

Minutes for the meeting of the PCC of Milborne Port
Tuesday 9th November 2021 7pm via Zoom

Those present – Chair: Nicki Edwards (NE), Elaine Ennis-Bunt (EE-B), Mary Clothier (MC), Pat Elliott (PE), Ben Grundy (BG), Jacquie Hall (JH), Robert Hall (RH), Trevor John (TJ), Amanda MacKintosh (AM), Linda Mumford (LM), Richard Redman (RR), Anne Salkeld (AS), Graham Sharpless (GS), Barbara Tindale (BT), Susan Wales (SW)

Adam Gale and Sarah Warren were present for the first 20 minutes of the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Harold Clarke (HC) and June Goodman (JG)

Introduction to Wilder Churches Project/’No Mow’ approach to churchyard management – Adam Gale outlined the work that had been carried out at Melbury Osmond, West Coker and Barwick churches through the ‘Wilder Churches’ joint initiative between B&W diocese and SWT (www.somersetwildlife.org/events/wilder-churches ‘Caring for God’s Acre’ (www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk) is another organisation that can assist parishes in developing areas in churchyards for biodiversity to encourage pollinators and invertebrates. He acknowledged that churchyards are sensitive areas, and that with careful management (e.g. not mowing in May, June and July) areas can soon become a haven for wildlife. There is no need to sow seeds as the plants are already there. The churchyard does not have to look unkempt as RH was concerned about how the churchyard would look, particularly for weddings or the church fete. Adam has already worked with MP primary school, and this would be another area in the village with which the children could become involved. NE has a similar project at the Gryphon School, and feels encouraged that this is a way the church can care for God’s creation. She suggests that **anyone interested in forming a group should contact SW who will arrange a site meeting with Adam and Sarah to assess what could be done.**

Adam and Sarah left the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Nicki Edwards. PE formerly opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 14th September 2021 – GS observed that it should have been recorded that NE chaired the meeting. Apart from this omission, the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to be a true record, with no further amendments, and signed by NE.

Matters arising from minutes - **Gift Day** – this had proved to be a most successful event, and much appreciated by all the visitors. NE thanked JH for her organisation, and all the contributors and various groups who helped throughout the day. **Food Share**- EE-B reported that, after a slow start, this project is getting better known in the village, and is being used by more individuals and families, with new faces appearing each week. The generosity of the Community Council in Somerset, the Co-op, and members of St John’s congregation is much appreciated by those seeking help. However, there is some concern that those with young families are not coming forward, and that maybe they view the involvement of “the church” as negative. The policy is not to question people about their status, but people do soon reveal their situation. LM suggested advertising on Facebook and in the magazine. NE thanked EE-B for the wonderful work that all those involved are doing.

Finance update – Prior to the meeting, RH had circulated the up to date financial report. Cash giving in September and October appears to have dipped compared with the previous two months. Regular giving has also fallen a little, with three fewer regular contributors withdrawing due to various reasons. The Silver Linings Gift Day total presently stands at £6,613, excluding Gift Aid tax rebates, and RH acknowledged that this amount will help to meet next year’s planned expenditure on the upkeep of the fabric of the church. **Sequestration**: RH has claimed the fees from the Diocese to reimburse the retired clergy since the beginning of the Vacancy. **2022 Fees and Remuneration**: this will be discussed at the next F&GP meeting. **CCLA Money Laundering**: RH has advised that all members of the PCC will need to provide their personal details as trustees, **and RH will email members in due course.** **Prankerds Charity**: another PCC member will need to be appointed as a trustee now that Rev. Godfrey has left the parish. The purpose of this charity was discussed, and how to make best use of the funds needs to be decided. **NE and RH will discuss and come back to PCC at next meeting.** NE thanked RH for his work in keeping the finances up to date.

Annual review of fees – to be decided at next finance meeting – (see above)

Fabric update – JH apprised the committee of the following points. The electrical upgrade of consumer units has been completed and the Church has been issued with a certificate for electrical safety compliance. Two new Lady Chapel heaters are on order and will be installed in near future (not yet billed). The central heating boiler in church is not working and engineers will need to investigate why. West Country Roofing has been chased to carry out repair work quoted for in June. This will involve scaffolding being erected for one day, for which the insurers should be notified. They will also investigate the leak from the roof above the crossing and replace a lead gutter on the north roof. They have estimated £1500 + VAT for the job. They will also investigate the source of the leaks in the north aisle. It is likely that new lead will be required on the north aisle roof to prevent rain blowing against the stone and dripping inside. This may involve a faculty. JG has identified the need for 8 new purificators as the ones presently in use are worn. **[Later: MC generously offered to purchase these, for which JH thanked her.]** The wiring to the lamppost in middle of west lawn is damaged. Therefore it will be a decorative, rather than functioning, feature. The seat by the path leading to Church House needs to be replaced. John and Margaret Barker have kindly agreed to allow the seat in memory of their grandson, Tom Shead, to be repositioned for this purpose.

EE-B left meeting at 20:00.

SW reported that bell hangers from Matthew Higby had been called to investigate a thudding noise from the bell chamber. The problem was identified as a loose bedplate on the bearing housing of the tenor, which has now been tightened. The bell hangers completed a service and identified other work that needs to be carried out. (Two pulley wheels misaligned; and the bolt holding the tenor clapper is rusty, due to rain coming in around the base of the flagpole - historic). **SW has chased for an invoice and a report on what needs to be done**, and this has not yet been received.

The annual roof alarm check was eventually carried out at the end of October at some cost. The batteries have been replaced, and a new sensor installed.

Vacancy - Since the pre Section 11 meeting held on 11th October, and the 'open house' meeting after church on 17th October to ascertain the views and ideas of parishioners as to what is envisaged to be the qualities and vision of any potential incumbent for the Benefice, and what we, as a Benefice, have to offer, an initial meeting has apparently been held to discuss the Parish Profile. After offering her services, LM has accordingly been collating people's thoughts and ideas and has been working on a first draft of the Parish Profile. Once the Parish Profile has been completed, and *approved by all PCCs, the Section 11 meeting can be held, and the post advertised if that is the wish of the PCCs*. Through a letter circulated to all PCC members prior to the meeting, GS had expressed his grave concerns about the future of our Church here, given the present financial situation of the Diocese/CofE and the looming threat of the reduction of stipendiary priests. SW advised that she had not yet received from the Designated Officer (Assistant Diocesan Secretary) Form 31, the 'Official Notice of Vacancy' form, along with Form 34, 'Appointment of Parish Representatives'. As detailed in the B&W Vacancy guide, these should have been sent out by diocese and received by the PCC secretary once the Vacancy starts. **SW has emailed the relevant official in diocese and will chase if no reply forthcoming.** All the Church Wardens have apparently met to discuss the way forward, and it was acknowledged by both NE and JH that there is the need to push the diocese to move. The point was raised that there is the real need to keep the congregation, and the wider community, informed about the process, through updates in the magazine, on the website and through FaceBook. GS reiterated his concerns, emphasising that the views of people in the village should also be sought in these challenging times for the Church as a whole. Good communication is essential, and JH confirmed that they would fight our corner. However, all PCCs involved in this process have joint responsibility and that all members are here to help, and that the workload should be shared. SW reported that she had, that afternoon, received an impassioned 'phone call from a parishioner, in which serious concerns were expressed along the lines of those described above. The parish is allowed to claim for two days per week of Pastoral Care. The Church Wardens should be advised if anyone knows of anyone who needs communion at home, or a visit from one of the retired clergy. AM then commented that surely the more evidence we have of the need for home visits the better in terms of the needs of people in the wider community, and asked if there is anyway that members of the younger generation can be used.

Vicarage – SW had been asked by JH to attend a site visit with representatives from the diocesan housing committee and finance group at the Vicarage on 26th October. [See précis appended to these minutes.] A substantial sum will need to be spent on the building as it stands (circa. £200K) to make it habitable. It is the responsibility of the PCCs to maintain a fit for purpose Vicarage. It is considered to be un-lettable in its present state. GS commented that the Vicarage cannot be sold without the agreement of the PCCs. In the earlier ‘phone conversation with the parishioner, SW reported that reservations were expressed of allowing the building to be sold without a suitable alternative in place as, in their view, without a home for an incumbent, the diocese might decide there is no need to appoint, and that a merger with an adjoining parish could be considered. Therefore, an undertaking from the diocese should be sought that the Vicarage, if sold, will be indeed replaced beforehand. JH and NE acknowledged that clever communications would be necessary. NE confirmed that she would keep everyone informed.

St John’s Cottage and Vergers’ remuneration - The decision to move from St John’s Cottage to a Commonalty house was a choice made solely by Ronnie and June. They would still be like to be vergers however, which of course is welcomed. Once the cottage is empty, moves to let the property will be made. At present, a commercial rental of £800 to £850pm is possible, with the PCC responsible for the upkeep of the building. It was emphasised that we need to keep ownership of the property. The going rate of pay for vergers is £10 per hour, and the Goodmans presently work around 12 hours per week. This will equate to a salary of £520 per month. **NE proposed, JH seconded, that the terms of employment, which have yet to be drawn up, should be “12 hours per week, at the rate of £10 per hour, with 25 days holiday per annum and 8 Bank/Public Holidays”. All were in favour.**

Safeguarding – NE advised that training needs to be completed in line with the updated CofE policy. All DBS checks also need to be revised/updated. NE will email the links to complete the on-line Safeguarding Awareness training.

Health and Safety update on Covid – It had been agreed at the previous evening’s Worship and Evangelism meeting that all parts of the Mass could now to be sung, as well as the Gradual hymn. The current mask protocol will continue, although if a member of the congregation does not want to wear a mask, then a LFT may be taken before the service to confirm negative Covid status. The Churchwardens retain the right to question people’s status. SW advised that there is the requirement for the ringers to take a LFT before practice night and Sunday ringing, to enable mask free ringing.

Any other business – AM advised RH that she would send an update on the up to date financial position regarding Milborne Wick.

Date of next meeting(s) - Tuesday 11th January 2022 **(BG to book)** – this will be held in Church House, **with all those attending to take a LFT beforehand.** NE assured those present that the Churchwardens would call a meeting if anything important crops up in the meantime, and that the PCC will be kept abreast of progress and/or developments.

The meeting closed at 21:05.