

St Luke's Parish Church - Holmes Chapel

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting held on Monday 9th September 2019

7.30pm, Massey Room, Church Hall

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<p>Present: Alastair Cragg (Chairman), Val Cragg, Rachel Copley, Alison Dale, Ray Davies, Tim Fryer, Stephen Haigh, William Hall (Treasurer), Trevor Jenkins, Wendy Macdonald, John Oram, Fiona Pullé, Alan Rickards, Anne Smith, Steve Smith (Secretary), Jane Thomson and Jayne Weaver (Vice-Chairman).</p> <p>1 Welcome and Opening – the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and set the context by reading from Matthew 28, v16-20, followed by prayer.</p> <p>2 Apologies for absence – received from Peter Cotton, Bill Paton and Barbara Smith.</p> <p>3 Minutes of Council meeting on Monday 1st July 2019 – there were no amendments. The minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting (as proposed by Alan Rickards and seconded by Wendy Macdonald) and were then signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>4 Matters arising from previous Council meeting</p> <p><i>The Chairman reported on matters a-c below:</i></p> <p>a) Church Organ – the organ has been further inspected by specialists in conjunction with the Diocesan Organ Adviser (DOA - Revd Andrew Manning). The expert advice is that it is not worth repairing or refurbishing and that replacement with a pipe or digital instrument should be considered. An excellent pipe organ, currently in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Heswall, may be available soon as that church building, dating from the 1960s, is to be replaced by a new building in which the organ will not be needed. An Italian company has already enquired about obtaining the Heswall organ but the DOA is keen to see the organ remain in the Diocese. The Secretary has therefore written a holding letter to the Heswall PCC expressing our potential interest in acquiring the Heswall organ subject to the necessary fact finding about size constraints, overall cost and possible relocation options to fit it into St Luke's.</p> <p>David Wells specialist organ builders of Liverpool are due to report about costs and potential relocation options within St Luke's and we are to donate £300 to the Heswall Parish Building Fund to show our continuing interest. However, no decision will be taken to proceed further with the potential relocation until the report of the overall costs and feasibility from David Wells has been considered in comparison with any digital organ alternative. It is hoped that it will be possible to report on that at the November Council meeting. Any changes to the position and type of organ replacing our existing instrument will in any case need to be supported by the DAC as part of the required faculty process. In answer to a question from Tim Fryer, the Chairman agreed that should a digital organ alternative be pursued then improvements to the church sound system could be considered at the same time.</p> <p>b) Church West End Project – we commissioned Bench Architects in Oct 2017 to carry out a feasibility study of possible options to address the priorities on the PCC's August 2017 wish-list e.g. providing improved safe access for all church users, increased entrance storage for walking-frames etc, possible WC provision etc. Adam Bench displayed several possible options at a meeting at St Luke's in Feb 2019 and a written report detailing six examples was provided at the end of June. The report has been reviewed by the Churchwardens and the Secretary has written a summary of the main points¹. All the examples would involve changes or additions outside the church e.g. reconfiguring the grave-stone paving paths to the West door, adding an entrance extension to the South (Red Lion) side of the tower in place of the current boiler-house, and/or adding an extension to the North (Barclays Bank) side of the tower.</p> <p>The feasibility study has produced some viable options which could be used in a potential West-end reordering project to meet the PCC's core requirements at a variety of costs and</p>	<p>Chairman Wendy Macdonald</p>

¹ Copy attached to these Minutes.

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<p>planning approval difficulty. At this preliminary stage (and until the priority of some of these requirements have been clarified in conjunction with Rob McLaren), none of the options have been costed although all are likely to be in six figures. Consequently, it is unlikely to be sooner than 2Q 2020 before we can reach a decision whether to proceed on any specific West-end reordering project and Bench have been informed to that effect. If Council members would like more information in the meantime, they should contact the Secretary.</p> <p>c) Parish Weekend: September 25-27th 2020 – the opportunity was put to a recent meeting of the local Churches Together committee to expand invitations to join in St Luke’s next Parish Weekend to members of the other Churches. The Roman Catholic Church was supportive but the Methodist Church was less so, citing its own circuit-wide Away Weekend as needing to take precedence. Peter and Brenda Shackleton will be meeting soon with Rob McLaren to discuss the format and theme for our Parish Weekend which will be open to anyone from the parish.</p> <p><i>Trevor Jenkins and the Secretary reported on the following matter arising:</i></p> <p>d) Church Website and Publications– extra pages and content continue to be added regularly to the new website at www.stlukesholmeschapel.uk but coordinating receipt and publication timing of events and other information across the different parish publications can sometimes be difficult. Following a recent meeting with Alan Rickards and Judith Hall, we will trial from 1st October the use of a single email address – media@stlukesholmeschapel.uk – for anyone in the parish to send proposed reports and notices for publication in the Magazine, Link, website and/or Facebook page, as appropriate. Emails sent to this address will be available to all the editor group for Church publications. It will still be possible to submit material for proposed publication to an individual editor, who will then make it available to the others, but we want to encourage use of email to the media address wherever possible.</p> <p>5 Update on the Interregnum – <i>Jayne reported for the Churchwardens:</i></p> <p>Rob McLaren has met informally with Tim and Steve, and Fiona and Wendy, to start to understand more about St Luke’s. He will also be talking to Peter and Brenda Shackleton about the Parish Weekend. He will also be present at the next Council meeting in November which Alastair will chair.</p> <p>Rob’s last service in his current parish of Poynton will be on 6th October and then he is travelling to Argentina to hand over a Church Mission which he has been heavily involved with. He and Jean will be moving into the vicarage during the last week in October.</p> <p>We are arranging for the vicarage to be deep cleaned by Cleanforce, the company which cleaned the church efficiently after completion of the church roof works. The inside of the vicarage needs to be freshened up before Rob and Jean move in, and so we are organising a working party to do some painting on 12th and 19th October between 9am and 3pm. We are looking for volunteers, even if you can only spare an hour; please contact Jayne if you are available. We will provide the paint but please bring your own brushes and dustsheets; stepladders would also be useful.</p> <p>During September and October our Sunday services will be led by Graham Joyce, Howard Eales and Rick Gates.</p> <p>She expressed her thanks to Stephen and Steph Haigh for their excellent job in clearing and reclaiming the garden at the vicarage, especially the area at the front and the patio at the back of the house. This had taken many hours and much hard work during the spring and summer.</p> <p>The Chairman echoed these thanks which were applauded by all those present.</p>	<p>Church Council</p>

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<p>6 Churchwardens' report – Jayne reported for the Wardens' Team:</p> <p>6.1 Standing Committee - The Standing Committee has met twice since the last Council meeting and has discussed the regular services, baptisms and harvest. We have started to plan for Rob's Induction Service on Friday 22nd November. The wardens have been trained by Anne in Sacristan duties in case they need to prepare the elements for Holy Communion. We agreed to mark Mervyn Harrison's long service as Captain of the Bellringers with a gift voucher and letter of thanks.</p> <p>6.2 Church Lighting – This project is paused while we review it with Bench Architects and Rob McLaren, but it still remains a high priority because changing the high-level bulbs continues to pose a health and safety risk.</p> <p>6.3 Redundant Choir Pews – all ten redundant choir pews have now gone to new homes in the parish raising a grand total of £460 for the Church Organ Fund.</p> <p>6.4 Church Hall Lighting – Val Cragg reported on this item from the Church Hall Committee:</p> <p>The old hall ceiling light panels have now been replaced with more efficient and economical LED panels. The resultant improvement in illumination has shown that the surrounding flush fitting ceiling tiles are in poor condition and in need of replacement with modern insulating tiles. A quotation is being obtained for the work to be carried out over the next few months.</p> <p>7 Treasurer's Report – William Hall reported as follows:</p> <p>Overall position: Income this July and August has been lower than our 2019 monthly average of £8,849, possibly affected by holiday absences. As a result, we had shortfalls over expenditure of £946 in July and £2200 in August. However, we still have an overall surplus as at 31 August of £8,241 and should finish the year with a small surplus.</p> <p>Planned Giving Scheme: Ideally the monthly Scheme donations should meet our monthly Parish Share instalments of £6,545.14 but so far this year they have only done so in January, June and July. However, this should be balanced out by the expected tax rebate we will receive from the donations which benefit from Gift Aid. The majority (67%) of those in the Scheme now donate by regular standing order. It is good to see more people coming forward to be regular givers to replace those whose donations have ceased for various reasons.</p> <p>Utilities expenditure: We made our gas and electric quarterly payments for both the church and vicarage which were considerably less than usual due to an empty vicarage and the warm summer weather.</p> <p>Reimbursements from Chester: We continue to be reimbursed for the fees we have paid to our visiting clergy, amounting to £1,060 in the past two months. Similarly, we have recently been refunded £780 for the hire of skips for removal of garden rubbish and other clearance items from the vicarage.</p> <p>Organ Funding: For many years we have held a small balance of nearly £2,300 for work on the organ on a Central Board of Finance deposit account in London. We have also collected various small donations for organ funding over recent months from the sale of the choir pews. Given the likelihood of new expenditure on the organ, I have decided that these donations totalling £1,642² will be deposited in one of our local Barclays saver accounts separating it from funds earmarked for ongoing fabric projects.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked William for his report and invited questions. None were forthcoming.</p> <p>8 Deanery Synod Matters - William reported that the Deanery Synod had not met since the last Council meeting but would do so again on 13th October 2019 at St James, Congleton.</p>	

² Now £1792.11

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<p>9 Any Other Business</p> <p>9.1 Sidesmen Cover – John Oram raised recent difficulties with having sufficient Sidesmen to cover the Sunday 8.30am service. Alison Dale volunteered to help and Darren Cottier was also suggested as a possible assistant. The Chairman is aware of the difficulties and will look into their resolution.</p> <p>9.2 Large Print Service Booklets – Jane Thomson asked if some large print versions of Common Worship, Communion Orders 1 and 2, could be obtained. The Secretary agreed to investigate.</p> <p>9.3 Harvest Festival – the 10am service on 29th September will be a Parade Service but this year only Girl Guiding will take part presenting flags and bringing up their Harvest Gifts as all the local Scout leaders will be involved supervising a Scout camp this weekend.</p> <p>9.4 Dates of Church Council meetings – Tim Fryer asked whether there was a reason for Council meetings to be held on the 2nd Monday of the month since that clashed with the meeting of the House Group. The Secretary indicated that he was sorry for this but it was not for any particular reason. The dates were agreed with the Church Hall for the coming year following the APCM to provide Council meetings at approximately two monthly intervals, avoiding school and bank holidays periods.</p> <p>9.5 Retirement from Readership of Anne Smith – The Chairman informed the Council that Anne Smith who has been our Licensed Lay Reader now for the past eight years has decided not to renew her Licence. He felt sure that all the Council members would like to record their thanks for her commitment in the role and their disappointment at missing her regular stimulating and encouraging addresses, as well as her active involvement in parish ministry. This feeling was endorsed enthusiastically by everyone present and Jayne Weaver presented Anne with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Council. In response, Anne said it had been a great privilege for her to serve in the role of Reader but that you cannot preach effectively except to willing listeners. She exhorted us to continue to explore our Christian faith and not to be afraid of questioning.</p> <p>10 Date and time of future meetings:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Monday 11 November 2019, 13 January 2020 and 9 March 2020, at 7.30pm in the Massey Room.</p> <p>11 Close of Meeting – there being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm with the Grace.</p>	<p>Chairman</p> <p>Secretary</p>

St Luke's Church, Holmes Chapel Possible Major Reordering and Entrance Project – Feasibility Study

Summary of main points

1 Background – our new Church architects, Bench Architects, were commissioned in Oct 2017 to carry out a feasibility study of possible options to address the priorities on the PCC's August 2017 wish-list e.g. providing improved safe access for all church users, increased entrance storage for walking-frames etc, possible WC provision etc. Five exemplary options were displayed at a meeting¹ at St Luke's at the end of Feb 2019. These were then provided in a written report² at the end of June 2019. This report included a further sixth option following feedback at the meeting.

2 General considerations from study

- Much of the heritage value of the building is internal – wooden frame pillars, vaulted roof trusses, 18C gallery, East window, etc. However, the church is the major historical feature in the village centre conservation area and external modifications will need to be done sympathetically to gain community support
- Internal space within the church building is already at a premium – maximum seating capacity of 300 (200 below and 100 in the Gallery) is already reached at Christmas, Remembrance and for large funerals. The expanding village population with the increase in new housing and a new incumbent in post are likely to result in an increase rather than a fall in church attendance.
- Entrance through the main West door except directly across the main road (A50) is currently stepped and difficultly accessible for the disabled and elderly. Entrance through the SW (Red Lion) door and N (Barclays Bank) door is restricted and not suitable for disabled access.
- The two gas fired CH boilers in the boiler-house under the gallery stairs and the associated pumps in the cellar on the SW side will need to be replaced in the next 5 years.

Design Conclusion: predominantly external options must be considered which minimise impact on the internal heritage and existing accommodation.

3 Main Features of the Project Options - Bench provided six examples of possible options, based on one or more of the following elements:

- a) **Reconfiguring paving adjacent main West entrance** - adjust the levels of the external stepped grave-stone paving around the base of the tower to match those of the path from the SW (Red Lion) churchyard gate to the main entrance W door and potentially also from the path from the N (Barclays Bank) churchyard gate; reinstate and lock the iron gates (currently stored in the cellar) restricting entrance to the churchyard across the A50.

Advantages: provides safe level access to the main W door from the S (Red Lion) churchyard gate (and potentially also from the N gate) and prevent immediate access to London Road (A50) except when required for funerals. Lowering the level of the paving will expose the lowest part of the gallery steps currently below ground. Should be significantly lower in cost with no major planning concerns envisaged.

Disadvantage: no provision for disabled access WC/baby-change area; longer crossing distance across the A50 to church from Church Hall and its carpark from either the Barclays Bank or Pelican Crossing sides.

¹ Attended by Adam Bench, Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver and Steve Smith

² Copy available for inspection from Steve Smith

- b) **Single storey extension to North side of tower** - provides disabled access WC/baby-change area and re-sited modern heating boiler(s) and electricity meters within single storey extension accessed through N side wall from W entrance porch; external grave-stone paving adjusted to provide level threshold from SW (Red Lion) path to W porch.

Advantages: meets most core requirements with relatively low visual impact to N base of Tower, providing disabled access WC/baby-change area and new boiler/electrics location outside the body of the church; maintains current entry into the nave via W door from tower porch; allows existing boiler house by the gallery steps to be demolished/converted for storage.

Disadvantages: requires cutting an opening in the base of the N wall of the tower inside the entrance porch, with some planning and heritage concerns to be overcome.

- c) **Single storey extension to S side of Tower under the stairs to the gallery** - includes new SW main entrance and porch with disabled access WC/baby-change area; existing choir vestry removed with a new door opening between the nave and the extension; minor relocation of font and removal of surrounding raised platform to give continued level access from entrance through nave³; external grave-stone paving adjusted to provide level threshold for the new entrance.

Advantages: meets most core requirements extending the building to minimum and with minimal impact on the historic fabric; a discrete tea point could be inserted adjacent the new door into the nave; and the tower porch area repurposed as a small crèche or meeting room; existing cellar retained accessed by concealed ladder.

Disadvantages: significant structural work under the gallery steps; CH boilers will need re-siting with external flues; view of altar and E window reduced using new entry route; some planning and heritage concerns to be overcome.

4 Current Situation – the detailed feasibility study has produced several viable options which could be used in a potential West-end reordering project to meet the PCC's core requirements at a variety of costs and planning approval difficulty. At this preliminary stage (and until the priority of some of these requirements have been clarified in conjunction with our new incumbent), none of the options have been costed although all are likely to be in six figures. However, the process has generated valuable detailed survey information about the church and its structural constraints which will be of future value. Bench Architects have been informed that no further action will take place until the report and core requirements have been discussed with our new incumbent and a decision taken to proceed on any specific project. This is unlikely to be sooner than 2Q 2020.

Steve Smith
PCC Secretary, 6 Sep 19

³ This change could also be included in other options.