



# The Parish Church of St George, Jesmond

## Parochial Church Council

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 January 2024**

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

**Present:** Hilary Cullingford, Joan Grenfell, The Reverend Canon Clare McLaren, Ian Ness, Enid Pearson (Acting Chair), Kay Plumley, Mike Ranson (Treasurer), Nigel Russell-Sewell (Secretary), Margaret Vane.

**Apologies:** Mike de la Hunt, Donald Gaze, Lana Liu, Izzy McDonald-Booth, Sue Vernon, Alex Walker, Janet Wilson.

1. The Reverend Canon Clare McLaren opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Enid Pearson (Churchwarden) was invited to chair the meeting, who then welcomed all.
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 4 December were approved. Proposed: Kay Plumley, seconded: Ian Ness. All approved.
  - 5.2 The Action Log was noted.

## **6. Discussion: “Getting out of fossil fuels in our church”**

- 6.1 Received: a presentation by the Eco Group. A top-line presentation will be made to the congregation for comment on 25 February. A formal recommendation will come to PCC following this, most likely in May.
- 6.2 A question was raised regarding cost against savings: an 85-year payback period that doesn't make financial sense. This may make fundraising from the congregation difficult. Response: the proposal would save money. The proposal does include some 'nice-to-haves' which could be stripped out without impacting the technology installed.
- 6.3 Noted: off-setting CO<sub>2</sub> may be an option against payback. We are asking for funds on other fronts: the organ and the Hub. The LED lights and draught excluders could be funded by the PCC without further fundraising. The Treasurer confirmed that general funds can be used for these items. Response: off-setting has been discussed by PCC before. We could use a reputable carbon off-setting scheme at any time, spending £900 now to off-set the 30 tonnes from our site. The Eco Group is not recommending this option as this passes off elsewhere; and are we convinced that off-setting works? Fundraising timing will be part of the consultation; noting that the grant-funding bodies will be different to those we would apply to for the organ or the hub so there would be no competition.
- 6.4 Noted: members of the congregation are anxious about the hall and other aspects that have yet to be completed before we start on another piece of fundraising.
- 6.5 A question was raised about the impact of cold air on performers in the choir and concerts; also the size of the building. This will be followed up.
- 6.6 The congregation will be notified of the presentation on 25 February in the notice sheet.

**ACTIONS: Kay Plumley**

## **7. Lectern steps update**

- 7.1 Presented: a revised plan with black metal handrails and three steps. The handrail will be on both sides enabling people to either turn around or to step down backwards. The lectern will remain in its current position. Quotation: £3,800 plus VAT (£4,560 total). Oak handrails would add ~£1,000 to the cost. Suggested: funding could be provided by Mrs Biles' legacy.
- 7.2 The PCC was asked to approve the design and Ian Ness would then submit the plans to DAC. The plan will be sent to the Secretary and comments requested by 25 January from PCC members with preferences for metal or oak handrails. The plan will also be displayed in the hall for the congregation to view.

**ACTION: Ian Ness & Secretary**

## **8. Standing item: Safeguarding**

- 8.1 Reported: Dr Graham Rutt has kindly agreed to be a 'contact face' for the safeguarding posters to be displayed within toilets, along with Sue Vernon. Other contacts will be added in due course. Sue Vernon is preparing the posters.

**ACTION: Sue Vernon**

- 8.2 There were no further safeguarding matters to report.

## **9. Standing item: Finance**

- 9.1 Received: the Treasurer's report to December 2023. Reported: 2023 was a better year than expected, although the cost of utilities is high and will continue to be. Income from the hall had also improved and is close to break-even. The income from the associated buildings is £24,000 through rentals; and we have benefitted from the vacant vicarage. The overall year-end position will be either a small deficit or small surplus.

- 9.2 Reported: the latest instalment from the Catherine Cookson Trust has not been received; no further funding has been received since summer 2023. The Acting Chair to make enquiries.

**ACTION: Enid Pearson**

- 9.3 The Treasurer raised a concern about the Friday Singing Group which has not had income recently but has expenditure. Joan Grenfell will make enquiries.

**ACTION: Joan Grenfell**

- 9.4 Question: planned giving and donations has been considerably lower than budget. Noted: these aren't year-end accounts and there may be donations collected towards the end of December and early January that belong in 2023 accounts along with the Christmas collections. Some donations have been paid in January relating to 2023 and these may be accrued. £5,000 attributable to administrative costs under 'other expenses' is being explored and should be clarified in the final year-end accounts.

- 9.5 Noted: the schedule of payments to PCC members; this will need to be shown in the published accounts.

- 9.6 Discussed: whether or not a stewardship campaign should be held in the near future. Agreed that this would be raised at the AGM when the accounts are presented. The Reverend Canon Clare McLaren to inform the congregation the reasons why the collection plate is not circulated: so as not to embarrass some and others use the card machine; the plate may be presented. She will discuss this further with the Churchwardens.

**ACTION: Churchwardens**

- 9.7 Reported: organ restoration fund. The Treasurer has been in touch with the Director of Music following the last PCC. Concerns were raised around the setting up of a new Trust and appointment of a treasurer, along with the partnership with the URC. The

Reverend Canon Clare McLaren reported from the recent meeting that the Steering Group need to legally establish themselves. Recommended that the funds are held within St George's. The Treasurer will meet with the Director of Music in the near future. Questions remain about the restricted funds already given for the sole use towards the restoration of the organ at St George's. A memorandum of understanding is under preparation by the Steering Group.

**ACTION: Treasurer**

9.8 Minutes of Steering Group to be circulated by the Secretary.

**ACTION: Secretary**

**10. Standing item: Estates Group**

10.1 Nothing to report at this meeting.

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

11.1 Noted: a *Burns Night celebration* will be held on 20 January; details to follow in weekly notices. A meeting with the congregation will be held in the morning on Saturday 20 April to update on plans.

**12. Churchwarden updates**

12.1 Reported: the ministry team will use a book on the Psalms by John Bell as the basis for Sunday sermons. Two groups will meet each week throughout Lent: one in the daytime in person, the other online in the evening. Other churches in Jesmond have been invited.

12.2 Holy Week will follow the same pattern as last year. There will be a party on Easter Day to say farewell to The Reverend Canon Clare McLaren.

12.3 Noted: St George's Choir have been invited to sing Choral Eucharist at Durham Cathedral on Monday 8 April.

12.4 Received: Parish Inspection report. This is carried out every three years. The inventory needs updating to include the Dexter Cope and new votive candle stand. We are required to keep a record of children who take communion who have not been baptized. Electronic data needs coordination.

**ACTION: Enid Pearson**

**13. Any other business**

13.1 Reported: dates have been agreed for the *Big Friendly Gathering* (to be held every other year, next in 2025) and *Summer Fête* (Saturday 4 May).

- 13.2 Reported: the Pantomime will be held on 9-10 February. Noted the next PCC is a rehearsal date which may impact meeting attendance.
- 13.3 Noted: the photocopier is having issues. The Parish Administrator is meeting with the manufacturer; there is only 9 months left on the contract.
- 13.4 Reported: Enid Pearson will not stand for election as Churchwarden at the AGM. Any names or suggestions are welcome to the Churchwardens.
14. The meeting closed at 9.15 pm with The Grace.

### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

<b>PCC Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline for Agenda items</b>
Wednesday 07 February 2024	Sunday 28 January 2024, midday
<i>Tuesday 12 March 2024</i>	<i>Joint meeting with Hub Steering Group and Buildings and Grounds 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 Buildings and Grounds Group and will be held in **St Hilda's Church**.*

16. **Dates to note**

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|-----------------|---|
| 20 January 2024 | Burns Night                                   |
| 31 March 2024   | Easter Sunday, farewell party for Canon Clare |
| 4 May 2024      | Summer Fête                                   |

## 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	
23-11	11.4	Ian Ness to provide quotes for lectern steps	
23-12	6.2	Kay Plumley to report aims to Deanery Synod	
24-01	6.6	Kay Plumley to invite congregation to 25 February meeting	
24-01	7.2	Ian Ness to submit plans for lectern steps to DAC	
24-01	8.1	Sue Vernon to prepare safeguarding poster	
24-01	9.2	Enid Pearson to make enquiries to Catherine Cookson Trust	
24-01	9.3	Joan Grenfell to make enquiries to Friday Singing Group	
24-01	9.6	Churchwardens to consider how collection plate is used	
24-01	9.7	Treasurer to meet Director of Music regarding organ	
24-01	9.8	Secretary to circulate organ fund Steering Group minutes	
24-01	12.4	Enid Pearson to fulfil requirements of Parish Inspection	
New action		Completed	Not yet completed (up to 4 months)
			Not yet completed (over 4 months)