



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council.
St Mary's Parish Centre
Thursday 29th July 7.30pm**

Present: In the Chair: Rhona Teale
Mary Bacon, Roger Burns, Maureen Dale, Brenda Hill, David Hollis, Keith Newby, Arthur Watts, Janet Western.

Meeting Started: 19:34

1. Opening Prayers

The meeting opened with prayers from Maureen.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd June 2021 were adjusted to reflect the correct Quinquennial date. They were then agreed as a correct record and signed off by Rhona.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Jonathan Elvy.

5. Lay Chair's Report (Rhona)

Rhona welcomed everyone to our second meeting indoors. She thanked all who attended the Churchyard cleaning day. We had our first wedding on Saturday and many pictures were taken on the drive.

There is more to do including tidying up Church Lane on either side of the boundary. We have received many positive comments from local residents though some concerns were raised over the removal of artificial flowers. We have apologised in not giving people notice and the opportunity to remove their flowers. They are now in the Church porch and can be collected by appointment.

Dearbhail Keeting was at Church on July 17th for our Quinquennial survey. She even climbed a ladder to inspect the Vestry roof. We expect her report by the end of August and will need to prioritise as to what we can afford and the urgency of the repairs.

We now have updated guidance from the House of Bishops regarding opening and managing church buildings in step 4 of the Roadmap.

6. Treasurer's Report (David)

David ran through the financials for the year to date. Compared to the same period in 2020 stewardship income, fees, Gift Aid have all increased whereas fundraising and hall income are down leaving a deficit of £720 on 2020.

The Church Fabric fund is slightly up on last year but Parish Centre donations are significantly down. Overall expenditure is £2410 higher this year which is mainly due to larger Parish Offer payments (now standing at 71% paid this year).



David explained that we expect to hit our Parish Offer for this year and could step it up and match last year's Parish Offer of £26,550. PCC agreed to this increase for this year and to also increase the 2022 payment by 5% up to £29,250. This shows our positive intent moving forward.

Rhona offered to talk to Luminaire to settle any outstanding payments to be made.

7. Churchwardens Report (Maureen)

Since our last PCC meeting on Thursday, 3rd June we have been increasingly busy with enquiries for booking Baptism, Wedding services as well as interment of ashes. There have been three funerals and two interment of ashes services and a wedding ceremony on Saturday, 24th July at which The Revd. Robin Ham presided.

Singing resumed in church on Sunday service last week which lifted everyone's spirit.

On Sunday, 20th June Rhona's grandson was baptised by his great uncle, The Revd. Clive Shaw during the morning service and was followed by a lunch in the Centre.

Our monthly local led Sunday morning service on 27th June had Mary and Steve Bacon giving a talk and showing pictures of their time supporting a school in Mamelodi in South Africa. It was really interesting to see how different life is for children in South Africa but their faith and joy shone through. St. Mary's also took up the challenge to help with monetary gifts for the teachers in Mamelodi during the worst of the pandemic.

On Thursday, 15th July, Rhona and Maureen were admitted as Churchwardens by Archdeacon Vernon Ross at a Service in St. James Church along with churchwardens from other churches in the Barrow Deanery.

St. Mary's Centre has now been opened for some events and there has been one child's birthday party and some bookings for September. It is expected that the Uniformed Organisations will resume indoors in September.

8. Barrow Mission Community (Maureen)

The Barrow Mission Community Prayer Group which meets weekly on Tuesday mornings at 9.15am will take a break from 27th July until 7th September.

The PCC had submitted a response to Archdeacon Vernon's Parish Offer request made to the BMC. We will discuss further with Vernon when he visits in August.

9. Safeguarding (Rhona)

We should continue to wear face masks, use hand sanitiser and use Track and Trace for services. It is not legally enforceable but it is strongly encouraged until the next Government announcement on 16th August. Rhona will be drawing up a new Risk Assessment for the Church.

10. PCC Sub-committee Reports

10.1 Buildings and Property (Roger).

Work undertaken since the May PCC meeting includes:

- The copper strips and screws for the ground floor window cover refurbishment.

- Alternative builders to repair the upper East Window covers are being sought as Wards have still to provide an estimate.
- Church electrical work has still to be undertaken and is being chased up.
- The Parish Centre dishwasher and dripping kitchen tap have been repaired.
- Arrangement to repair the gates to the Parish Centre Kitchen area are in hand.
- We are looking at grant funding to enable the repair of the Parish Centre roof.
- Two new risks have been identified,
 - Tiles under the carpet on the north aisle have risen. The area has been marked off pending further assessment.
 - Increasing anti-social behaviour in the churchyard including litter, fly tipping and nuisance. Whilst CCTV was considered it is a significant cost and management challenge. We should continue to monitor, speak to the individuals and report to the police when necessary.

Roger thanked Arthur, Jonathan and Dawn for working to mitigate some of these risks.

10.2 Communications and Connect (Roger).

This PCC Sub-committee met on July 19th through Zoom. Key outcomes include:

- Options for Online Donations were reassessed. The Church of England recommended suppliers of “Give A Little” (website software) and “Sum It Up” (financial processing) remain our preferences. Cost is 1.95% per transaction.

PCC agreed to progress this. PCC also agreed to make use of the new Card Reader in church where donations can be made and then uploaded to a Church bank account later. There is a transaction charge and next year we will be expected to pay a quarterly rental so its important to trial it now and make people aware on the Noticesheet.

Mary took the device away and will look at how we can use it in church.

- We agreed that Denise’s Facebook Survey should be put back into the Autumn to secure more active inputs as Summer tends to be quiet.
- We looked at the YouTube data for viewings of our Sunday Service. Our YouTube channel has 4 subscribers and 72% of viewers reach the Service through Facebook. Average viewing time on each video is 10-15 minutes. In lockdown there were on average 20-30 people looking at each service, there are now approx 10.

PCC agreed it was timely to pause these recordings due to increasing attendance at church and also because the iPad is used to play back the service hymns. We should aim to record special events and services only in the future.

- We continued discussions on Wi-fi capabilities for the church and Parish Centre. There are mobile wifi units available. Church services (including funerals) and social events at the Centre (such as music streaming) are potential areas of benefit.

PCC agreed we should continue to monitor options until a new incumbent is appointed.

10.3 Worship Committee (Maureen).

The Worship Committee meets each month to prepare for the Local Led Services. The next Local Led Service will be on Sunday, 15th August.

PCC members were asked to share any thoughts and ideas for this service.



10.4 Baptism (Maureen).

Five Baptism Services have taken place since our last PCC meeting and we are now fully booked up to December. Only one child per service has been baptised but as things continue to improve it may be possible to baptise two children at each service. Preparation evenings are now held in church and a short film is also shown which has been well received so far. It is intended to have a Parish Evening in church each week where people can come and book baptisms and weddings.

10.5 Pastoral and Post Bereavement (Marie)

These eighteen months have been difficult for many people. Sadly we have all known someone, may it be a family member or a friend, who has had Covid and also passed away. We have lost some church members in this time and six more have moved into new homes and are settling in well.

Through these difficult months we have seen the wonderful support people have given one another, either by phone calls or a listening ear. We certainly witnessed God's hands and feet at work. Although the restrictions are easing, I pray we continue to care for one another in the coming months as we get back to some sort of normality.

11. Secretary's Report and Correspondence (Roger)

- **Diocese Contact Management System** was reviewed to ensure it had the appropriate data on St Mary's roles.
- **St Mary's Parish Offer Response** was prepared with PCC inputs and submitted to Vernon and Robin Ham.
- **Meeting with Archdeacon Vernon** finalised.
- **Churchyard Grass Cutting** was undertaken in June following a conversation with Barrow Parks department.

Roger was asked by PCC to talk with Barrow Parks to agree how some of the remaining churchyard work could be completed (eg tree by old Bank, Church Lane boundary)

12. Preparing for PCC Meeting with Archdeacon Vernon (Roger/Rhona)

PCC discussed the agenda for the visit of Archdeacon Vernon and Father Jack.

Presenters are asked to circulate their key points by August 5th to ensure alignment.

13. Any Other Urgent Business

1. Church Services Resumption (Rhona)

In the absence of an incumbent the Churchwardens and PCC are expected to ensure everyone is safe in line with Diocese recommendations. This needs to be balanced with the personal freedoms and choices that people can now make.

PCC agreed to remove pew restrictions, continue to sing two hymns on Sunday, remain in place when sharing the Peace, retain hand sanitisers, spare facemasks, QR code check in and sign-in book and to maintain current cleaning regimes. In the Noticesheet we will encourage people to wear masks when singing or moving round church.

We will look to open up Parish Centre on 12th September for Sunday Coffee.

2. Churchyard Regulations and Notices (Roger)



PCC discussed the Churchyard Regulations and Garden of Remembrance policy. Whilst questions have been raised on the use of artificial flowers here and in other dioceses there are no plans in the near future for the Diocese of Carlisle to make changes. Therefore PCC agreed to support the continued adherence to these policies. Any further questions or enquiries should be directed to the Churchwardens.

The Standing Committee was actioned to create a single policy document outlining the key requirements and to recommend how best they monitored it and communicated it to the broader community.

3. Parish Centre Cleaner (Maureen)

Maureen said we are down to 4 hours cleaning per week which is achievable but as usage of the Centre increases from September then we need to be able to increase the cleaning hours needed.

14. Next PCC Meeting Date

Scheduled for Thursday 30th September in Parish Centre.

15. Closing Prayers

Mary closed the meeting with prayers.

Meeting Finished: 21:41