

THE PARISH OF ST GEORGE, BENENDEN

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting on Monday 27th November 2023 at 7.30 in St. George's Church

Present: In the chair Revd. D. Commander

Revd. Y. Blid Mackenzie, Mrs. S. Fisher, Mr. D. Collard, Mrs. J. Collard, Mr. D. Barnes, Mr. D. Harmsworth, Ms. C. Presgrave, Ms. Hazel Strouts and Mr. C. Trollope.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. J. Davies, Mrs. S-A Marks and Mr. R. Stubbings.

Revd. David Commander commenced the meeting with a reading from Luke Chap. 21 followed by prayer.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 2nd October 2023

The minutes of 2nd October 2023 were approved and signed as a true copy.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 23rd October 2023

The minutes of 23rd October 2023 were approved and signed as a true copy.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 2nd October 2023

Fire Extinguishers

These were serviced today.

Heating

We are waiting for a non-return valve to be put on the oil line to ensure the heating does not keep cutting out.

Caring for God's Acre – the churchyard

Revd. David Commander has not yet had the opportunity to discuss ideas for the future of the churchyard.

PTFA use of church for one evening

Revd, David Commander reported this has not gone ahead.

Sidesmen Training

The second training session was on 11th November.

Fire Risk Assessment

Mr. David Collard reported he is still drawing this report up.

5. Matters Arising from Minutes of 23rd October 2023

Unfortunately Mr. Richard Stubbings could not attend but the following were reported:-

Trial Pits

It is known that a faculty has been issued for digging the trial pits. No start date has been advised yet and it seems likely this will not happen before the New Year.

Next 20/20 Meeting

This will be next Wednesday, 29th November

Marriage Order

Sandhurst PCC have now agreed to this order (to allow Banns to be read and marriages to be solemnised in any church in the benefice). Revd. David Commander will now send the paperwork to the Diocese for processing.

6. Minutes of Standing Committee dated 2nd November 2024

The minutes of Standing Committee dated 2nd November 2024 were approved and signed as a true copy.

7. Matters Arising from Standing Committee dated 2nd November 2024

Two new church computers have been ordered and are expected to be installed within the next two weeks, starting with the Rectory.

8. Ministry Report

There was no report this time.

9. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer had previously circulated the third quarter's figures which are on target for the year. He had nothing to highlight.

Sumup.

The cost of the new machine has been put in the office expenses line. It was requested the sum of £3 is added to the new Sumup screen in church. Now we are no longer using the collection bags a note will be put on all pew sheets explaining the Sumup machine or collection plate should be used at services.

Parish Share

There has been a 7% increase in the parish share to £55,120.91 this year. The Treasurer will pay it in two halves as the previous discount if it is paid in full is no longer available.

Fees increases

Sandhurst PCC have voted to increase the Parish Administrator's salary by 8%. Mr. Charles Trollope proposed our PCC similarly increases her salary by 8%, seconded by Revd. David Commander and agreed by the committee.

Occasional fees

The fees for our occasional services was reviewed:-

| | Previous | New |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Organist | £85 | £100 |
| Verger | £50 | £50 |
| Choir | £80 | £100 |
| Bellringers | £200 | £200 |
| Heating | £40/£75 | £50 |

Sunday Organist

The fee for the Sunday organist will increase from £46 to £50.

Revd. David Commander proposed the above increases are made. This was unanimously agreed by the whole PCC.

Legacy

The Treasurer reported we have received a legacy of £100,000 from the late Barbara Sheffield's estate. This is an unrestricted legacy and has been put on the legacy fund. It is understood once the estate is wound up we will be receiving more funds. The Treasurer has replied by email but will write to the executors with our thanks once the estate is wound up.

10. Fabric Reports

Roof Alarm

The new roof alarm was recently serviced but has been causing problems (false alarms) since it was serviced. A different operative called today and found the wireless connection was unsatisfactory and considered the original survey was not done well. He is expected to call again.

Loose tiles on roof

There are loose tiles on the roof at the east end on the north side. Mr. David Barnes has obtained a quotation from Parker & Sons for £1,680 + VAT which includes scaffolding. He wondered if the tiles could be reached from the roof to avoid scaffolding. He will have another look on Friday.

New Path to Glebe

We have had an email from a parishioner complaining the new path has covered up ancient stones and suggesting the stones could be dug up. As the PCC thinks the new path is now just right no action will be taken. Instead a note will be put in the church records indicating the stones are there. Mr. David Barnes is to write to the parishioner.

Path near pond

The matter of upgrading this path is to be looked again when the weather really turns wet, perhaps January/February.

Clock

Nick Eastwood got the clock going again although it is not striking correctly now. There is a quotation of £16,000 to repair it. We would like it repaired but need the agreement of the Parish Council as they are responsible for half the cost. Mr. Charles Trollope will see Mr. Guy Hagan who is the Parish Council's representative on the Clock Committee.

Smell of Burning

Last Thursday the community choir smelt burning in the church whilst rehearsing. Then on Sunday it happened again in the 10 am service. The next day Revd. David Commander tried all the electric fans, pew heaters, oil heating in isolation but there was no smell. The lighting and the organ blower were also tested. Our architect even came to give his opinion. If the smell is reported again, then Canelec Marshall's will be invited in to carry out safety checks on the electrical system and heating system respectively. However, the whole situation has caused us to consider our emergency protocol in case of fire. The church architect is happy we are showing due diligence in handling this.

Ant Hills in the churchyard

The Friends of St. George have indicated they are willing to pay someone to remove the ant hills in the churchyard. We believe these ant hills are fairly recent and they pose great problems for the working parties when cutting down and clearing the churchyard every autumn. Mr. Dick Hill and the churchyard committee will be consulted.

11. “How Village Churches Thrive”, Chap 5 – Discussion

This was deferred to the next PCC meeting.

12. Project 20/20 update

As neither Mr. Richard Stubbings or Mr. Peter Brook was present no update was forthcoming. However it was suggested possible dates for the test pits is slipping, looking more like early 2024. There is a 20/20 meeting next Wednesday when this will be discussed.

13. Primary School

The Primary School are holding a Christmas Fayre on 8th December from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm to raise funds for the PTFA.

14, Deanery Report

The Deanery Synod draft report of 22nd November had been circulated. The Diocesan Roadshow was hosted at Cranbrook recently with 65 people there. The Bishop of Dover spoke and there were three discussion groups. The next week Cranbrook welcomed Revd. Richard King as their minister so the Synod clergy are now back to full strength.

15. Safeguarding

Revd. Ylva Blid Mackenzie and Revd. David Commander have recently completed their Safeguarding updates. Revd. David Commander has applied for his DBS renewal. Some church officials have received by email a questionnaire about the bellringers/tower which will be completed in due course.

16. Correspondence

Following the recent funeral of Mrs Susan Bridges a request has been for a bench to be placed in the newest part of the churchyard. There is no bench there at the moment. The PCC thought this is a good idea and asked that the family submit suggestions as to what they would like to provide. Revd. David Commander will ask the Archdeacon if we need any permissions.

17. Confidentiality of proceedings – There were none.

18. Any Other Business

Electoral Roll

Mr. Guy Hagan has recently applied to go on the Electoral Roll. The application was accepted by the PCC.

Church Website

This is being updated and will have a fresh look shortly.

Benenden Magazine

It was pointed out a new representative from the PCC is needed to replace Martin Pexton on the Editorial Board. Ms. Cathy Presgrave agreed to take his place. Mr. Charles Trollope commented next month's issue is the 100th issue in the new format.

19. Date and time of next meeting

The next PCC meeting will be on Monday 22nd January 2024 in the Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed Dated