



The Parish Church of St George, Jesmond

Parochial Church Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 September 2023

at 7.30 pm in the Choir Vestry, St George's Church

Present: Hilary Cullingford, Joan Grenfell, Mike de la Hunt, Izzy McDonald-Booth (Acting Chair), Ian Ness, Kay Plumley, Mike Ranson (Treasurer), Nigel Russell-Sewell (Secretary), Margaret Vane.

Apologies: The Reverend Ollie Dempsey, Donald Gaze, Lana Liu, Enid Pearson, Sue Vernon, Alex Walker, Janet Wilson.

1. Joan Grenfell opened the meeting with prayer.
2. All were welcomed by Izzy McDonald-Booth who stood in as Acting Chair. The Chair, Professor Janet Wilson, was indisposed and all wished her a speedy recovery.
3. Apologies were noted.
4. **Declaration of Interests**
 - 4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.
5. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 August 2023, approval and review of Action Log**
 - 5.1 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 2 August 2023 [Paper 2309-A] were approved; proposed: Joan Grenfell, seconded: Mike Ranson.
 - 5.2 The final bullet point of minute 7.1 was amended to read:
 - Thank-you letters are sent to donors and pledgers, previously signed by Brian Hurst. The Hub Steering Group is asked to consider if this is deemed sufficient; for example, donors to the organ fund receive certificates.

5.3 The Action log was reviewed:

23-05 (8): The diocese are reviewing a number of policies and it is better to be consistent with them than produce our own. Recommend waiting for diocesan policy to be issued before further consideration.

23-08 (7.2): The Treasurer has removed the old signatories at the bank.

23-08 (11.1): *Songs of Praise* has taken place.

23-08 (14.4): on the Agenda today.

Other items remain on the action log appended to these Minutes. There are no items of concern.

6. Standing item: Safeguarding

6.1 No items from the Safeguarding Officer. Action outstanding re DBS: Sue to send the PCC Secretary the list of training completed and outstanding.

ACTION: PCC Secretary to follow up

7. Standing item: Finance

7.1 The Treasurer reported that an additional £4,000 had been received from the Cookson Foundation towards the upkeep of the building. The PCC is very grateful for this support.

7.2 The Virgin Money account is to be closed due to the low interest rates offered.

7 (a) The Garden of Remembrance

7.3 The whereabouts of the terms and conditions for the endowment fund relating to the Garden of Remembrance are currently not known. The Treasurer has visited Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn. The archive relating to the Garden of Remembrance, No:142/98, should have contained five folders but four were missing. The Archive's records indicate that the files were removed by Sintons in 2016 and have not been returned. The one file that remained contained plans of the Garden dated between July 1965 (EP 142/98/4) and June 1966 along with drawings of the Sculpture (designed by L C Evetts MA ARCA) dated 1968. There was what looked like the final plan, in colour, dated February 1966 which showed the consecrated land, with the land to the west of the path not to be consecrated. There was no indication what was contained in the files removed by Sintons.

7.4 Another file examined (No. 142/64) contained PCC Minutes from 6 April 1965 to 4 March 1969, the period during which the Garden of Remembrance was constructed. There was, however, no reference to either cost or where the money came from, other than that the sculpture was paid for by an anonymous donor. There are references to the Right of Way to the Tennis Ground across the site of the Garden, leading to two

counsel's opinions being obtained. The Tennis Club relinquished the Right of Way for £50 in February 1967.

7.5 On 18 July 1967 the minutes record approval of the revised plans for the GoR by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, with the Faculty proceeding. The minutes of 19 September 1967 say that construction can go ahead as Faculty granted, plans passed, specification drawn up and sent for tenders. In January 1968 there was reference to fixing a date for consecration by the Bishop but no later reference to the actual date.

7.6 The following minutes contain some detail, and copies have been retained:

- 11 June 1968 - Regulations and Charges for the Garden
- 25 June 1968 - The minutes say that the PCC resolved that this ground be vested in the Church Commissioners and solicitors were to be instructed, followed by lengthy discussion about the Sculpture.
- 30 July 1968 - a lengthy minute about the Sculpture. Also recorded that there was to be a Book of Remembrance kept in St Oswald's Chapel and the plan of the Garden showing disposition of ashes would be kept with the Burial Register in the safe.
- 4 February 1969 - the conveyance of the Garden to the Church Commissioners was signed.

7.7 There were no further records of PCC minutes or signed accounts. There is no record of the cost of the Garden; no reference to fundraising for the Garden; or creation of the Endowment Fund. It can only therefore be assumed that this information is in the files retained by Sintons. Recent communication with Sintons suggests they returned the files to the Archive. The Archive are going to make a thorough search to see if the missing folders have been misplaced.

7.8 Barbara Peacock holds a file with further documentation. This does not, however, provide the terms and restrictions on the endowment fund. The Treasurer is going to continue to explore old PCC minutes held in the Church Hall.

ACTION: The Treasurer

7 (b) *The Dexter Legacy*

7.9 The Dexter family have asked if St George's would receive, use, and care for, a cope made for former Vicar, Frank Dexter. The cope was made by Patricia Winskell and has rather fine depictions of St George's campanile alongside the campanile of St Mark's, Venice. The PCC would be delighted to receive this. The cope would be worn at festive services, and it was suggested the new Vicar could be vested in the cope as part of their installation. It was hoped that the cope could be received at a service attended by both members of the Dexter family and Patricia Winskell.

ACTION: Janet to write to the Dexter family

7.10 Frank Dexter's legacy included £2,000 which the PCC would like to place in the restricted Fabric Fund.

ACTION: Janet to write to the Dexter family

8. Standing item: St George's Community Hub 2025

8.1 Kay Plumley noted that responsibility for fundraising had moved from Janet Wilson to Margaret Vane following Janet's appointment as Churchwarden.

8.2 The next fundraising event is the upcoming Heritage Open Weekend.

9. Churchwarden updates

9.1 On behalf of the Churchwardens, the Acting Chair noted thanks to:

- John and Ann Clark for kindly having volunteered to replace the church entrance doormat, following their sterling efforts in cleaning up this section of the church ahead of *Songs of Praise*;
- Derek Nicholson for kindly donating a large screen laptop as part of the live stream reconfiguration following the lightning strike;
- The enhanced cleaning team ahead of *Songs of Praise*;
- The de la Hunts and Donald Gaze for doing much heavy lifting in clearing the vast amount of rubbish which has been gathering in the Middleton Room since Covid.

9.2 All were reminded to respect the efforts made by Ollie to clear out surplus objects from the Baptistery so that it could regain its appropriate atmosphere as a special place within the church.

9.3 A strategy is required to debulk and rationalise our present composting system which is too voluminous for our requirements, attracts food waste and unfortunately is proving a pleasing domicile for rats. This may be an item that falls somewhat between Tuesday group and Buildings and Grounds, and will be kept under review.

9.4 Methodist worshippers may appear for parish coffee ahead of their service at 11 am during their refurbishment, scheduled to run from 10 September to 15 October. Their main coffee will follow their own service and therefore not start till about 12.15 pm. The Jesmond Methodist Church (JMC) clergy team are tremendously grateful for our accommodation of their approximately 50 weekly worshippers. This has led to positive discussions about re-establishing "Jesmond churches together" for congregations. This type of ecumenical support mechanism would be helpful for a new incumbent and build on existing links particularly the music links with United Reformed Church.

9.5 Everyone was encouraged to attend and promote the upcoming Heritage Open Days.

9.6 A question was asked about practicalities of coffee for JMC: where are they storing their consumables etc, what are we doing with furniture?

ACTION: Izzy to follow up with Janet

9.7 A question was asked about the rat infestation. It looks as though the holes have been plugged and rats are no longer able to get into church. Is it ok now to move soft furnishings back?

ACTION: Kay to check with Janet

10. Building and Grounds Committee report

- 10.1 A note had been received from the Building and Grounds Committee regarding the appointment of the Quinquennial Architect. A number of names have been suggested. Any name must be approved by the PCC before going to the Diocesan Advisory Committee. Lucy Burfield will be contacted for a current list of “approved” people. A list from the Diocese of Durham will also be requested. It is important that the *right* person for St George’s is appointed.
- 10.2 There is no urgency in making the appointment as the current Quinquennial report has been well actioned and the next isn’t due until December 2024.
- 10.3 A concern was raised that the Building and Grounds Committee is not represented on the PCC.

ACTION: Janet to explore further with Building and Grounds Committee

11. Biodiversity Project recommendations

- 11.1 Three proposals were presented to the PCC in Paper 2309-B:
1. Approval to create the two wildflower areas identified;
 2. (subject to 1) to provide £500 of PCC funds to clear the ground if the application for a grant of £1,000 from Community Foundation is unsuccessful;
 3. To approve the request to the council to change the mowing schedule of the grass border from end of June to end of July (noting, this is beyond our control should they decline).
- 11.2 Proposal 1: a request was made by Ian Ness to consider the need for a sign as he felt there were too many on the estate. Others felt these were informative in letting people know what was happening. This would be considered. Unanimous approval was given to the proposal to create the wildflower beds.
- 11.3 Proposal 2: Approval was given for an application to the Community Foundation for £1,000. It was noted this is the minimum amount that can be applied for. If unsuccessful, the PCC suggest that volunteers could clear the land rather than spending funds; an opportunity to engage younger members of the community. The cost of seeds and bulbs could then be raised through appeal for donations. Further consideration will be made by the PCC once the outcome of the Community Foundation application is known.

ACTION: Kay Plumley

- 11.4 Proposal 3: unanimously agreed.

ACTION: Kay Plumley

12. A separate confidential minute is recorded for PCC members only

13. Review of draft Parish Statement

13.1 The draft Parish Statement had been circulated before the meeting. Amendments and suggestions were noted. Any further suggestions are asked to be submitted to the PCC Secretary by midday Saturday 9 September.

ACTION: All

13.2 The Secretary will draft the Brochure for review at the October meeting. This is a joint document for the Benefice and relevant information has been received from St Hilda's PCC.

ACTION: PCC Secretary

14. Any other business

14.1 None.

15. Joan Grenfell closed the meeting at 9.40 pm with The Grace.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Tuesday 3 October 2023 – St George's PCC
- Monday 23 October 2023 – Section 11 Meeting with Archdeacon
- Wednesday 8 November 2023 – St George's PCC
- Wednesday 29 November 2023 – Section 12 Meeting with +Newcastle
- Monday 4 December 2023 – St George's PCC

All meetings will begin at 7.30 pm. The Section 11 and 12 meetings (joint with St Hilda's PCC members) have now been confirmed, venue to be advised.

ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	Action	Status
23-07	11.1	Sue Vernon to update PCC Secretary of training records, in confidence	
23-08	5.2	Kay Plumley to make recommendation(s) to the PCC regarding the Net Zero report following consultation with the congregation.	
23-08	7.1	The Chair and Margaret Vane to prepare a hall costs review paper for September.	
23-08	7.1	The Chair to discuss with the Hub Steering Group means to acknowledge donations to the Community Hub.	
23-08	12.1	Alex Walker to speak to Chair about Hospitality Group.	
23-09	6.1	PCC Secretary to follow up 23-7 (11.1) with Sue Vernon	
23-09	7.8	The Treasurer to continue pursuance of the Endowment terms and conditions for the Garden of Remembrance	
23-09	7.9-10	Janet to write to the Dexter family re the cope and legacy	
23-09	9.6	Izzy to check coffee arrangements for JMC with Janet	
23-09	9.7	Kay to check with Janet if soft furnishings can be restored	
23-09	10.3	Janet to discuss PCC representation with Building and Grounds Committee	
23-09	11.3	Kay to make application to Community Foundation	
23-09	11.4	Kay to ask Council to change their mowing schedule	
23-09	13.2	Brochure to be prepared by Secretary for next meeting	

	New action
	Completed
	Not yet completed (up to 4 months)
	Not yet completed (over 4 months)