

**Church Council Meeting: Tuesday 17 October 2017: Consolidated reports**

**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Vacancies**

The following vacancies remain unfilled: Two Church Stewards and Justice & Peace Secretary.

**AGENDA ITEM 7**

**Appointment of Sunday (Vestry) Stewards**

It was agreed at the June 2017 meeting that the names of people who had offered to help as Sunday (Vestry) Stewards would be circulated. The Church Council is asked to agree the appointment of the following: Caroline Tough, George Selvarajan, Graham Smith, Jan Kitchin and Leslie Saunders.

**Appointment of Crèche Secretary**

It was agreed at the June 2017 meeting that the appointment of a new Crèche Secretary would be delegated to the minister and church stewards.Kathy Whayman has reconsidered and is now happy to continue to do the rota.

**Appointment to the Babies and Toddlers Group Management Group**

It was agreed at the June 2017 meeting that the appointment to the Babies and Toddlers Group Management Group would be delegated to the minister and church stewards.This group consists of the Minister, a Steward and one other Church Member. It is hoped to have a name by the Church Council.

**Financial Management: Charitable Giving**

In the autumn every two years, the Church Council decides which three charities it will support for two years by personal donations and fund-raising; local, national and international. The congregation as a whole is invited to make suggestions and to provide information in support. These proposals are then circulated to members of the Church Council for a postal ballot on each set of local, national and international suggestions. Those with the highest votes cast are chosen. There has been some discussion about whether charities that do not meet the criteria of being UK-based and do not have a recognised process for the transfer of funds should be supported. There is evidence in the wider church that funds not so managed can fall into the wrong hands or be used for other purposes. It is proposed by the Church Secretary that in order to protect the use of the church's charitable giving this policy should be adopted in relation to all giving. The Church Council is asked to express its view.

**Decisions of the Circuit Meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2017**

The Circuit Leadership Team [CLT] had circulated a paper entitled 'A Vision for the future of the Circuit from the CLT' and asked all church councils in the circuit to consider it prior to the Circuit Meeting being held on 13 September 2017. This required an extra Church Council meeting at Hatfield Road which was held on 30 August 2017.

At that meeting the Church Council considered the paper and made a considerable number of comments which where summarised in the minutes of that meeting. It concluded as follows:

*to date by the Circuit Stewards and asked its representatives to the forthcoming Circuit Meeting to express, on its behalf, the following key points:*

*The Church Council decided to defer further consideration of the two issues raised by the circuit stewards until a comprehensive vision paper could be prepared. This should contain a greater clarity of vision, more detail about the options available, what is affordable, its definition of growth, membership and attendance projections, and the implications if the current staffing levels were reduced.*

*A delay in considering a more comprehensive paper may result in missing the forthcoming 2018 round of stationing but this was considered acceptable in order to achieve the best outcome.*

The Circuit Meeting on 13 September 2017 received revised proposals in light of the feedback from church councils, including Hatfield Road. As a result it agreed:

*- that the original paper of 9 August 2017 should be withdrawn without a vote on either proposal;*

*- to receive all written church council submissions to inform future work, and circulate with the minutes of the meeting and continue to consult churches as new plans were devised;*

*-to focus discussions at the meeting on church feedback that was critical to Item 7 on its agenda (The [re]invitation decisions (Rev Rosemary Fletcher and a successor to Rev Nick Young).*

The Chair of District Rev David Chapman chaired that part of the agenda which related to the reinvitation of Rev Rosemary Fletcher. Due process had been followed by the Circuit Invitation Committee and no objections to their recommendation had been received by the Chair of District.

The Circuit Meeting therefore endorsed the proposal that Rosemary's invitation should be extended for a period of four years from 1 September 2018, and further agreed to seek a replacement for the Rev Nick Young when he retires next Summer.

**Appointment of young and new people to groups arising out of the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Review (Andrew Prout)**

The Church Council in June 2016 agreed that Andrew, with the church stewards, would encourage young people and new members who had recently joined HRMC to consider becoming involved in the additional groups arising from the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. The Church Stewards with Andrew will continue to do this.

**AGENDA ITEM 8**

**Church Stewards Report (Val Parker)**

At the start of July, the Stewards welcomed Lianne Weidmann into the team. At the same time, Paul Duxbury and Freda Gray stood down after five years, and George Selverajan after four. We thank them for the time and effort they have put into carrying out this important role.

As only Lianne came forward as a new Steward, this meant that the team was faced with the challenge of a reduction from six people to four. In order to make this work, we have been trying out a system whereby four people have been recruited as Sunday Assistants to share the work of running our 10:30am Sunday services. This new set-up seems to be working well so far.

However, as Marion Eaton will be standing down from the end of October, we are currently seeking another Steward to take over from her.

**Marlborough Road**

A date is being sought for another joint meeting to take place shortly between the Ministers and Stewards of MRMC and HRMC, to continue exploring ways in which we can work together and support each other in our work and mission to St Albans.

**Other matters**

The Stewards meet with Andrew once every 4-6 weeks to discuss all matters concerning the day-to-day management of the church. They maintain an overview with regard to mission, personnel, policy, finance, special services, pastoral care, youth work, storage, equipment, publicity, social activities and many other areas of church life that need to be dealt with. Anyone is welcome to approach one of the Stewards if they think there is an issue that needs to be addressed by the team.

**Worship (Peter Wallace)**

Worship Consultation is an open meeting held three times a year to reflect on our patterns of worship, recent acts of worship, and to aid future planning by our minister (Revd Andrew Prout ) and Church Stewards, all subject to the agreement of Church Council. We last met 12 September 2017 and are next due to meet 3 January 2018.

Many of the topics we discuss will have been reported as part of the reports from the Minister and Senior Steward.

We continue to review progress made in following-up ‘Five Practices … Passionate Worship’.

**Learning and Caring (General)**

The Pastoral Committee next meets on Tuesday November 7th at 8.00pm. Membership currently stands at 118. The House Groups have begun their study of Symon Hill’s book ‘The Upside Down Bible’. Just under 40 people belong to one of the four House Groups. The Creative Arts Group, Network Fellowship and Girl’s and Boy’s Brigade have all restarted following the Summer break. The Sunday Club staff have met to plan ahead up until Christmas. Around 25 children and young people remain on our books. The Sunday Evening Fellowship meets with 12 young people once a month, six of whom come from Hatfield Road.

**Safeguarding (Joanna Rose)**

The 2017 Methodist Conference has approved the publication of a new Safeguarding Handbook. This incorporates latest good practice and advice, and consolidates previous guidance which had been separately published. Action is now needed by churches to adhere to Safeguarding Policy and guidance, including Risk Assessments, Job Descriptions for Volunteer appointments and so on. A full report will be presented to the next meeting of the church council.

**Service**

**Property & Finance (Rev Andrew Prout / Phillip Eaton)**

*Presentation of Adoption of Final Accounts 2016-2017*

The final accounts for the financial year 2016-2017 are attached and the Church Council is asked to adopt them, subject to independent examination.

*South Windows in Large Hall*: The Church Council in June granted permission to the Property and Finance Committee to proceed, subject to Circuit and District consent, with the replacement of the south windows in the main hall and the window above the porch in the small hall, the work being undertaken by Cleveland Glass. This work is due for completion week commencing 2nd October, 2017.

*External works*: The Church Council in June granted permission to the Property and Finance Committee to proceed, subject to a) Circuit and District consent, b) due professional oversight and c) satisfactory references, with the necessary external works (roofs, guttering, pointing & painting) identified in the Quinquennial Report of 2015, and authorised a budget of £30,000 from General Funds inclusive of professional fees, VAT and a contingency of 10% report, the said work to be carried out by Abbey Roofing who had provided the lowest of three estimates. This work is due to get underway the week commencing 9th October, 2017, under due contract and professional oversight as authorised by the Church Council.

*Large Hall:* The Church Council in June noted that estimates had been obtained for the replacement of the floor and that a local company was being approached to give advice on lighting solutions. Another company is now being approached due to lack of interest and reply. None of these works can be done until first the external works and the replacement of the south windows has been undertaken. Full proposals for the large hall, including lighting, decorating and flooring, will be brought to the Church Council once detail is finalised. Initial estimates seem to suggest we will need to set aside around £30,000 for this work. The Church Council is asked to indicate at this stage how it wishes to secure this funding – From Restricted Funds (Legacies) or through separate fundraising.

*Fire Door (Main Sanctuary):* Estimates are being sought for this replacement of this door in uPVC.

*Main Entrance:* The Property and Finance Committee heard that the PROD Group had obtained the professional guidance agreed at the May Church Council in relation to a Feasibility Study of options to renew the Main Entrance. Options ranged in cost from £10,000 to £65,000. The last area of flat roof will also need addressing at this point and this would cost around a further £15,000.

*Epworth Room:* Work on the Epworth Room is now complete. The room has been cleared of unused items, the unsafe flooring has been replaced, the whole floor re-boarded, redecoration has taken place, new carpet tiles fitted, storage units obtained and installed, a new work surface fitted with improved electrics, filing cabinets replaced, and a secure cabinet for Safeguarding records, with a new church filing system being developed, a new rack to hang the church banners; and finally, the circuit has replaced the copying machines.

*Annual Property Check*

The annual property check is being carried out ahead of the Church Council, and immediately following the Church Council work will begin on completing the annual Property Schedule. Work is being undertaken alongside this by the Property and Finance Committee to complete all our obligations in relation to Fire, Risk, and Health and Safety. A report will be given to the February Church Council.

*Planning Application:* An objection had been raised and duly made to the outline pre-planning application for conversion of current offices and shop fronts into three new residential dwellings, all located in 133-135 Hatfield Road (our neighbour) on the grounds of their being insufficient off road parking. Due reference was also made to the preservation of our boundaries and rights of access, which if development did proceed may need legal clarification.

*Appointment of the Independent Examiner*

It had previously been reported that charities were required to have an independent examination of their financial accounts. The Church Council agreed to delegate the authority to appoint the Independent Examiner to a small group comprising the minister, senior church steward and Church Council secretary jointly, reporting to Church Council members as soon as such an appointment had been made. The previous Independent Examiner provided his services on a *pro bono* basis. If the Church Council could not find a suitable volunteer, it would be necessary to pay for such services in the future. A recent estimate had suggested that the cost could be in the region of £1,000 per annum. The small group was authorised to incur that expenditure should it be necessary.

Mr Michael Saminaden until recently was Chief Executive of Welwyn Hatfield Council, is a qualified accountant, a serving magistrate and in that capacity is known to Chris Kitchin who recommended his appointment. The Church Council is asked to note that Mr Michel Saminaden has been appointed for one year to examine the church accounts for 2016-2017. He is also prepared to undertake the work on a pro bono basis.

**Annual Licence for Christine Nelson Ministries (Rev Andrew Prout)**

A report had been circulated at the May 2017 meeting following a request from the Christine Nelson Ministries for use of part of the church buildings. Under Methodist Church procedure such use of the building by other Christian Groups can only be authorised with the permission of the Church Council, the Superintendent and the Methodist Connexion, subject to an annual licence. It was noted that this was the current arrangement with the Living Waters Church. It had been agreed to defer further consideration of this application until full information was available (including a Safeguarding Policy), and further advice had been obtained from connexional staff. It is hoped to have some clarification by the Church Council.

**Communications (Rev Andrew Prout)**

Following the Methodist Conference in June /July 2017, a call was made to every Church to start the year with a Day of Prayer and fasting, and to encourage every Church Council annually to address and answer the question ‘Do we have a growth plan or an end of life plan’. The timing of the letter made it difficult to make any concrete plans in respect of the former but we remain a Church committed to prayer, and a day of fasting and prayer is something we may take forward at some point in the year. The recent revision of our Mission Statement has demonstrated that we very much believe we have a future and one in which we will pursue growth. The full letter was circulated with the agenda of the last meeting as we considered the Circuit Vision document.

**Perpetual Calendar (Chris Kitchin)**

The Worship Consultation has adopted a Lookahead Planner for Worship; the Social, Events and Outreach Group is planning ahead; the House Groups have a well established pattern of group meetings; and a broad outline for committee meetings is set out in the annually adopted Register of Meetings - but the church as a whole does not have a forward planning calendar which brings all this together. Church business does not always flow naturally through the year and decision-making can be slow. What is proposed is a perpetual calendar that can be used to determine the dates for all church business meetings. This would allow meetings to flow in the right order, allowing sufficient time for papers to be prepared for church council meetings. A perpetual calendar has been drafted which demonstrates that this is possible. It will improve diary management and save time. The Church Council is asked by the Church Secretary to adopt this proposal and implement its use by consulting with Chairs and Secretaries of business meetings and groups.

**125th Anniversary plans, 2019 (Rev Andrew Prout)**

At the June 2017 meeting of the Church Council it was reported that work was ongoing with regard to the 125th Anniversary plans for 2019. The church stewards with Andrew would begin to do some initial thinking about what might be possible to celebrate that anniversary. A report will be given to the Church Council

**Neighbourhood & World Issues (General)**

The Aldersgate Café and Babies and Toddlers Group are both attracting good numbers each week. At the Café we are building a relationship with a local support group for adults with learning difficulties. Twenty elderly local residents continue to be assisted every week by the DayCare Group. The GrowMore Ramblers has restarted following the summer recess. At Morrisons we are hoping to have a new permanent site for the Prayer Board once the current development of the Store is completed.

**Mission Secretaries Action Group (Rev Andrew Prout)**

Rev Andrew Prout will be meeting with Evangeline Selvarajan and Tony Moody to discuss how we can take this forward. It is hoped to bring the group together in November to plan activities and dates for 2018.

**Social, Outreach and Events Group (Jan Kitchin)**

The group meets regularly to plan a range of events for the church family and the community - it is our aim to involve different people in organising and helping. Since June 2017 we have had the Church family Picnic in the Park, Desserts & Delights, Scones in the Sunshine, the JMA barbeque and the International Harvest Supper for Christian Aid. These have been attended by our own members and friends, some new to the church and people from the community with a wide range of ages, and have been enjoyed by all those attending. We appreciate all the hard work that goes into these successful events. In addition to sharing friendship and fellowship, a considerable amount of money has been raised for our church charities and Christian Aid. The group would be pleased to have suggestions for future events from any one with ideas!

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**Agenda item 8**

