield Passion Play, 2024

FM had met to discuss this possibility with St. Thomas's and Colkin's Mill to take place on Palm Sunday (March 24th) as an alternative to the Good Friday procession of witness. Cathy Pogson of Wateryard had proposed this and St. Dunstan's has been invited to take part. If we do we are asked to provide 10 volunteers willing to be actors (but smaller number is fine), publicise the event widely and contribute £200.00 towards the cost of the production. The play will be performed in various parts of the village including outside St. Dunstan's.

It was agreed that we should certainly take part and wholeheartedly support this village event.

7. Hope Explored

The three week course had been enjoyed by some 20 people and there had been a very positive response to the follow-up questionnaire. It was agreed that we should certainly build on what has been started. A useful starting point is to set up some house groups to start in the New Year.

8. Finance Update

- RH 's Report had been circulated which showed an annualised shortfall of £27,129 for the 10-month period, however this time of year usually sees increased giving so it is hoped this will drop to about £20,000.00.
- An unexpected expenditure has been the installation of a roof alarm due to the increase in lead burglaries in the region. Insurance would not cover the full cost of replacement and it had been decided to get the system installed as soon as possible. Of the three quotations received, Ace Defence Security Ltd. who had quoted £4,980 including £830 VAT had been chosen. The system has now been installed and is very efficient and very reassuring! RH has applied for two grants to help towards the cost - to Listed Places of Worship for the VAT and to the Benedict Trust (parent company of Ecclesiastical Insurance) for 50% of the cost.
- Income from the hire of the Church has increased and the events well managed. We are now receiving regular rent from Mayfacs for the use of London House.
- RH had circulated a memorandum to the PCC from the Investment Sub-Committee concerning a review of the current portfolio and its investment strategy. In 2019, faced with the continuing reliance on the fund to pay year on year for the running costs of the Parish, the PCC agreed to ring fence £400,000 of its reserves to be used to buy time for future planning should the total funds (currently £851,000.00) be running out. The outlook has not changed but there is a continuing likelihood of withdrawals being required for small projects and to finance the deficit, although elimination of this is a long term objective of the PCC.

Given the need to keep £400,000 aside for long term, the Sub Committee feels that this is now an opportunity to move away from short term capital preservation by increasing the levels of investment with the long term in mind. This may increase volatility but should also increase returns for the future.

Following discussion the PCC agreed that this was the right proposition for the current handling of the portfolio.

Proposed: SS Seconded: TR

- RH reported that £182 had been raised in the last quarter by donations through www.easyfundraising.org.uk which enabled purchasers at large stores and well known companies to tap into their charitable funds and make a donation to a purchaser's chosen charity. It can also be done through an App and is a very easy system to get used to using regularly. He urged the PCC to research it and tell others!
- SB proposed that the Churchwardens should send a follow up letter to that written to all Electoral Roll members this time last year, reporting on increased funding received and summarising the current financial situation as included in RH's November Financial Report. The letter would also encourage people to increase their support if possible or indeed, use this opportunity to support St. Dunstan's if they had not been able to do so in 2022. SB had the draft and summarised it to the meeting but had been unable to photocopy. ERR would circulate the draft as soon as possible after the meeting so that comments could be made and the draft approved for circulation in the week of 3rd December.

It was agreed that the letter should be sent, subject to any comments that may be received from the PCC.

9. Safeguarding Update

KD reported that all the usual DBS checks and training are being kept up to date and in process. FM is undertaking his second Level 2 Leadership Course in February.

10. Health and Safety Update

ERR reported that a group had met to review H and S and a new general policy was being written. A lot of H and S material has emerged from various sources and we will meet in the New Year to take the policy forward for PCC approval. As no individual is willing to take sole responsibility the policy proposes that different people should be responsible for one particular aspect and the regular checks required are overseen by the Administrator.

11. Bellringers' Constitution

The minor amendments in the Constitution had been circulated to the PCC which were approved.

12. Fabric Report

- a. Further leaks have emerged around the Glubb Window and North Aisle following recent heavy rain. Repair work was quoted for in early 2023 by Parker's. SB will take advice from the Church Architect, John Bailey, and ask Parker's to revisit their £10,000 quote in the light of time elapsed.
- b. A meeting with the Church Architect had been held to discuss the possibility of installing glass doors at the south entrance. Recommendations and costings will be forwarded in due course.
- c. The roof alarm had been installed and is fully operational. It is an easy and efficient system to use which SB, SL and FM have access to.
- d. The churchyard shed which stores extra chairs for use at concerts and large events is very damp with a leak in the roof. This is to be repaired and roof debris cleared off.
- e. Repairs have been completed to the front door of London House and the handrails re-painted. The white warning strips on the War Memorial steps have also been re-painted and are now clearly visible in the dark.
- f. As reported at the last meeting, the London House flat has been sold subject to contract. Interior repairs and making good must be carried out within a reasonable period of the purchaser moving in, in line with the terms of the lease.

13. Publicising PCC Minutes

Rather than displaying them on the porch notice board, it was agreed that they would be available on St. Dunstan's website with the information that a hard copy can be seen at the Parish Office. Any confidential matters would be omitted from the website copy.

14. PCC Meeting dates for 2024

A printed list was circulated at the meeting and will be sent to those who were unable to attend. Coffee volunteers agreed:

January - Sue Smith
March - Tim Reid

15. Minutes of meeting held on 26th September, 2023

FM thanked ERR for taking the Minutes.

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16. Matters arising from the last meeting

No matters arising

17. Any Other Business

- The proposed Advent Posada had been postponed until 2024 as a source for the figures needs to be researched.
- Having agreed to support the charity Grass Roots/Uganda, SL had suggested that given events in Palestine and Israel, we should continue to make donations to Friends of the Holy Land until September 2024.
- On behalf of the Flower Guild, the Chairman thanked the PCC for agreeing to re-instate the annual donation to the fund and the increase from £200 to £250 was greatly appreciated.
- SL was still discussing the possibility of increasing audience numbers to 500 with the Mayfield Festival Organisers. The Jamie Ballon Consultancy still maintains that 400 is the maximum number that can be safely allowed and that is the firm recommendation for any organisation renting out the church. The PCC agreed that 400 was just about manageable and have no wish to increase it.
- Subsequent to the meeting, the latest Minutes of the Organ Trust had been received and are attached herewith.

The meeting ended with the words of The Grace.

Signed as an accurate record by:

Name

Date