

The meeting was held in the church from 7:30pm onwards.

**Present:** Jema Ball, (Vicar/Chair), Hayley Brydges, (Youth Minister), Jo Bridgwater, Angela Cattell, Julia Gwyther, Jennifer Hall, Tony Hughes, Caroline Jowett-Ive (Warden), Andy Judd, Al Meadows, Caroline Owen (Treasurer), Kate Pinfold, Simon Potter (Associate Vicar), Nick Powlesland, Peter Robottom, Caroline Simpson, Ann Thomas (Warden), and Tony Yeadon.

**In attendance:** Steve Fairbairn (Secretary), Patrick Massey.

## **1. OPENING REFLECTION & PRAYER**

Jema opened the meeting by reading from Hebrews Chapter 2, reminding PCC members that we see Jesus directly in his word, and then she opened the meeting in prayer.

Jema then introduced Patrick Massey as the Avonside Mission Area Ministry Experience Scheme Worker - a ten-month, Diocese-funded position aimed at allowing the worker to experience a breadth of ministry across the mission area.". He was attending to observe a PCC in action. Jema also noted that Ben Notley, formerly an ordinand at St Mary's, has moved his placement to St Mary's and St James Lockleaze. This leaves a Deanery Synod place vacant on our PCC.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

It was noted that apologies had been received from Jo Morris (Curate), Brian Richardson, Jerry Sandford and Hazel Trapnell.

## **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **3.1 To agree the minutes**

Jema noted that the latest update on the September minutes had been circulated only hours before the meeting. However, she also noted that the changes were not large and so she asked PCC members whether they would accept the minutes of the last PCC meeting. There were no objections to the minutes and this led to the following proposal.

**Proposal** The minutes of the PCC meeting held on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 can be accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings.

**Proposed** Nick Powlesland      **Seconded** Caroline Simpson

**Result** This proposal was accepted unanimously and Jema signed the minutes.

### **3.2 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **3.3 Leadership Team Minutes**

These minutes had been pre-circulated to PCC members.

Jema noted that, whilst the south wall of the church seemed dry at the time of the last PCC meeting, damp penetration has occurred since mid-October and this has been noted by the Leadership Team who are now acting on the matter.

## **4. RESOURCING MISSION**

At this point Jema noted that given the importance of current finance issues these should be handled first, so that the subsequent agenda of the meeting needed to be changed from that originally planned. Jema requested that item 4.2 of the original agenda be dealt with first. Jema also noted that there are important finance related decisions needed under item 5.5.1 of the original agenda. Jema then asked for Caroline Owen to present the current accounts and projected budget for 2022.

### **4.2 Our Finances**

The management accounts for the year to date 31<sup>st</sup> October and the budget to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 had been pre-circulated prior to the PCC meeting.

Caroline Owen noted that the current state of play is that the accounts for the year to the end of October show a deficit of £26,916 compared to a budgeted deficit of £54,610. She explained that the variation was due to one-off donations and income from church room lets and fees from weddings and from funerals. She expected the income from funerals to decrease in 2022 because there would be no further extra services and internments from funerals conducted during lockdown when there were many attendance restrictions.

Caroline said the forthcoming Gift Day may cover much of our deficit. Jema commented that we're now using the phrase *Season of Stewardship* to describe the annual appeal in November. Rather than having a specific Gift Day at the end of November, church members will be encouraged to respond to the appeal any time during that month.

Caroline reported that her December 2021 budget forecast was for a deficit of £19,214 allowing for a projected £17K from one off gifts made in response to the Stewardship Appeal. Caroline reported that in 2021 St Mary's had lost several givers, many of whom had sadly died. She noted that budget giving in the year to December 2021 is £223,832 compared to a total of £228,000 that she had been hoping. She also reported that external bookings for the church and Church Rooms have increased significantly in recent months, and that her accounts assume a continuing rental from our St. Laud Close property (£950 per month) which is unlikely to be sold during 2022.

Simon noted that dual role of worship and tech leader was difficult because it is not possible, during a Sunday service, for one person to be both at the back supervising tech and at the front providing music. Simon stated that he was happy about covering the music side of things at the 10:30 service for the time being, seeing this as a small but significant part of his ministry.

One member noted that worship leadership might be a voluntary service role. Another member noted that providing Zoom vision and sound is stretching for our tech operators, but Jema replied that she nevertheless wanted to continue with provision of Zoom capabilities throughout the coming winter and that this would be reviewed in the Spring.

Jema suggested a vote to decide whether to employ a new part-time worship leadership or not given current financial deficits and this led to the following proposal.

**Proposal** St Mary's will not appoint a worship leader at this point in time.

**Proposed** Caroline Jowett-Ive      **Seconded** Jennifer Hall

**Result** This proposal was accepted with no abstentions and one vote against.

One member noted that the PCC should be grateful to the HR Committee for the time they gave to trying to define the role of a new worship leader. It was agreed that we could re-visit this decision when the need to do so becomes obvious.

Jema then directed the PCC's attention to Mission Giving and its financial significance.

### **5.5.1 Mission Partners Review**

A paper on this review had been circulated prior to the meeting which gave the results of a congregational vote on which Mission Partners we should support from 2022-25 and how we should fund and manage Mission Giving in the future.

Jema reported that the Mission Partners who would not continue to receive support from St Mary's over the next three years as a result of the congregational vote had been contacted. Malcolm Pritchard had already replied with an understanding email in which he said that he understood our position. She noted that the Bristol International Student Centre (BISC) which is a struggling local charity had been left out too.

Jema reiterated what was outlined in the accompanying paper concerning the proposed shift towards tithing the church's planned income in support of our Mission Partners, moving away from a dependence on an annual Mission Partners Gift Day in the summer..

One member stated a preference for a system of tithing and another noted that many other churches manage giving in this way. Another member commented that the amount given to Mission Partners has historically equated to around 10% of our planned income, but that this was more by chance rather than having planned it to be that way. This drew a remark that many church members will also choose to support various charities at a personal level. It was also noted that a portion of our parish share is also a form of giving as it enables other parishes to fund a Vicar when they would otherwise be unable to afford one. Simon noted that curacies are funded through our Parish Share giving and stressed the importance of how we foster giving from the congregation and tell people about our mission partners.

Caroline advised PCC members that we have two major spends, namely the Parish Share, £165,00 requested for 2022, and the salaries of our five employees. She also advised that all PCC members are trustees of the church funds and so need to consider whether to accept our current deficit. Caroline noted that our reserves are about £182,000 with some £39,000 in restricted funds and about £88,000 in designated funds so that the available spending money is about £54,000 and the PCC could therefore pay off all our budgeted deficit of £27,396 for the end of December 2022. She reminded PCC members that the reserves policy is such that we should be able to maintain the church for three months from reserves alone. Simon expressed the view that we need to consider the scale of the deficit compared to the amount in reserve.

In response to a question on whether all churches give to Parish Share, Caroline noted that each church commits to a parish share and that the Diocesan request is based partly on their historic review of our accounts, but also several other factors are taken into account. Caroline also noted that some churches receive more from the Diocese than they contribute.

Jema asked whether the proposed church budget is wise. One PCC member replied yes and gave the opinion that numbers are increasing at the 10:30 service and that this should hopefully mean that planned giving will gradually start to increase. Caroline noted that if giving only goes up by 2.5% then we cannot sustain the current deficit beyond the 2023 financial year.

In response to a question about whether we have set deficit budgets in the past, Caroline reported that in the recent past we have had some big deficits in the budget, but then by the end of the year have reported a surplus. Meeting the parish share request continues to be a priority each year.

Simon noted that most churches have deficit budgets set, due to their reliance on extra income received through an annual appeal/Gift Day which is often not budgeted for in terms of income. There was some discussion around whether the Season of Stewardship had been publicized widely enough and Jema felt it had. She also noted that we currently have around 180 adults connected to the church, of whom around 140 give to the church in a planned way. One PCC member said that we have set deficit budgets in the past and that at present we are covered by our reserves.

At this point in the debate Jema stressed the finance related importance of the worship leader recruitment issue and pointed members to item 4.1.1 in the agenda.

#### **4.1.1 Worship Leader Role**

A proposal to recruit a new worship leader had been circulated by the HR committee prior to the meeting.

Jema reminded PCC members that our previous worship leader, Matt Hurley, had left at the end of August and that to the HR Committee had met in early September and proposed that the hours of a new Worship Leader be scaled back to 8 hours per week rather than 18 hours, so that the annual salary would be lower at about £5,300. She then reported that over the last few weeks in church the pattern of worship leadership had moved on.

Simon explained that Trinity College ordinands had provided new music players together with some musicians from the congregation and that the worship leader role is currently being covered by Simon (music) and Hayley (A/V tech). In response to a query about who runs the tech side of services Simon replied that Hayley and Brian Richardson manage the tech side.

In light of the decision to delay the recruitment of a Worship Leader, Jema proposed the idea that the budgeted salary of the Worship Leader (£5,300) but this year used instead to support our Mission Partners. Simon noted the need to define what amounts to mission giving correctly and another member noted the need to tell this to the congregation. Jema restated her view of the need to change our system for giving and wondered whether in 2022 we could budget to give away 5% of our planned income to Mission Partners, as a first step towards tithing in the future. Some doubt was expressed by one PCC member but nevertheless Jema asked whether the evening's debates could be formalized in a vote and this led to the following proposal.

**Proposal** St Mary's should move towards a system of tithing our planned income in support of our Mission Partners, beginning with a gift of 5% of our income in 2022 and scaling this up over the next few years.

**Proposed** Jennifer Hall      **Seconded** Hayley Brydges

**Result** This proposal was accepted with no abstentions and one vote against.

Jema then redirected the attention of the meeting to Caroline Owen's projected budget for 2022.

#### **4.2.1 2022 Budget**

Jema asked whether, subject to changes already decided during the current meeting, the projected budget for 2022 was acceptable. This led to the following proposal.

**Proposal** The PCC accepts the projected budget for 2022 subject to changes necessary to implement decisions just taken on mission funding and the delay in appointing a Worship Leader.

**Proposed** Nick Powlesland      **Seconded** Al Meadows

**Result** This proposal was accepted with no abstentions and one vote against.

#### **4.3.1 Trees Work**

The Buildings Committee meeting notes had been distributed prior to the meeting, together with a tabulation from Peter Robottom of the situation with regard to quotations from 5 contractors. Peter advised the PCC that the "Simply Gardens" firm had now said that they were busy for the next three to four months, and that the quote from "Gordano" looked the best option in terms of price and competence. One other member of the PCC Buildings Committee expressed agreement with this view. Peter also noted that it might be possible to get the removal of the redwood and a carving done using the stump following an offer from a parishioner, but there would be many caveats to this and it may not prove feasible or able to be secured. Jema then asked whether there was general PCC support for engaging Gordano to complete the works quoted for, and this led to the following proposal.

**Proposal** The Gordano Tree Care company quotation for removal of the Redwood tree and other tree works should be accepted.

**Proposed** Ann Thomas      **Seconded** Angela Cattell

**Result** This proposal was accepted unanimously.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Jema then drew the meeting to a close by asking members to note the important dates for 2022 and in particular ASMA related gatherings, and the joint ASMA PCCs away day which she noted would be more like a long morning plus lunch. This day will provide important opportunity for getting to know each other better, reflecting on the ASMA project so far and sharing conversations about possible future steps.

**7. CLOSING PRAYER**

Angela Cattell closed the meeting in prayer at 9:16pm.

The next planned meeting will be held on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2022. Volunteers please note the need to arrive at about 7:00pm to prepare tea and coffee for our 7:30 PCC meeting start.

Signed..........

Date.....10/02/22.....