



# The Parish Church of St George, Jesmond

## Parochial Church Council

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 December 2023**

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

Present: Hilary Cullingford, Donald Gaze, Ian Ness, Enid Pearson, Kay Plumley, Mike Ranson (Treasurer), Nigel Russell-Sewell (Secretary), Janet Wilson (Chair).

Apologies: Izzy McDonald-Booth, Joan Grenfell, Mike de la Hunt, The Reverend Canon Clare McLaren, Alex Walker, Sue Vernon.

1. The Chair opened the meeting with prayer.
2. All were welcomed by the Chair.
3. Apologies were noted.

#### **4. Declaration of Interests**

- 4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### **5. Minutes of the last Meeting**

- 5.1 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 8 November were approved. Proposed: Enid Pearson, seconded: Kay Plumley. All approved.
- 5.2 Action 23-08 (5.2) is ongoing. The congregation session is likely to be 25 February, and recommendations will come to PCC in March. It is likely that we will stop using gas and move to an electric heating system, heating people rather than space; at a cost of about £250,000. The right time to fund-raise for this will be determined. The PCC had previously adopted a commitment to be net-zero by 2030. In 2022 St George's pumped out 22 tonnes of carbon. Offsetting currently costs about £30 per tonne; although whether or not this is ethically acceptable or desirable is another matter.

5.3 The Action Log was noted.

## **6. Deanery Plan**

6.1 The PCC agreed by correspondence we should support the following three aims from the Deanery Plan:

- Aim 4: To reach out to children, young people and families through building effective links with toddler groups and schools;
- Aim 5: To provide accessible and effective pastoral care to all who seek it in each of our communities through clear structures and communication and appropriate training; and
- Aim 7: To explore use of buildings by the wider community and for worship.

6.2 The PCC supported all three aims and Kay Plumley will report back to Deanery Synod.

**ACTION: Kay Plumley**

## **7. Standing item: Safeguarding**

7.1 Discussed: examples from Morpeth for posting safeguarding notices. A poster with photographs of who can be approached was preferred for display on the back of toilet doors. The photos should include someone identifiably female and someone identifiably male, and the two contacts should not be related to each other. Ideally there would be four people named, with no more than two people related to each other.

**ACTION: Chair**

## **8. Standing item: Finance**

8.1 Approved: the charitable giving beneficiaries.

8.2 Discussed: the amount given to charities used to be £4,000 per annum. This year we will have given £4,500 as £2,000 was given earlier in the year. Proposed: PCC give £4,000 for 2024. The Treasurer noted that finances are currently stable so it was appropriate to consider the PCC's objectives and restoring the deficit. The amount set for 2024 does not set precedent for the future. Proposed: Ian Ness, seconded Hilary Cullingford; all approved.

**ACTION: Chair to take decision to Charitable Group**

8.3 Received: the Treasurer's Report. Noted: the bill for gas and electricity will be ~£12,000 for the year. £700 was received from *BBC Songs of Praise*. All insurance payments have been received. In addition, the Church Hall income to date is £14,500 and expect the year end to be £18-19,000 with arrears having been paid.

**9. Standing item: Estates Group**

- 9.1 Received: a statement from the Estates Group. Enid Pearson (Churchwarden) agreed to join the group and act as a conduit between the group and PCC for full representation and to avoid miscommunication. Proposed: the Estates Group be thanked for all the work they do on a voluntary basis without a formal remit, and they continue to have full support of the PCC.

**ACTION: Chair**

- 9.2 Acknowledged: the group are working hard, taking considerable time. Noted: the PCC employ an architect who is paid to work hard; the Estates Group are encouraged not to undertake work the architect should be doing such as drawing up plans for the hall, and communicating plans with the congregation. Noted: the architect and the PCC are the two bodies that have full legal responsibility.

- 9.3 Suggested for consideration: the Hub and other building works may warrant employing a Project Manager.

- 9.4 Received: an email from members of the congregation regarding consultation over the state of the hall. We have followed guidance from our fundraiser in approaching external bodies to fund the north-west extension as the first step. Securing monies from medium-sized trusts requires architectural tendering which is now underway. Although the Green Room extension is somewhat ahead of the Hall planning, the PCC has commissioned drawings for the replacement rooflights to meet a planning deadline of February 2024. In response to internal commentary on the original proposed Hall layout, the plans for the hall are currently being revisited and there will be further consultation with users, the congregation and architect. The Chair will respond.

**ACTION: Chair**

- 9.5 When the Estates Group are ready, the revised plans for the hall will be shared with the congregation, suggested between Easter Day and the Annual Meetings, and with the Buildings Conservation Officer at the City Council for listed buildings consent.

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

- 10.1 The Hub team will pursue consultation with users and members of the electoral roll. It has not been possible for Clare McLaren to speak to user groups and item 23-11 (9.8) will be removed from the Action Log.

- 10.2 Proposed: before next APCM there is a joint meeting of the PCC, Hub Steering Committee, Estates Group and the Architect (date to be determined). Questions to be submitted in writing in advance to help set the agenda.

**ACTION: Chair**

- 10.3 Received: Hub meeting notes.

## **11. Organ Project**

- 11.1 Received: meeting notes and project brief. The PCC reaffirmed its commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the organ restoration.
- 11.2 Highlighted: the proposal for the joint organ project with the URC which may likely be more successful with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).
- 11.3 Questions were raised over financial responsibility and governance, noting that St George's PCC is a Registered Charity and governed by the Charity Commission. In particular:
- the feedback from the NLHF about financial responsibility;
  - the significance of the reference to 'a separate trust or bank account';
  - the contents and legal status of any proposed *memorandum of understanding*;
  - how the proposed feasibility study and engagement of a freelancer will be funded;
  - how the funding income and costs are proposed to be apportioned between St. George's and Jesmond URC;
  - the role of the 'treasurer' (Simon Pallet or anyone else) in the context of the overarching arrangements, given that there is already a treasurer for St. George's and, presumably, Jesmond URC;
  - confirmation of financial details (breakdown of suggested finances) by Jill Fenwick; and
  - formal representation of the PCC on the organ fundraising group (suggested: Hilary Cullingford act in this role as she is a member of both).

**ACTIONS: Treasurer and Secretary**

## **12. Churchwarden updates**

- 12.1 Ian Ness and Ian Spencer were thanked for their work on the pendant lighting. Proposed to leave the chancel lighting for the time being due to costs.
- 12.2 Proposed: replacement of audiovisual equipment, screen, projector and connections would be £810. Half has been funded by donations; the remainder was requested from PCC funds. Proposed: Hilary Cullingford, seconded: Kay Plumley. All approved.

**ACTION: Chair**

- 12.3 Received: the advert for Church Times from the Archdeacon's office. PCC agreed that the advert be placed 'until filled'. The advert will be submitted as soon as possible for earliest publication date.

**ACTION: Treasurer**

- 12.4 Received: the revised Health and Safety Policy, noting the removal of the Family and Youth Leader.

**13. Any other business**

13.1 Requested: the PCC contribute towards the cost of cassock and surplice for Reader-in-training, Izzy McDonald-Booth. The PCC unanimously approved funding the full cost of the robes and their gratitude to Izzy for all she does for the parish.

**ACTION: Secretary**

13.2 Reported: two items of petty theft from church: the collection tin for the Poppy Appeal, and the clicker to count attendees at services. All advised to keep watch and not leave anything of value unattended.

14. The meeting closed at 9.45 pm with The Grace.

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b>PCC Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline for Agenda items</b>
Tuesday 09 January 2024	Tuesday 02 January 2024, midday
Wednesday 07 February 2024	Sunday 28 January 2024, midday
<i>Tuesday 12 March 2024</i>	<i>Joint meeting with Hub Steering Group and Estates Group</i>
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.

*Note: The March PCC meeting has been replaced with a joint meeting with the Hub Steering Group and the Estates Group and will be held in **St Hilda's Church**.*

## ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	Action	Status	
23-08	5.2	Kay Plumley to make recommendation(s) to the PCC regarding the Net Zero report following consultation with the congregation.	Ongoing	
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		
23-10	7.5	Treasurer to authorise Parish Administrator to support GiftAid processing		
23-10	9.2	Chair to bring fund-raising dinner to Hub Group		
23-11	6.2	Churchwardens and Safeguarding Officer to bring Safeguarding Action Plan to next meeting		
23-11	9.7	Chair to arrange joint meeting of the Hub and PCC to review Hall plans		
23-11	11.4	Ian Ness to provide quotes for lectern steps		
23-12	6.2	Kay Plumley to report aims to Deanery Synod		
23-12	7.1	Chair to speak to Safeguarding Officer about signage		
23-12	8.2	Chair to inform Charitable Giving group of £4,000 for 2024		
23-12	9.1	Chair to write to Estates Group		
23-12	9.4	Chair to respond to congregation email		
23-12	10.2	Chair to arrange date for joint meeting		
23-12	11.3	Treasurer and Secretary to write to the Director of Music		
23-12	12.2	Chair to claim funds for audiovisual equipment		
23-12	12.3	Treasurer to place advert with Church Times		
23-12	13.1	Secretary to write to IMB		
New action		Completed	Not yet completed (up to 4 months)	Not yet completed (over 4 months)