**St Swithun’s Church, Sandy**

**Minutes of Parochial Church Council Meeting**

**Tuesday, 2nd April 2024 at 7.30pm**

**1. Attendance and Apologies:**

Present: Colin Osborne (Chair), Rev’d Philip Macaulay, Elizabeth Adams, Julia Bickerdike, Elizabeth Gammell, Carole Martin, Jean Peckham, Lynsey Sheppard, Stephen Snow and Sandy Stopher

Virtual: Abigail Davies

Apologies: Sandra Watson, Jennifer Watson, Matt Bushby, Anthony Lock, Ruth Lock and Karen Varley.

**2. Introduction and Opening Prayer.**

Philip opened with a reading from Luke 24 13-26 and led the meeting in Prayer.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th March.**

Sentence 3 of Item 6c (Matters Arising) now reads “It was felt we should at least get a report on the drain to the North West wall where there is a channel of water along the foot of the wall after heavy rain and overflow problems with several other soakaway drains”. The end of Sentence 3 of Item 14 (Curate’s Report) now only says that Philip is no longer managing KWB. The Minutes were signed off.

**4. Matters Arising from 5th March 2024.**

i. Soakaways. The formal quote from Drain365 to inspect our soakaway drains was significantly more than we were first told. It is still felt that we should have an inspection of the drain to the North West Wall, however, and this can be used to support a claim for funding from Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust. Jean will contact Alan Hobbs at Drain365.

ii. Bell Ringers Chamber. A carpenter inspected the chamber floor on 30th March. We await his quote for the repairs required.

Steven Akhurst wrote to Colin and Stephen on 17th March describing a curtain rail that will safely operate and support the curtains that we have. Such a curtain rail will cost approximately £400. It was agreed that Stephen would check with Steven that the curtain rail would be of theatre quality or supplied by a theatre specialist. There were otherwise no objections to the rail being purchased. Whilst the curtains are down it seems sensible to use the opportunity to clean them. The curtains are thought to be old so a closer inspection should be made to ensure that they will not be destroyed by the cleaning process.

Steven is also keen to acquire Polo Tops for the Bell Ringing Team. Whilst the Team Members will buy their own tops, the intention is also to buy about 5 of each size for any new Ringers. It is hoped that a discount might be secured if the tops are ordered in bulk. This was approved.

iii. Secretarial Position. Colin reminded the PCC that Stephen Snow will not renew his membership at the next APCM. A new Secretary must be appointed before the APCM. Stephen is happy to give as much guidance and support as required.

iv. The Pinnacle Magazine. Adrienne will shortly assemble a Team of people to review the results of the Readership Survey carried out in December and decide on the way forward for the magazine. A report will then be submitted to the PCC.

v. Parish Share. Our Parish Share for 2023 has now been paid in full.

vi. Fire Drill. No Change to that reported last month.

**5. Finance.**

There was concern, with the difficulties presently faced in finalising 2023 figures, issues with the Church Laptop (now fixed) and our antiquated accounting software that the PCC may fall back to using manual ledgers to keep our books. PCC members must support our Treasury Team as much as possible. Colin has suggested that the Finance Team might wish to consider whether our current system should be replaced with another that is easier to use and less cumbersome in it’s operation. The Team are invited to investigate and make proposals about this to the PCC.

**6. Safeguarding.**

The following Minutes were sent to Stephen Snow from Sandy Stopher:

**DBS checks:**

All church officers are up to date including Open the Book and Junior Church helpers.

**TRAINING:**

In our discussions it is important to remember that the policies and procedures set by the Church of England cover all churches from Canterbury cathedral, large urban churches to tiny village chapels. In deciding our stance we need to think about our current situation and those who help in church.

Following Sandy’s previous training session we needed to agree the level of training we expect from church officers. In terms of the Church of England a church officer is anyone who is deemed, by us or members of the public, to represent the church. This could include servers, those serving coffee, the choir, flower arrangers, bell ringers, the welcome team, gardeners…

The PCC agreed that apart from anyone working directly with children only the Tower Captain and Robed Servers require training.

**RECRUITMENT:**

This does not apply to elected roles (churchwardens and PCC members) but: ‘Prior to the election, a declaration must be made by the candidate that he/she is not disqualified from working with children.’ (i.e. shouldn’t fail a DBS check)

“The Requirements in this guidance must be followed for the appointment of all roles within a Church body that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, for example, members of the clergy authorised to officiate, Readers, lay workers, youth workers, employees and volunteers.

Specific appointment processes for appointing church officers will vary depending on the exact scope and function of each role as they will need to be **proportionate** to the degree of safeguarding risk and responsibility. For example, the role description for volunteer positions will be briefer than for an employed position; the range of questions in an interview for some volunteer positions might be more limited than for other volunteer positions with more complex safeguarding responsibilities (e.g. Support / Link Person roles).

The PCC agreed to continue developing our procedures and discuss it further should anyone new volunteer for a role involving children, young people or vulnerable adults.

**7. Preparations for the arrival of our new Rector.**

Rectory. Electrical repairs were completed on 28th March and final repairs to the plumbing will be undertaken on 19th April. Colin has chased Rumbold Sedgewick as he has not heard from the appointed Contractor undertaking external repairs. Mike Scott will shortly weed and feed the lawns after which we should ask Solomon to mow them.

Contact. Colin has been in contact with Jodie over the last month and discussed plans for Wedding Services that have been booked at St Swithuns. Archdeacon Dave Middlebrook has emphasised that Jodie is still on maternity leave and asked that we don’t “pester” her too much. Jodie will be on holiday during the last week of August and the first week of September.

Catering at the Licensing Service – Wednesday 10th July 2024. It was felt we should “put on a show” just as we did at the interview days. Whilst a lot of food was provided for these, none of it was wasted and it is likely that this service will be well attended. The Church Wardens will be drawing up a list of all who should be invited once they have heard back from the Archdeacon’s PA, to give an idea of numbers. Valerie will make an announcement about this to our Congregations in June and request funding / Food items. The intention is that catering will be at zero cost to St Swithuns.

**8. Bread and Chalice Helpers at Communion.**

These Helpers were previously signed off by the Diocesan Bishop but the PCC are now responsible for this. The PCC agreed to the following (as per the email you have) and Stephen was asked to send an email to Karen asking if she would these onto the Rotas for Sunday Services.

**9. Fundraising.**

**15th June – Sandy Carnival.** Lynsey has been asked if we wish to have a stall in the grounds of Sandye Place as part of the Carnival. This is being considered but was supported by the PCC.

**13th July –** Date for Summer Fete.

**August Afternoon Teas**. These are being planned for Saturdays in August, subject to them not being held when there is a Church wedding.

**23rd November - The Christmas Bazaar**. This will be held from 11am until 1pm so as to allow closure before the onset of darkness.

Elizabeth G is arranging a Summer Concert Week. All of the Schools in Sandy have been contacted asking if they wish to take part in the Fete. We await responses. Our Tower Captain, Steven Akhurst, may host a discussion group introducing people to Bell Ringing on the previous Thursday.

**10. Church Wardens Report.** All matters reported above.

**11. Curate’s Report.**

Philip’s handover of responsibilities continues. A full rota up to the point where Jodie takes over on 10th July is in place. Jodie has already been in touch about arrangements thereafter. Philip’s final Wednesday Communion will be on 3rd April and Colin has taken over the management of Funeral Services. Philip asked All to Pray for those who are taking over responsibilities from him.

**26th May** – Trinity Sunday. There will be one family Service at 10am. This will be a fun Service representing GOD, Jesus and the Holy Spirit together as one.

Our previous objectives were a balanced budget, appointing a Rector and keeping 3 Sunday Services. It does not feel as if we need a revolution, but Philip asked if the PCC want any tweaks to this. For example, some of the 11am Congregation are asking if they might have Communion once a month. Consideration was requested to stretching the 3 services further apart to avoid time pressure on each service and on the intervals between them. This may, however, make it difficult to serve refreshments in the Church Building. It was suggested that an Agenda item for the May PCC Meeting might be: Goals for St Swithuns to achieve before 10th July.

**12. Wi-Fi in The Church Building.**

On 23rd March Philip circulated a report to the PCC on our options for installing Wi-Fi into St Swithuns. Philip recommended the use of Wi-Fi with a mobile network using a SIM only deal on a rolling contract. Experience at St Mary’s, Potton, shows that this is reliable for most of the time, but we would need to have volunteers to manage the system. This would work as a temporary measure until 10th July after which time Jodie may either continue with this system or decide on new arrangements. It was agreed to see if anyone in the Congregation could assist.

**13. Deanery Synod Report.**

CHUMS will visit St Swithuns on 14th April. There will be a stall in Church to support the event.

For 2025, the Deanery will give financial aid to an Overseas Charity. PCC members should consider any Charities which they wish St Swithuns to nominate to the Deanery for this support.

**14. Annual Parish Church Meeting.**

It was carried that this will be held on 4pm on Sunday 19th May 2024.

**15.** **St Swithuns Representative for Churches Together in Sandy & Beeston.**

Stephen will contact Jenny Endersby about this.

**16. Any Other Business.** None.

There being no other business, the meeting closed with The Grace.

**Signed Correct Dated:**