

The meeting was held in the church.

Present: Jema Ball, (Vicar/Chair), Hayley Brydges, (Youth Minister), Jennifer Hall, Tony Hughes, Al Meadows, Jo Morris (Curate), Caroline Owen (Treasurer), Kate Pinfold, Simon Potter (Associate Vicar), Nick Powlesland, Brian Richardson, Peter Robottom, Jerry Sandford and Caroline Simpson.

In attendance: Steve Fairbairn (Secretary).

1. OPENING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Jema opened the meeting by reading from Revelations Chapter 7 and then she opened the meeting in prayer.

2. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies had been received from Julia Gwyther, Jo Bridgwater, Tony Yeadon, Hazel Trapnell, Ann Thomas (Warden), Caroline Jowett-Ive (Warden), Angela Cattell and Andy Judd.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 To agree the minutes

Jema asked PCC members whether they would accept the minutes of the last PCC meeting which had been distributed to PCC members before the meeting. There were no objections to the minutes and this led to the following proposal.

Proposal The minutes of the PCC meeting held on July 14th 2021 can be accepted as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Proposed Kate Pinfold **Seconded** Jo Morris

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

3.2 Matters Arising

It was noted that a £20K estimate has been received for a new gas boiler for the church. Jema said that she hoped that the existing boiler would at least see us through this winter, and that it would be likely that the January PCC meeting would be when the different replacement boiler options would be presented to the PCC for a decision.

3.3 Leadership Team Minutes

These minutes had been pre-circulated to PCC members.

Kate Pinfold asked whether the Redwood tree in the car-park would need to be felled. Peter reported that he had just received confirmation that the tree is fully dead and should be felled within a year, however local Council agreement was necessary before the tree is removed and it is possible that the Council may require us to plant a new tree in the same location or nearby. He also noted that the cost of felling would likely be significant because a crane would be needed, together with a trailer next to the car park, and that any necessary road closures would cost about an extra £1K. Simon Potter noted that the diocese has links to tree surgeons and so it was noted that it might be worth getting a quote from them. The idea that we might manage some details of the felling like road closures ourselves was floated, but dismissed as impractical and not likely to save costs. "Branch Walkers" was mentioned as a good tree surgeon. It was noted that we would have to decide whether to make a ground level cut only or remove the roots too (which would involve digging up the car park). Jema noted that it's unlikely we will look to create a carving out of the stump due to the already significant costs associated with simply felling the tree. It was noted that the cost of producing the carvings on the tree stump at Stoke Lodge was mentioned as being about £20K.

4. RESOURCING MISSION

4.1 Our Staff Team

Jema reported that Matt Hurley has now formally left St Mary's and that the HR Committee has still to decide how to fill his role.

Jema noted that the Staff Team recently had an Away Day together to begin the new term. She also noted that there would be eight placement students with us this academic year (seven studying at Trinity College and one studying with Sarum College). Simon noted that, for those going into their second year, that this year would effectively be the start of normality post Covid, and that our student cohort this year is very diverse. As the last year has been particularly challenging for students engaging with their placement church, Simon urged everyone to continue to be welcoming to all our students.

4.2 Our Finances

The management accounts for the year to date 31st August had been pre-circulated prior to the PCC meeting.

Caroline Owen noted that the accounts do make grim reading with a deficit of £21K, though there is reason for cautious optimism as the annual Stewardship Appeal does tend to cover much of our deficit each financial year. She reported that there have been savings this year in the Worship Director's hours, though we have increased the Children and Families Minister's hours and the total of our office team hours are back to the pre-pandemic level. The letting of our church rooms has been increasing, which is encouraging. Caroline noted a change in the supply of telephone services that now cover both the church and the vicarage. This had meant that the vicar's expenses had gone down, but that the overall telephone bill had gone up. In response to a question raised, Caroline noted that the "Development Fund" simply covers a

part of uncommitted church funds, but that the "Church Hall fund" is earmarked spending. She also noted that the 'City Farm' line in the budget refers to Hazelnut Community Farm, which is now a registered charity in its own right, and so in due course their finances will no longer be shown as a line in our accounts. She also noted that Thursday Lunch Club is not committed money but could be used to purchase new kitchen items with PCC agreement.

Caroline was asked to make the accounts clearer on whether funds are committed or not and she agreed to make some changes.

4.2.1 Stewardship Update

Jema reported that the ways that people can serve in the Mission Area are to be published shortly. Caroline Owen reported that there about 100 individuals/couples giving regularly to St Mary's. Jema noted that St Mary's is much more fortunate in this respect than many other churches and that the plans for the Stewardship Appeal are well underway for later this term.

4.3 Our Buildings

Jema noted that next Friday and Saturday that there would be maintenance working party mornings and she encouraged people to come. Jema reported that Chris and Ann Thomas had been doing some church interior décor work over the main door now that it seems that the gutter repair work (done earlier by Mogford Prescott) seems to have solved the issue of the church walls becoming damp in that area.

5. MISSION and MINISTRY UPDATES and DECISIONS

5.1 Worship and Teaching

Jema reported that a new pattern of services had started two weeks ago. "Connect on Tuesdays" has been held twice so far. There is also "Explore@4" and "Together@4" which are running fortnightly on alternate Sunday afternoons, and the "Living in Life and Faith" (LLF) Course is due to start in October.

It was noted that the Tuesdays group seems to be going well with more people attending than expected. This initiative is being held in a similar way at other churches. It was noted that the aim is to help people to connect and build relationships and that craft options are included and that the drop-in cafe offers an opportunity for chat.

Jema commented that other activities are likely to increase in frequency as we emerge from the pandemic, particularly the number of baptism enquiries. She mentioned the Alpha Course that Brian and Beverley Richardson are hosting in their home starting on Thursday 23rd. Jennifer Hall mentioned the forthcoming Bereavement Service which will hopefully be helpful for those who attend, and urged PCC members to let her know if they can think of members of the congregation who have lost loved ones recently, so that they can be specifically invited by letter.

In connection with the LLF update sent out to church family members recently, Jema reported that there have been 25 people signed up so far, so this is encouraging.

5.2 Caring and Praying for each other

Jema reported that a 24/7 Prayer Week would be coming up soon organized by Angela Cattell and Ann Thomas and their team.

Jo Morris noted that Bright Sparks has restarted now and Thursday lunch has resumed serving hot meals, which meant that the numbers attending has increased. Peter Weeks is moving forwards with the Telephone Befriending initiative. Also, Wendy Hughes and Lucy Swithinbank are re-starting a walking group, initially with a two-hour walk on Saturday 18th and that potentially Saturday Breakfasts may resume once it is felt safe to do so from a Covid perspective. All of these initiatives are aimed at helping to build relationships with people so that informal care and support can be offered.

Paul Spencer and Wendy Hughes will be starting up a group in keeping with the Kintsugi Hope Emotional Wellbeing material. They will rename their group to try to make it more appealing locally. This will be shared with the church family on Sunday 3rd October and will start shortly afterwards.

5.3 Connecting with Younger Generations

Hayley reported that there is lots going on in this area and that she is really enjoying her work. SHINEonSundays, Bright Sparks, Explore@4 and Fuel are all going well, with encouraging numbers at the start of the term. Hayley and Rachel continue to work hard to communicate with those who have previously been to church activities, to see if they would like to join in with these new activities. It was noted that young people from other ASMA churches attend Fuel, which is encouraging.

Jema noted that there would be a Christingle service on December 5th at Explore@4 which may well draw in some new people.

5.4 Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School

Jema reported that whole school Collective Worship has resumed and that Hayley and Rachel are able to be in school on Wednesday lunchtimes to listen and chat to pupils. Jema also reported that the parent prayer group will hopefully move to being held in person soon. Jema noted that the OFSTED inspection is likely to occur this term so that she, Rachel and Beverly were working hard, alongside all the other Governors, to ensure that the school is ready for this.

5.5 Serving the wider parish, mission areas and beyond

Jema noted that, now the students are back at Bristol University, that the St Mary's student ministry on campus (known as Oasis@Wills Hall Chapel) on Wednesday afternoons will restart next week.

5.5.1 Mission Committee Update

The Mission Committee has met twice since the last PCC meeting and has been undertaking a review of our Mission Partners. A 'long list' has been created, which includes many of our existing Mission Partners as well as some new ones. The congregation will be invited to vote for their preferred Mission Partners, so that the 'long list' is reduced to twelve Mission Partners who will be the ones that St Mary's supports for the next three years.

There was a debate as to whether people should be limited to choosing three Mission Partners from each category in the list. After some discussion, it was concluded that the Mission Committee had been empowered to make the decisions and that the outcome has been a helpful balanced system and that some groups simply cannot be supported in the future. There were no further queries.

Following a question that was raised, Caroline Owen noted that the money given to Joseph Bilal goes partly on his own living expenses and the costs associated with him travelling back to the UK to see his family.

5.5.2 ASMA Update

Simon explained that the pre-circulated Prayer Sheet gives a flavour of the things that have been happening across the Mission Area. It is encouraging that individual churches have been able to offer courses (e.g. The Marriage Course at St Edyth's) which people from different churches have joined in with. The Living in Love and Faith course is being run jointly, and hosted by St Mary's Stoke Bishop.

He recognized the many activities at Avonmouth, including their Listening Cafes and the Space4Makers workshop, and encouraged PCC members to pray for them. He reported that the workshop was set up in part as a memorial to lives lost at Wessex Water and has many other non-church inputs. Simon went on to note that Shirehampton church does need lots of support to cope with the vacancy there and that the St Mary's team has been able to help out significantly so far.

The way that ASMA is operating continues to be with support being given in many and varied small ways, rather than running large-scale events together across the five churches. A query was raised as to whether there were particular social justice needs in the parish that could be met by the Social Justice Missional Community, such as a litter pick and/or prayer walk. Simon and Jema said either would be welcome, noting that members of St Mary's congregation have previously carried out prayer walks in the parish, and Kate Pinfold (a member of the Social Justice Missional Community) will liaise with Simon about this in due course.

5.6 Safeguarding

There was nothing to report on Safeguarding for St Mary's, though Jema mentioned that Lucy Swithinbank is kindly acting as interim Parish Safeguarding Officer for St Mary's Shirehampton.

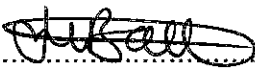
6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no AOB.

7. CLOSING PRAYER

Hayley closed the meeting in prayer at 8:56pm.

The next meeting will be held on November 10th.

Signed..........

Date.....10/11/21.....