

THE PARISH OF ST GEORGE, BENENDEN

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting on Monday 24th July 2023 at 7.30 in the Memorial Hall

Present: In the chair Revd. D. Commander

Revd. Y. Blid -Mackenzie, Mrs. S. Fisher, Mr. D. Collard, Mr. D. Barnes, Mrs. J. Collard, Mrs. J. Davies, Mr. D. Harmsworth, Ms. C. Presgrave, Mrs. Sally-Ann Marks, Ms. H. Strouts, Mr. R. Stubbings and Mr. C. Trollope.

1. Apologies for absence. There were none.

Revd. David Commander commenced the meeting with a reading from Psalms 127/128 followed by prayers.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 22nd May 2023

On P2 under Churchyard Wildlife Boards the person dealing with this should be Mr. David Harmsworth. Otherwise, the meeting agreed the minutes were correct and were signed.

3. Matters Arising

Fire Extinguishers

This has not been progressed yet. Mr. Charles Trollope will look into it further

Tower Top Door

Mr. David Barnes reported he has found someone to strengthen the door and the weak step in the clock room up to the clock.

Non-return valve in kitchen area

Mr. David Collard will contact Mr. Chris Leech again.

Deanery Synod

Revd. David Commander reported he has found someone willing to be secretary to the Deanery Synod – our PCC Secretary. He also reported a priest has accepted the Cranbrook vacancy but they are awaiting Bishop Rose's formal agreement. It is expected this person will be in place at Cranbrook by the end of October.

Church ceiling

The repairs following the fall of plaster have now been completed satisfactorily.

Roof Alarm

The alarm is in place and activated.

Heating

Mr. Marshall has now rebuilt our heating system (heat exchanger) and recommissioned the heating which will now work when the winter arrives.

Lay Worship Leading Course

Mrs. Victoria Bray has now completed this course and undertook her first talk at the recent Connect Four meeting.

Deepening Discipleship Course

Mrs. C. Presgrave has now completed this course which she found interesting and enjoyable.

4. Ministry Report

Revd. David Commander had previously circulated his report but talked us through specific items:-

Confirmation

Mrs Vicki Young helped him with the confirmation course for five youngsters who were confirmed at Marden recently. There have already been enquiries about further confirmations next year.

Connect Four

They held their recent service in St. George's Church rather than the Rectory garden due to bad weather with 24 attending.

Vicki Young's training.

She enters her final year of training now. She lives in the Diocese of Chichester (just over the boarder) so arranging training is more difficult.

Deanery

As Area Dean Revd. David Commander is finding it difficult to make a date for a Chapter meeting that all clergy can attend.

Church Fete

This was well attended again this year. The PCC gave a vote of thanks to Athena Cripps and all the fete committee and helpers. The Secretary will contact Anthea in this regard. Revd. David Commander suggested it we find other church members to serve on the fete committee. He will put a note in the August magazine. Mrs. Cathy Presgrave thought she might be interested.

Summer Teas

Tea/coffee and cake has been available at the church on Sunday afternoons this month, into August. This venture has been really good and is proving popular with locals as well as visitors. Although it is not a profit making venture, £50 has been raised so far.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's quarterly report as at 30th June 2023 had been circulated and the Treasurer is pleased it is on plan. He then answered a few comments. The church fete proceeds had come in above expectation at £13,849. £293 on the choir line should have been on the organ and piano line as it is for the church music licence. It was suggested as we no longer have a choir master these two lines be amalgamated in future reports.

Our Treasurer has been informed there will be a residual legacy coming from the estate of Barbara Sheffield in due course. He also understands there may be some money coming from the estate of Mr. C. Lenox-Conyngham but has no firm details yet.

6. Fabric Reports

Church path near pond

Mr. David Harmsworth has arranged for Mr. David Sarton to look at this portion of the path through the graveyard and give his suggestions to combat the mud problem each winter.

New Church Path to Glebe

a We have received an estimate from Tompsett's to finish the sides of this new path through the churchyard. The committee did not like the use of Roundup which will be declined, but otherwise agreed with their estimate. Mr. David Barnes proposed, therefore, the works be carried out at a cost of £3,156 including VAT, seconded by Mr. David Collard. Voting was as follows:- 9 Yes, 2 No, 2 Abstaining. The proposal was therefore carried.

- b Tompsett's have also quoted £564.00 including VAT for levelling the surface of the high spots in the path. Mr. David Barnes therefore proposed this estimate is accepted, seconded by Mr. David Collard. Voting was as follows: 9 Yes, 3 Against, 1 Abstaining. The proposal was therefore carried.

Clock

The Parish Council have now paid their share of an earlier bill for work on the clock. It is understood the Clock Committee are chasing Cumbria Clock Co. for an estimate to overhaul the church clock. Caroline Levett the Clerk to Benenden Parish Council informs us Mr. Guy Hagan has been nominated the Parish Council's representative on the Clock Committee and he is being kept informed.

Tower Movement

Mr. Richard Stubbings has submitted a report on the appearance of cracks in the building fabric beside the tower following concerns from parishioners. Our architect has been informed but he is not worried about the cracks. Nevertheless, this report is considered as a first monitor which will be followed up.

7. Welcome to Associate Priest

Revd. Y. Blid-Mackenzie has now completed her curacy. We are all delighted to welcome her as our Associate Priest (part time, 20 hours per week). To us all this is the best solution for everyone now she has finished her curacy. The whole parish celebrated with the Licencing service attended by the Ven. Andrew Sewell, Archdeacon of Maidstone.

8. "How Village Churches Thrive". Chp 3 – Using Buildings Creatively

This chapter is about how to use our buildings and we were heartened to read that we are doing quite well by reorganising our church.

9. Project 20/20 Update

Senior Project Manager

From a short list of three Peter Brook was chosen to be the Senior Project Manager, Community Liaison & Fundraising for the 20/20 Project subject to approval by the PCC. Mr. Peter Brook has been known to Revd. David Commander for ten years, his wife works at the primary school and they are Christians living in Cranbrook. It is proposed to offer Mr. Peter Brook a consultancy arrangement to a maximum of 10 working days per month starting on 1st September, 2023. The initial term will be for 6 months at which point the terms of the arrangement should be reviewed. Peter will only bill us for days actually worked, so the maximum liability will be £12,000 plus expenses which are not anticipated to be material. Peter has kindly agreed to invest his own time in a series of induction meetings with members of the 20:20 Project Group in August. Mr. Richard Stubbings proposed we confirm the above offer to Mr. Brook, seconded by Rev. David Commander and approved by 12 members with one abstention.

Lighting Scheme

Members of the Project met with CES Lighting recently view their presentation on what they can do with our church lighting. This illustrated report had previously been circulated to all PCC members. It was suggested the new bulbs should have a life of 10 to 12 years. Mr. Richard Stubbings asked the PCC to endorse the recommendations of the 20/20 steering group that the lighting scheme to be developed by CES should proceed and include:

A flexible system of LED lighting
Ambient lighting by arcade pendants designed by a local artist
Service/activity leading lighting highlights
Feature lighting
Sensor lighting

This was seconded by Revd. David Commander. The voting was Yes 11, 1 against, 1 abstention.

Meetings

Mr. Richard Stubbings asked for a PCC meeting dedicated to the 20/20 Project to be held in the church on 23rd October 2023 which the meeting agreed to. The PCC meeting on 25th September was then changed to 2nd October. Because of Holy Week next year and Sandhurst's PCC meeting date, our PCC meeting on 25th March 2024 was changed to 11th March 2024. The Secretary will alter our dates for the Memorial Hall.

Second 20/20 Newsletter

This has now been sent out to interested parties to keep them up to date.

10. Primary School

The Primary School's End of Year service in St. George's Church was extremely well attended. Each Year 6 child received a copy of the Good News Bible courtesy of the Gibbon & Buckland Trust and a special sweatshirt from the Primary School.

11. Learning & Sharing the Faith

This committee met on 19th July and the minutes were circulated to the PCC. It was noted Rev. David Commander would like to resume Sunday School this coming September.

12. Mission Allocation

The next meeting will be on 16th August and will be reported at the next PCC meeting.

13. Deanery

There has been no Deanery meeting recently but Revd. David Commander reported he has found a replacement secretary for Deanery – Mrs. Julia Collard. For this she had to be co-opt to Deanery as our representative, nominated by Mr. David Harmsworth and seconded by Revd. David Commander and elected by 11 members of the committee.

14. Safeguarding

Revd. David Commander reported Mr. Ian Malaugh is looking at the renewal of DBS and training. He will let people know what they need to do. Revd. Ylva Blid-Mackenzie and Revd. David Commander are completing a second session on a leadership safeguarding module. They recommend everyone should complete a safeguarding training update. Mr. Rod Lebon and Mrs. Karen Lebon have completed safeguarding courses in relation to their positions with the bellringers.

15. Correspondence

The Secretary has received an email from Mr. Rod Lebon regarding the bellringing chamber. He highlighted the deteriorating state of the walls in that chamber and asked that they be repainted. Mr. Richard Stubbings confirmed that this is due to be done as part of the 20/20 refurbishment so it is in hand. The Secretary will inform Mr. Lebon

16. Confidentiality of Proceedings

There was one item.

17. Any Other Business

Lady Chapel

The hinge on the flap on the altar rail in the Lady Chapel has completely broken. This appears to be an old brass hinge. It was suggested Mr. David Barnes contacts Mr. Rod Lebon to see if he is able to mend it.

Newcomers Lunch/Evening

Mrs. Sally-Ann Marks is not able to run this this autumn and asked it be postponed to next year, to which the meeting agreed. Names and addresses of newcomers to Benenden should be sent to Mrs. Julia Collard for use later.

Harvest Lunch

The Harvest Lunch will be on 1st October this year. The Worship Group are to discuss/arrange it when they meet next.

Loose tiles in middle aisle

David Barnes will ensure the loose tiles are rebedded.

18. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday 2nd October 2023 in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.34 pm.

Signed Dated