

Minutes for the meeting of the PCC of Milborne Port Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 7pm in Church House

NE welcomed everyone, especially Catherine Ewart-Smith, who has recently taken on the role of treasurer at Milborne Wick. The meeting opened in prayer led by PE.

Those present – Chair: Nicki Edwards (NE), Harold Clarke (HC), 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), Catherine Ewart-Smith (CE-S), Barbara Tindale (BT), Susan Wales (SW)

Apologies - Elaine Ennis-Bunt (EE-B), June Goodman (JG)

Milborne Wick – AM updated those present on recent events at Milborne Wick. The Carol Service was held outside and proved most successful. A Christmas raffle was held, with two hampers as prizes. Members of the Wick congregation appreciate the 'alternative' nature of the services that are held there. Becky Ayres-Harris will discuss Easter services with AM. The accounts are being prepared, ready for independent verification by the accountant. There followed a discussion about Milborne Wick's 2022 Parish Share. The finances are in a parlous state, with the balance amounting to less than £1000, so consequently AM and CE-S feel daunted by the prospect of paying the amount requested by the Diocese, which is c. £2K. Fundraising events have been held throughout the year, despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic. AM expressed her concern that the Diocese has little comprehension about the issues facing small rural communities such as Milborne Wick. The contribution that the church made to the Parish Share in 2021 was £750, with the remainder being met by St John's PCC. It was agreed that the same contribution would be made this year, with the community meeting their own insurance and utility bills. NE thanked AM, CE-S and the congregation at Milborne Wick, emphasising that there is no intention of undermining the work that they do, and acknowledging that they are doing all they possibly can to stay afloat, and maintaining the church community in that place. AM and CE-S left the meeting at 7.25pm.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 9th November 2021 – the minutes were agreed to be a true record, with no amendments, and signed by NE.

Matters arising from minutes: Wilder Churchyard: SW updated the PCC on a 'site' meeting that was held last week between a group of volunteers and mowers about leaving areas of the churchyard un-mown, as discussed in the previous meeting. NE asked if there were any objections: both GS and MC were concerned about how the area would look, but it was agreed, with these reservations in mind, that part of the two areas to the west of the church would be mown late winter/early spring, and then left until the end of June when it would be mown again in preparation for the fete. The areas would then be left until the end of September. The situation will be kept under review. SW thanked all concerned for their support. The dumping of garden waste: RH had phoned Phil Lock of the Parish Council to report that some black bags of garden waste had been dumped by the SE entrance to the churchyard, near the Church St gate. It is unclear who has done this, but Phil Lock thought it was above and beyond the village ranger's remit to clear it. Food Share: – JH reported that this was going very well, especially in the week before Christmas, when nearly all the food was cleared out. Food donations continue from the Co-op, an organisation in Glastonbury, and the congregation of St John's. A selection of cooked meals is also now available. The project is becoming better known, with more people coming. However, volunteers are always needed, and are in short supply at present.

Finance update – RH presented the Summary of Accounts for 2021 in preparation for approval by the PCC at the next meeting. Martin Freeman will provide the independent check as in previous years. Despite the restrictions imposed on all of us over the last two years, the church finances have remained reasonably stable, and are only around £3300 adrift compared with previous years, pre-pandemic. A most successful Gift Day helped to maintain this position. Exceptional receipts in the form of in memoriam donations and legacies also helped. Donations from the yellow envelopes are down considerably on pre-pandemic figures. Consideration will be given to acquiring a hand-held payment device (Sum Up) to allow people to donate electronically.

RH reported that Sue Bradshaw, who used to be a regular worshipper at St John's, has kindly assessed St John's Cottage for its energy efficiency, and has provided an EPC certificate, necessary for the letting agency.

Parish Share – The notification for this year's payments from B&W DBF had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. These show two options: (Option A), to keep the payment same as 2020; or (Option B) the payment that is considered to be appropriate if the prevailing circumstances were as in a 'normal' year. The Diocese has invited all parishes to prayerfully consider what option they should take. However, RH has concluded that, because St John's is supporting Milborne Wick with its Parish Share; regular giving has not kept pace with the increase in cost of living and that energy costs will be more this year, then Option A is fair. NE proposed that St John's pays Option A, with the understanding that St John's is underwriting the smaller parishes and that each tranche is paid on time. All were in favour.

The Gambling Act: Two appointed people are required to counter-sign the returns which are needed, by law, after each lottery (Prize Draw). It was therefore agreed that Trevor John should be added in place of Ann Johnson, who is no longer on the PCC. The named people will therefore be:

Promoter Robert Hall

Approvers Anne Salkeld

Benjamin Grundy

W Trevor John

Change of Gas & Electricity suppliers: The present fixed term contracts, for both gas and electricity, are soon coming to an end. With the current situation regarding the volatility in the energy markets (our costs will increase – as will usage in the coming year as we are back to regularly worshipping in the building), RH has researched suitable alternatives, and provided some comparison figures. In the light of this, RH has initiated the change of electricity and gas suppliers as follows: **from E-on to Simplest Energy** for both suppliers at the end of the current contracts. Electricity will be ending on 31/1/22, Gas on the 13/5/22. All were in favour. AS queried the feasibility of heat pumps and/or solar panels. Sherborne Abbey are likely to be investing in an air source heat pump, and grants have been sought.

Annual review of fees – After discussion, and on recommendation by RH, the following were agreed: Organist - from £3420 to £3600 p.a; Verger – from £55 to £60 for weddings & funerals; Deputising organist - from £60 to £65; Wedding organist - from £132 to £140; Funeral organist - from £85 to £90; Ringers' wedding fees - from £120 to £150. Fees for the Church Choir will remain the same at £120. Payment for Church heating – from £55 to £60. The 'Sponsor a Date' initiative is designed to help cover the cost of heating for regular services. It was suggested that this should now be increased from £25 to £30 per date. In due course, JH will approach members of the congregation to ask them to take part in this again this year.

NE then offered RH our collective grateful thanks for his hard and meticulous work in keeping the finances up to date and in such good health.

St John's Cottage – Ronnie and June have now completed their move, and the cottage has been spruced/cleaned up ready for letting. Some essential DIY has been carried out, electrical and gas checks completed, the property has been redecorated, the chimney swept, the stair carpet, and the kitchen and toilet flooring, have all been replaced, and c.£3K has been laid out for these improvements. (+ the EPC certificate, minuted above). There has been interest, and there have been viewings.

Fabric update – JH reported that the boiler has now been mended, having replaced the thermistor and pump. The fluorescent tube above the Rood Screen has been replaced; the faulty floodlight unit has been replaced and it is now working; the electric heaters for the Lady Chapel need to be replaced, but there is a shortage of parts from the supplier. SW had contacted the bell hanger following the last meeting and discussed the outstanding work needed in the belfry, but has not heard back from him.

Vacancy – A joint meeting of all the PCC representatives was held on 6/12, in which draft Parish Profile had been approved. The Section 11 meeting is to be held on 25/1. LM reported that she is well on the way to completing the formatting of the document, and that she hopes it should be ready by the 25th. On behalf of everyone, NE conveyed her thanks to LM for all the work that she is doing in producing this important document.

Vicarage - The Diocesan surveyor has found a suitable property locally, although some minor alterations will be required to bring it up to "vicarage" standard. It is hoped that the sale will be completed soon, in order that everyone can be informed of its location.

Electoral Roll – GS advised that there is a new enrolment form, on which there is a section relating to the use of email addresses as a point of contact, under the stipulation of GDPR. Both JH and NE confirmed that there is a distinct dividing line between this, and the Mail Chimp email list which is used to distribute Pew News, where individuals have given their permission for this correspondence to be sent.

Safeguarding – NE reminded those present to be sure to complete the relevant Cof E Safeguarding training: C0 Basic Awareness and C1 Foundations, as soon as possible. NE then advised SW that she should complete the next level of training in her position as Tower Captain.

Health and Safety - Covid regulations are to continue as they are presently. Music in services has gradually increased with more singing, with numbers of verses cut if necessary, and it was decided at the Worship Committee meeting the previous evening, that now all elements of the Mass would now be sung.

AOB – JH updated those present on plans for Lent talks as discussed the previous evening.

GS had previously circulated information regarding a company who produced training modules for PCCs. However, it was decided that it would be sensible to defer anything of this nature until a new Incumbent is appointed.

Cherie Creighton had approached HC, offering the services of her husband to move the bench that is situated alongside the path leading to Church House, and to swap it with the one dedicated to Tom Shead. The Barker family had previously given permission that this can be done, and HC will inform Cherie to proceed.

PE advised that her Licence to Officiate as reader expires in April. She would like to renew it for another year, and all were in favour that Mrs Pat Elliott should renew her license.

New purificators have yet to be purchased.

Date of next meetings, including approval of PCC accounts and APCM

- Section 11 meeting 25th January 2022
- Approval of accounts – 22-3-22
- APCM – 3-4-22 after church
- 17-5-22

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.14pm.