

St Chad's Church Ladybarn, Diocese of Manchester

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on 5 November 2013.

Present:

John Milner (Chair), Leslie Bell, Judy Fletcher (Churchwarden), Leslie Fletcher (Secretary), Margaret Harrop, Jean Matthews, Peter Matthews, Robert Nicholls (Deanery Synod Representative), Jean Nixon (Deanery Synod Representative), Trena Radcliffe, Diane Wynn (Churchwarden).

1. **Opening prayers** were led by John Milner.
Order of items It was agreed that Item 11: *Nave Altar Experiment* would be taken before Item 10 and that items 10 and 12: *Mission and Ministry* and *Advent Sunday* would be taken together after that.
2. **Apologies for absence** There were no apologies for absence
3. **Minutes of meeting on 1 October 2013** Judy Fletcher had led the prayers and the Christmas event on Saturday 7 December starts at 12.30pm, not John Milner and 1.00pm as in the draft minutes. With those changes and correction of a few typos, the minutes of this meeting were accepted as correct record. It was also agreed that, in view of the importance of Item 6: *Submission to the Deanery Pastoral Committee* the supporting papers should be included in the Minute Book and a note to that effect be included in the minutes of the meeting.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes not mentioned below**
Judy Fletcher would report on the meeting of the Deanery Pastoral Committee on 15 October which she and Robert Nicholls had attended under Item 7 below.
5. **Finance**
The Treasurer's report was received with thanks. It was proposed by John Milner, seconded by Leslie Bell and passed unanimously that a payment of £1,907 be made toward the Parish Share.
6. **Fund raising and progress report on Christmas event**
Peter Matthews reported that 200 items have been given so far for the "Massive Tombola", the raffle &c. but more are needed; he will continue the team's vigorous campaign to ensure a continued flow of these gifts and maintain the momentum of the preparations. The Ladies' Group gave £100 from the proceeds of their bric-a-brac sale to fund other stalls. Local shops would be approached in the next few days with a request for their support.
7. **Wardens' Report**
Judy Fletcher spoke briefly to the Wardens' Report which had been circulated. She emphasised the positive comments from the Archdeacon and Area Dean about the content of the St Chad's submission to the Deanery Pastoral Committee and the process which lay behind it. Responding to a question, she said that repairs needed to the floor of the Clergy Vestry would be looked at the near future. Patterns for new Kneelers were being acquired in preparation for the First World War Centenary commemoration.
8. **Reports from subcommittees**
Leslie Fletcher spoke briefly about the report from the Hall Lettings Sub-committee. Discussion of the possibility of accepting more bookings for birthday parties was deferred to another occasion.
Robert Nicholls reported that the Organ Restoration Sub-committee had met in preparation for a further round of applications to grant-awarding bodies and that he was now the chair of the Subcommittee. He proposed*, seconded by Jean Nixon,

that the committee be permitted to apply for funds, followed by submission of a faculty for the restoration in collaboration with the Priest-in-charge. This was passed unanimously. (**This took place during the adjourned meeting under Item 15 but it convenient to minute it here.**)

9. **Report from Deanery Synod Representatives** None: the Synod has not met

10. Mission and Ministry – next steps following the Deanery Pastoral Committee meeting and implications of Alison Peacock's presentation

This item was taken in conjunction with Item 12

11. Nave altar experiment – next steps following the congregational meeting

John Milner introduced his paper by reminding the PCC of their responsibilities and powers. He is particularly concerned at the congregation's apparent lack of trust in the capacity of the PCC to demonstrate confidence and leadership. The outcome of the nave altar experiment must not be seen as a foregone conclusion. The PCC should take collective responsibility for this outcome to demonstrate that the concerns expressed by some in the congregation and not being ridden over rough-shod.

He said that everyone involved was already aware of some snags with the use of a nave altar. The arrangements for receiving Holy Communion need to be greatly improved before the start of the experiment and problems around the seating of the choir addressed – Kevin Dunn had remarked on 20 October that there was no liturgical reason why the choir should not continue to sit in the chancel with a nave altar in use.

Finally, he emphasised that the thrust of his paper is how to handle the nave altar experiment.

There then followed a long and constructive discussion during which the following points were made:

- Across the congregation there are widely different attitudes to change in general and to this particular change so it may not be possible to satisfy everybody;
- It is important to stress to all concerned that this is an experiment so
 - the most satisfactory way of arranging for a nave altar will only emerge over time;
 - evaluation is key to a satisfactory outcome;
 - until there is actual sustained experience of a nave altar and the sense of togetherness which it brings it is not possible to judge the outcome;
- The Archdeacon's licence¹ for the experimental reordering, (*the correct term for the "temporary faculty"*) is permissive in nature and does not require the same arrangement every Sunday. On an informal show of hands, there was a large majority of the PCC in favour of use of the High Altar from time to time during the experimental period. It was felt that many in the congregation would welcome this as an acknowledgement of their concerns;
- There are some issues which need attention immediately
 - people must be able to come to the altar to receive Communion and return to their seats in a seemly manner;
 - those in the congregation wish to kneel to receive their Communion should be provided for.
- On a show of hands, there was unanimous re-affirmation of the PCC's

¹ There is a useful and highly pertinent account of the use of Archdeacon's Licences at <http://www.norwichdiocesanregistry.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Use-of-Archdeacons-Licences.doc>

earlier decision to undertake the experiment. The Chair had advised that reversal of the decision of the May PCC could not be done without due notice.

Following this, John Milner said he would prepare an open letter to be given to the congregation on Sunday 17 November explaining the PCC's decision and reasoning. It was agreed that this should come from the PCC as a whole, with everyone's name on it.

Judy Fletcher agreed to convene a working party which would examine the important practical issues at stake, recommend ways in which the experiment can be evaluated as it proceeds and reports made to all interested parties.

It being 9.40pm the meeting was adjourned after saying the Evening Collect and the Grace until the following Sunday morning at 11.30am.

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council re-convened on 10 November 2013.

Present:

John Milner (Chair), Leslie Bell, Judy Fletcher (Churchwarden), Leslie Fletcher (Secretary), Jean Matthews, Peter Matthews, Robert Nicholls (Deanery Synod Representative), Jean Nixon (Deanery Synod Representative), Trena Radcliffe, Diane Wynn (Churchwarden). Apologies were received from Margaret Harrop.

Before returning to the remainder of the agenda, John Milner circulated a draft of the letter which had emerged from the discussion of Item 11 on Wednesday. He asked for comments, by telephone or email, before Thursday 14 November. He would finalise the letter in consultation with the Churchwardens.

12. Advent Sunday – next steps in stewardship evaluation and looking to the future

Item 10 was taken in conjunction with this item.

John Milner reminded the meeting that the PCC had agreed that a final evaluation of the Stewardship campaign would take place on Advent Sunday. Since then the Mission and Ministry Statement had been agreed and submitted to the Deanery Pastoral Committee and Alison Peacock had offered significant insight into parish demographics. He is down to preach on Advent Sunday, providing an opportunity to present to the congregation some of the vigorous thinking which has taken place. Of course, further discussions and thinking will be necessary.

Leslie Fletcher briefly introduced the paper he had written from a personal perspective, feeling some responsibility for the use of Advent Sunday in this way and realising that a discussion paper was needed to start the preparations. Regarding the content of his paper, he re-iterated his disappointment with the outcome of the Stewardship campaign and his belief that hard thinking about the future is essential.

In the discussion which followed the following points were made:

- The Stewardship campaign and Community Wildlife Garden are major initiatives involving a lot of hard work so should be evaluated realistically;
- Social events such as the Christmas fundraiser bring people into the Hall but not into church. However we must be wary of equating mission with bringing people into church;

- It is important to continue doing what we do well. The All Souls service is an excellent recent example, though the lack of evaluation of this and most other church activities was noted;
- It is important to try new things
 - Providing food and a meeting place for students has been mentioned in several quarters;
 - There have been suggestions in the local press that the number of students in the Fallowfield/Withington area may be decreasing;
 - We need to conserve our person power.
- An important way of learning what could be done at St Chad's is to visit other churches to tap into their experience;
- Good communication is key and a good start has been made with the information given to the congregation about the Ministry and Mission statement and the nave altar;
- It is important to encourage a “no blame” culture;
- Talent money is to be returned on Advent Sunday.

Noting that clear and open processes are also important, he agreed to liaise with Leslie Fletcher how best to respond to this discussion and use the opportunity on Advent Sunday to take these issues forward.

13. Arrangements for Christmas Services

- 1. Carol Singing in the “Courts”:** 20 December as already agreed. Colin Powell is contacting the “Courts” about arrangements;
- 2. Christmas Eve:** 11.30pm First Communion of Christmas;
- 3. Christmas Day:** 10.00am Holy Communion with carols and sermon;
- 4. 29 December:** 10.00am Holy Communion with carols and sermon.

14. Remarks by the Chair These were pre-empted by several expressions from PCC members of thanks for the work he had done. In response John

- thanked everyone for their kind words
- had enjoyed the experience, especially the emerging sense collective ownership of the decisions the PCC had made after good and open discussion;
- reminded the PCC that they have significant powers which should be exercised for the good of the church and parish;
- felt pre-circulation of background papers was very valuable so members should expect them;
- would make these points during the post-sabbatical meeting with Elizabeth on 2 December.

General thanks were again expressed, by the whole meeting.

15. Any other business. There being no other business, the meeting closed with a prayer and saying the Grace at 12.40

16. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3 December 2013; items for agenda to the Secretary by Sunday 24 November.