



# The Parish Church of St George, Jesmond

## Parochial Church Council

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 3 October 2023**

at 7.30 pm in the Winskell Room, St George's Church Hall

**Present:** Hilary Cullingford, Donald Gaze, Joan Grenfell, Mike de la Hunt, Lana Liu, The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren, Ian Ness, Enid Pearson, Kay Plumley, Mike Ranson (Treasurer), Nigel Russell-Sewell (Secretary), Alex Walker, Janet Wilson (Chair).

**Apologies:** The Reverend Ollie Dempsey, Izzy McDonald-Booth, Margaret Vane, Sue Vernon.

1. The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren opened the meeting with prayer.
2. All were welcomed by the Chair, who thanked Izzy McDonald-Booth for chairing the last meeting. A special welcome was offered to The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren, Interim Priest at St George's. The Reverend Ollie Dempsey will not be at PCC during his secondment to St Hilda's and Newcastle University.
3. Apologies were noted.
- 4. Declaration of Interests**
  - 4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.
- 5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2023, approval and review of Action Log**
  - 5.1 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 4 September [Paper 2310-A] were approved with the amendment to 10.3 "a concern was raised that the Building and Grounds Committee is not represented on PCC"; proposed: Kay Plumley, seconded: Joan Grenfell.

5.2 A question was asked about the reasons for pursuing the documentation regarding the Garden of Remembrance. The Treasurer replied that the original terms of the fund are missing and are required to request the Charity Commission to permit use of the endowment fund as a whole. Further details are in the papers circulated prior to the September meeting.

5.3 The Action log was reviewed:

23-07 (11.1): The Safeguarding Officer has informed the Chair and Secretary that the Diocese is moving to a new record-keeping system and all records will be held securely, and in confidence. There is one outstanding PCC member whose record is to be updated and the Safeguarding Officer is following this up.

23-08 (7.1) A proposal has been made.

**ACTION: Secretary to send email to PCC for comment**

A question was raised: are we sure all users are paying what they owe? Treasurer to check with Parish Administrator and that costs do cover increase in bills.

**ACTION: Treasurer**

23-09 (7.9-10) Enid Pearson has written to the Dexter Family and the cope was received on Monday 25 September. It will be worn at the dedication service on 15 October.

23-09 (9.6) Arrangements for JMC coffee have been made.

23-09 (9.7) Soft furnishings have been restored.

23-09 (13.2) The draft Brochure will be circulated for comment in advance of the next meeting.

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.

6.2 The Churchwardens attended safeguarding leadership training and have developed a Safeguarding Plan, which will be shared in due course.

**ACTION: Churchwardens**

**7. Standing item: Finance**

7.1 The Treasurer's report [Paper 2310-B] was received.

7.2 For information: the Catherine Cookson Trust rents out four houses in Gosforth Park with the net income coming to St George's. The monies must be spent on the church

and associated buildings and nothing else, and specifically not on staffing costs or towards Parish Share or other monies to the Diocese. A report at the end of the year should be made to ensure we thank the Trustees and show them how this is spent. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place; however, we cannot budget for this as the money may be withdrawn at any time by the Trustees.

- 7.3 A letter from the Diocese had been received concerning the Parish Share. The Treasurer proposed a response which corrected a number of factual errors in the proposal put forward by the Diocese. The PCC formally approved the letter (proposer: Enid Pearson, seconded Mike de la Hunt). It was reiterated that the PCC would like to offer more than £90,000 but must look after its own house first, replenishing reserves.

**ACTION: Treasurer to send letter to the Diocese**

- 7.4 The Brochure, under preparation, should include a clear statement on stewardship to highlight the importance the PCC places on honouring its commitments to its staff and estate among other things, noting that it pays more proportionally per head of congregation than it has in the past.

**ACTION: Secretary and Treasurer**

- 7.5 The PCC is requested to authorise Parish Administrator to support processing GiftAid claims. All agreed.

**ACTION: Treasurer**

- 7.6 A discussion took place on congregation awareness of the reduction in what we pay as Parish Share. It had been agreed that we wouldn't have a stewardship campaign during the interregnum and it was noted that a new Vicar wouldn't want to hold one in their first six months. However, the Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren offered to run a parish giving review in the spring. It was suggested Lent may be a good time to do this and to go beyond finance to consider our position in the community, city, region and more widely.

**ACTION: Treasurer to make proposal for charitable giving**

- 7.7 A question was raised over the legality of a charity making donations to another from monies given directly to the church in collections. *Post-meeting note: the Secretary has checked the Charity Commission record and it is formally noted that "The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St George, Jesmond...helps make grants to organisations"* (<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5004983/what-who-how-where>).

## **8. Standing item: Buildings and Grounds Group**

- 8.1 Lightning strike: a full claim for £4,577.60 has been accepted by insurers. All IT equipment has now been repaired/replaced accordingly.
- 8.2 Pot holes have been filled in the car park.

- 8.3 A mosaic specialist has viewed damage and a quote for restoration is awaited. The Friends of St George's have offered to pay for this.
- 8.4 Minor electrical work has been undertaken in the church.
- 8.5 The issue with the chancel light has still to be determined. The light fittings are now obsolete so all will need replacing in time. However, for the time being, the cost of refitting the single set affected is to be sought.

**ACTION: Chair to ask B&GG**

- 8.6 Quinquennial recommendations: outstanding items are under review.
- 8.7 Consultants will meet for the first Design Team Meeting on 4 October for the church extension to consider formal tendering.

## **9. Standing item: St George's Community Hub 2025**

- 9.1 The Chair had spoken to local donors and will report back to the next Hub meeting. Margaret Vane suggested a smaller number of larger events in future rather than a large number of small events would be more successful at fundraising.
- 9.2 The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren proposed a fund-raising dinner in the hall for high net-worth individuals with great entertainers and excellent food; making clear the way the Hub will serve the community. It was noted that there is a missing need to sell that we are creating facilities that will help refugees, children and young people, student population: the local community and not the Parish electoral roll. The rationale needs to be clear, and the observation is that currently this is not visible. Activities in the Hub will be run by partner organisations and not the church. A business case is missing at present.

**ACTION: Chair and Kay Plumley to raise with Hub Group**

## **10. Churchwarden updates**

- 10.1 Hall ceiling: there was a minor loss of plaster from the hall ceiling adjacent to one of the skylights (scheduled for replacement when the hall is renovated). An initial risk assessment showed no imminent danger, but noted long-standing plaster cracks. The situation was discussed with the immediately subsequent users who felt relaxed about continuing to use the space, with awareness that if there were any further plaster fall they would be asked to evacuate. So far, the situation has been stable. A subsequent assessment by a plasterer has resulted in a scheduled repair at a cost of £150. Once complete, the Chair will ask Tom Klenka to carry out a risk assessment on the ceiling.

**ACTION: Chair**

- 10.2 Parish Giving Scheme: churchwarden training sessions emphasised the importance of a parish giving scheme review to ensure that we were not over dependent on a small number of very generous donors. Also, to make sure that people who have

joined the church since the last promotion of Parish Giving Scheme were at least aware of it. The PCC decided not to run a Generosity Week campaign this year. Instead, around the time of next year's APCM Caroline Field, Planned Giving Officer, has kindly agreed to a review on the lines proposed on the Diocesan website, which also offers regional benchmarking data. In due course, this review can be the basis of our promotion of regular giving. Wardens shared practice on alerting parishioners and visitors to the thousands spent weekly to keep churches open.

- 10.3 Workshop on Health and Safety run by the church officer of Ecclesiastical insurance company was very informative. We now realise that our Health and Safety Policy has not yet been fully signed off following handover to our current Health and Safety Officer, Tom Klenka. Tom has kindly agreed to review the Ecclesiastical website resources and checklist and then present an updated policy to the PCC for approval.
- 10.4 Church cleaning: This takes place on the Saturday prior to each evensong. The next will be on the 14 October, the day before the Bishop will visit and preach at Choral Evensong. Because there is a wedding at noon the clean must finish by 11 am, so please consider doing a one-off contribution ahead of the Bishop's appearance. The Churchwardens are grateful to the experienced team members including Louise, who previously ran church cleaning for many years, for their expertise and knowledge.

## **11. Parish Statement: approval of final version**

- 11.1 The final text of the Parish Statement had been circulated, with thanks to all who contributed. Following a small amendment, approval was given for this to be sent to the Archdeacon in preparation for the Section 11 meeting. Proposed: Kay Plumley, seconded: Alex Walker.

**ACTION: Secretary**

- 11.2 Out of courtesy, St Hilda's PCC will be sent a copy and in return a copy of their Parish Statement will be requested.

**ACTION: Secretary**

## **12. Any other business**

- 12.1 A question has been raised about Children and Young People leadership: is CYP actively looking for a Family and Youth Leader or is this on hold during the interregnum? It was noted that a process had been followed and concluded that an internal leader should be in place for the time being; increasing involvement of young people in services. The Curate and Interim Priest are looking at this further, with an "all age service" in the coming weeks. It was noted that there may be interest in the Family and Youth Leader role from a number of members of the congregation.

- 12.2 Retention of Duncan HR for consultancy at over £117 per month: it was felt that we should not renew the external HR contract on a ‘retainment’ basis. If we need to in future, we could employ specialist HR services. A question was raised about Committees A and B: this should be part of the PCC Charter.

**ACTION: Chair to write to Duncan HR**

**ACTION: Secretary to check Committees A and B in PCC Charter**

13. The Reverend Canon Clare MacLaren closed the meeting at 9.45 pm with The Grace.

### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

<b>PCC Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline for Agenda items</b>
Wednesday 08 November 2023	Sunday 29 October 2023, midday
Monday 04 December 2023	Sunday 26 November 2023, midday
Tuesday 09 January 2024	Tuesday 02 January 2024, midday
Wednesday 07 February 2024	Sunday 28 January 2024, midday
Monday 04 March 2024	Sunday 25 February 2024, midday
Tuesday 09 April 2024	Sunday 31 March 2024, midday
Sunday 28 April 2024 - ANNUAL MEETINGS (separate notice)	
Monday 13 May 2024	Sunday 05 May 2024, midday

All meetings will begin at 7.30 pm. Venue will be confirmed in the agenda papers.

In addition, the PCC is required to be present on:

- Monday 23 October 2023, 7.30 pm at St Hilda’s for the Section 11 meeting
- Wednesday 29 November 2023, 7.30 pm at St Hilda’s for the Section 12 meeting

### ACTION LOG

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
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	7.8	The Treasurer to continue pursuance of the Endowment terms and conditions for the Garden of Remembrance	Ongoing
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	
23-10	5.3	Secretary to email PCC proposal for hall hire costs	
23-10	5.3	Treasurer to check with Parish Administrator that (a) all users are paying their invoices; and (b) that hire costs cover increase in bills (ie we are not running at a loss).	
23-10	6.2	Churchwardens to share Safeguarding Plan	
23-10	7.3	Treasurer to send letter re Parish Share to Diocese	
23-10	7.4	Secretary and Treasurer to include statement on stewardship in Brochure	No longer needed
23-10	7.5	Treasurer to authorise Parish Administrator to support GiftAid processing	
23-10	7.6	Treasurer to make proposal to PCC for charitable giving	
23-10	8.5	Chair to ask Buildings and Grounds Group to cost replacing the chancel light fitting	
23-10	9.2	Chair and Kay to bring fund-raising dinner to Hub Group	
23-10	10.1	Chair to ask Tom Klenka to carry out risk assessment of hall ceiling	
23-10	11.1	Secretary to send Parish Statement to Archdeacon	
23-10	11.2	Secretary to share Parish Statement with St Hilda's	
23-10	12.2	Chair to write to Duncan HR	
23-10	12.2	Secretary to check PCC Charter re Committees A and B	
New action		Completed	Not yet completed (up to 4 months)
			Not yet completed (over 4 months)