

## St Luke's Parish Church - Holmes Chapel

### Minutes of the Parochial Church Council meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**7.30pm, Massey Room, Church Hall**

		Actions
	<b>Present:</b> Canon Rob McLaren (Vicar and Chairman), Peter Cotton, Val Cragg, Stephen Haigh, William Hall (Treasurer), Trevor Jenkins, Wendy Macdonald, John Oram, William Paton, Fiona Pullé, Alan Rickards, Steve Smith (Secretary), and Jayne Weaver.	
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Opening</b> – the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and set the context by reading extracts from an article “What Martin Luther Teaches Us About Coronavirus” <sup>1</sup> followed by introductory prayers.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> – received from Alastair Cragg, Rachel Copley, Ray Davies, Alison Dale, Tim Fryer, Anne Smith, Barbara Smith and Jane Thomson.	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Chairman's Notices</b></p> <p><b>a) Safeguarding – Past Cases Review (PCR2):</b> extensive checking of the records and PCC minutes from 2000 has been carried out and enquiries made from previous incumbents, Paul Mason and John Eardley of all known cases of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults. No such cases were found and a nil return has been submitted to the Diocese.</p> <p><b>b) VE Day Celebrations:</b> the Chairman and Peter Cotton have represented St Luke's in the village committee organising the weekend of celebrations planned for 8-10<sup>th</sup> May, many of which centre round the church.</p> <p><b>c) Candidates for Readership:</b> the Chairman asked the Council to support his recommendation that Tim Fryer and Yvonne Janvier should apply for consideration for Readership training in the Diocese. Tim's underlying Christian commitment is well known in the parish and he has already carried out various supervised preachments. Yvonne has recently moved to the parish from South Africa where she was a licensed assistant minister in a Presbyterian church but has already engaged actively in church groups, worship and prayer.</p> <p>Readership training is over two years and requires financial support from the Council of ca £450 per candidate. It provides the option for candidates to move over to ordination to the priesthood. If accepted for training, Tim and Yvonne would spend some of the period mentored by a priest in a neighbouring parish. The Council unanimously endorsed the Chairman's recommendation</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020</b> – these had been circulated in January and no amendments were proposed; the minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting (as proposed by Fiona Pullé, and seconded by Val Cragg) and were signed by the Chairman.	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Matters arising from previous Council meeting</b></p> <p><b>a) Church Organ</b> – the Secretary confirmed that he had informed Revd Martin Cannam and David Wetherall of Heswall PCC of our intention to proceed with the acquisition for a total sum of £1,000 of the redundant pipe organ currently in their Church of the Good Shepherd, and to apply for faculty approval for its removal, refurbishment and installation in the NE corner of the nave of St Luke's. A further meeting in St Luke's with David Wells, the Liverpool based organ builders, to provide the necessary outline details of the positioning of the Heswall organ for the faculty application is being arranged<sup>2</sup>.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> By Emmy Yang in Christianity Today, 30 Jan 20: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/january-web-only/martin-luther-coronavirus-wuhan-chinese-new-year-christians.html>

<sup>2</sup> Post meeting note: subsequently arranged for 1<sup>st</sup> April but cancelled because of coronavirus restrictions.

		Actions
	<p><b>b)</b> It was agreed to set up a sub-committee (initially comprising the Chairman, Wendy Macdonald, Stephen Haigh and Peter Cotton) to progress an appeal for funds and seek grants for the overall relocation/installation project.</p> <p><b>c) Parish Weekend</b> – despite extended publicity for several months and the retention of the Revd Steve James as an excellent inspirational speaker, support for this event had been disappointing and insufficient to warrant going ahead (26 confirmed attendees of a possible 80 places). It was therefore reluctantly agreed to cancel the weekend so that only our initial deposit of £200 would be lost. The Chairman will write a note expressing his disappointment in the Sunday Link and will survey after Easter the views of the congregation about holding a future Parish Weekend</p> <p><b>d) The Knitted Bible<sup>3</sup></b> - Fiona Pullé reported that display of the knitted Bible scenes at St Luke's has now been confirmed with St George's United Reform Church of Hartlepool from <b>Sat. 13<sup>th</sup> – Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021</b>. The intention is that the scenes will be placed on boards on the church pews for well-advertised display to the congregation and groups of children from the local schools. The Chairman agreed to follow-up with schools.</p> <p><b>e) Safeguarding</b> – the Secretary distributed copies of a useful Pocket Guide about Safeguarding to Council members. More copies are available on request. He reminded everyone that Anne Smith continues to be the Parish Safeguarding Officer.</p> <p><b>f) Developing a future vision for St Luke's</b> – the Chairman circulated an updated version of the paper<sup>4</sup> originally discussed in draft form at the previous meeting and outlining a tentative plan to address the opportunities/ challenges set out in our Parish Profile. His updated paper set out suggestions for a general strategy and proposed targets for the next six and twelve months and three years. Regarding work with pre-school children/parents, he has already discussed with Alison Wright of the village “Bridge the Gap” group for a Thursday morning 9am “mums and toddlers” session in the Church Hall which he would join around 10am.</p> <p>He invited comments from all those present and there was broad agreement about the strategy and targets. In view of the shortage of time and absence of several Council members, it was agreed to defer agreement of the future vision for St Luke's and the targets to help deliver it until the next meeting.</p>	Secretary
6	<p><b>Churchwardens' report</b> – Jayne reported on the following items:</p> <p><b>Standing Committee</b> -The standing committee met in February and discussed the Easter services and forthcoming baptisms. It was agreed to move the Altar table back nearer the wall so that Communion services could be conducted from the side of the Altar rather than from behind it.</p> <p><b>Quinquennial inspection</b> – the inspection of the condition of the church building was carried out on Friday 13th December by our architects, Bench Architects. We are still awaiting their report.</p> <p><b>Mausoleum</b> – the mausoleum at the Knutsford Road Churchyard has been used for storage of some redundant church furniture and the Rose Fete games. We would like to empty the Mausoleum in case we need to use it to store the organ from the Church of the Good Shepherd. Mike Street and David Peake have contacted a local valuer who has advised that the two chairs and a lectern could be sold at auction. Mike and David will also be undertaking some general maintenance of the mausoleum, painting the bargeboards, soffits and doors.</p> <p><b>Church Lighting</b> – this project is still on hold for review with the Chairman and our architects but remains a high priority for health and safety reasons.</p>	
7	<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b> – William Hall reported as follows:</p> <p><b>General</b> - Income and expenditure in the first two months showed a surplus of £6,575, following receipt in January of the first Gift Aid tax repayment of £13,417. Receipt of a second Gift Aid tax repayment of £3K is expected in April or May. Refund of about £1k</p>	

<sup>3</sup> See details and places where it has been and is scheduled to be displayed: <http://www.stgeorgesurc.co.uk/the-knitted-bible/>

<sup>4</sup> Copy attached to these minutes

		Actions
	<p>of the VAT paid on church boiler and architect expenditure last year should be paid soon through the Listed Places of Worship scheme.</p> <p>The accounts for 2019 are not yet complete but a schedule of the income and expenditure will be circulated separately. In the previous year income was £140,041 with expenditure for all purposes of £143,063 leaving a shortfall of just over £3,000. In 2017 the shortfall was nearly £7,500 but much of that resulted from fabric expenditure on the chancel reordering and churchyard extension.</p> <p>The annual 2.5% increases in our Parish Share show no signs of abating. In the past we have tried to ensure that Planned Giving and the corresponding Gift Aid tax repayments pay for our parish share, with all other income covering the remaining expenditure but this may soon no longer be possible.</p> <p>Last year we donated from our Cranage Educational Fund to assist Olivia Middleweek to attend a trip to Slovenia under the auspices of international Girlguiding. This year we have been asked to assist Evie Bostock on her trip to Gdansk and Molly Frances and Alice Middleweek who are taking part in junior overseas community experience trips. Any donation would be administered via Girlguiding rather than to the young people or their families. He proposed that we donate £1,000 from the Educational Fund to assist these young people. As before, we would appreciate their sharing their experiences with us.</p> <p><i>The Chairman asked whether this proposal was supported. It was seconded by Alan Rickards and approved unanimously by the Council.</i></p> <p><b>Fabric Matters</b> – the two currently envisaged fabric projects (replacement of the organ and the lighting upgrade) are expected to total about £103K. The organ project will require about £77K for installation and refurbishment and consequential flooring alterations in the N aisle. We have £34K available towards this now and so will need to raise a further £69k to fund both projects. Some grant aid may be available but I suspect we may have to raise at least half of the funds ourselves first.</p> <p><i>The Chairman thanked William for his report and invited questions. None were forthcoming.</i></p>	
8	<p><b>Annual Church Meetings 2020 – preliminaries</b></p> <p>The Annual Meeting to elect the Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) were originally scheduled to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> April, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Easter. However, the Secretary explained that the new Church Representation Rules 2020 now allow both meetings to be held by Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May at the latest. He proposed that we avail ourselves of this change and hold our Annual Meetings later this year that is on <b>Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020<sup>5</sup></b>. This will avoid the Easter period and the changed bank holidays this year and give more time to complete the required financial and parish reports. After a short discussion, this was agreed by the Council.</p> <p>Following the three-year Church Council election cycle, this year five lay members (Tim Fryer, Stephen Haigh, Bill Paton, Fiona Pullé and the Secretary) will be standing down, and will ordinarily be eligible for re-election. Similarly, our two current lay representatives on the Deanery Synod (William Hall and Barbara Smith) will also stand down but be eligible for re-election (and if elected would also be <i>ex officio</i> members of the Church Council). This year the Diocese has advised that we are entitled to elect four representatives to the Deanery Synod i.e. two more than at present. In addition, our two co-opted Council members (Peter Cotton and Ray Davies) will be standing down and eligible for election or co-option to the Council for a further year.</p> <p>Additionally, Jane Thomson has notified the Secretary that for personal reasons she will be resigning from the Council this year. The Chairman said she would be much missed and thanked her for her valuable contributions in the Council and previously as an assistant churchwarden. These statements were supported enthusiastically by the whole Council.</p> <p>The Secretary asked those who were standing down to let him know their intentions before the next Council meeting regarding their seeking election/co-option to the Church Council</p>	<p><b>Relevant Council Members</b></p>

<sup>5</sup> Post meeting note - see later footnote 7 amending date of Annual Church Meetings to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

		Actions
	and election to the Deanery Synod at the APCM so that suitable nomination forms could be prepared.	
9	<p><b>Deanery Synod Matters</b> – <i>William Hall reported as follows:</i></p> <p>A meeting was held on 6th February 2020 at Christ Church Alsager presided over by the Rural Dean, Steve Clapham.</p> <p>The treasurer, Albert Crew, gave his financial report for 2019 which showed that the Deanery's cash assets had reduced to £2710 and a parish levy of £45 would be required to top up the funds. This will be the first levy in three years. The deanery funds are available for deanery events and grants to pastoral workers and Lay Readers. Parishes are invited to put forward names of suitable people ...</p> <p><b>Funeral Services - Past and Present</b> – Canon David Page presented on this topic which he had researched during his recent sabbatical.</p> <p>Over 500,000 people die every year in England and Wales. In 2018 78% of those deceased had a cremation. In 2004 the C of E conducted over 200,000 funerals but this figure has now fallen to 128,000 and it is feared that C of E funeral ministry may disappear for all but church members within 30 years.</p> <p>The Association of Independent Celebrants (AOIC) is the trade body for the people who take most funerals at crematoria - NOT the Church. Civil Celebrants are good at advertising at crematoria, whereas the Church is not. Although families often express a wish to funeral directors that a funeral should not be religious, most services include hymns, prayers and Bible readings in addition to a eulogy and contributions from family or friends. However, often despite the religious content, the clergy are not involved in the services.</p> <p>As part of his research David enrolled as a chaplain to four funeral directors in the Middlewich area, conducting six crematoria funerals and receiving good feedback from the mourners. He considered how we can maintain a C of E presence whilst aiming for a service that seeks to celebrate a person's life. People often do not sing the hymns because they often do not know them but use the time as a period of reflection. The choice of music at funerals is often based on popular songs not sacred anthems, psalms or hymns.</p> <p>He concluded that we need to maintain good relationships with our local undertakers. We need to be flexible with timings of funerals so that family members needing to travel can attend. To compete with the civil chaplains, we need to create our own C of E chaplaincy service and offer bereavement follow-up. The Dioceses of Gloucester, Liverpool and Oxford have set up central departments providing one contact point which allocates funerals to local clergy. Uniform fees are also offered to help undertakers book up funerals quickly.</p> <p><b>Other Matters</b> - The motion from our Deanery to abolish faculty fees is on the agenda for the next meeting of the Diocesan Synod. It seems unlikely that Chester will agree to abolish the fees but some clarification as to when they should be charged would be helpful.</p> <p>The Melanesian bishops are staying at Foxhill and will be available to parishes during July. There are still vacancies at Barthomley and Sandbach but interviews for Congleton and Astbury and Smallwood are underway.</p> <p>The Deanery Synod is due to meet next on Monday, 8th June at 7:30pm at St. John's Smallwood.</p>	
10	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>a) <b>Coronavirus COVID-19</b> – the Chairman introduced an extended discussion of how St Luke's should respond to the increasing spread of the COVID-19 virus in the light of advice from the NHS, Public Health England and the Church of England. He indicated that necessary actions would be developed in the Standing Committee.</p>	

		Actions
	<p>b) <b>War Grave Notice</b> - we have received an offer from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to erect a notice on the gates of the Knutsford Road Churchyard informing that it contains the grave of Pte G Broome. No cost is involved for the Church and the Council agreed that the offer should be gratefully accepted.</p> <p>c) <b>Lay Conference – 15-17 May: Not Just Sunday</b><sup>6</sup>: Yvonne Janvier will be attending to take up the free room reserved for St Luke's. A few further free rooms may still be available until 31<sup>st</sup> March. Contact the Secretary as soon as possible if you know of anyone who might be interested.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Council Members</b></p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Dates and times of further meetings</b><sup>7</sup>:</p> <p><b>Monday 11 May 2020, 7.30 pm - by Zoom teleconference</b></p> <p><b>Monday July 13<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm – by Zoom teleconference</b></p> <p><b>Monday Sep 14<sup>th</sup>, 7.30pm - by Zoom teleconference</b></p> <p><b>Sunday October 25<sup>th</sup>, 9.30am – Annual Meetings in Church after short service</b></p> <p><b>Future meetings of the new Church Council</b></p> <p><b>Monday Nov 9th - appointment of Sidesmen and other Church Council Officers</b></p> <p><b>Monday Jan 11th, 2021</b></p> <p><b>Monday Mar 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b></p> <p><b>Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Annual Meetings in church</b></p> <p><b>Monday May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – appointment of Sidesmen and other Church Council Officers</b></p>	
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Close of Meeting</b> – there being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm followed by prayers and the Grace.</p>	

<sup>6</sup> Post meeting note: subsequently cancelled for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

<sup>7</sup> Post meeting note: amended following the suspension of services and closure of church buildings from mid-March.

Arrangements for “in person” Church Council meetings and the Annual Church Meetings on October 25<sup>th</sup> will be reviewed in the light of changes to the Government social distancing requirements during the pandemic.

## **APPENDIX - Working toward a 5-year vision for St Luke's following the Parish Profile**

My observations from the parish profile.

Welcoming and friendly with a desire to grow, particularly amongst young families and youth. We have a lively children's group for KS1 & KS2 but lack a work amongst pre-school and youth.

We have good mutual care amongst established regulars but lack a cutting edge with those beyond. What is the route we expect people to take in order to go from unchurched locals to committed members of St Luke's?

Lack of clear visibility among new estate arrivals from elsewhere. What visibility we do have is muddled because our interface is mainly through Churches Together who lead with the Christmas card and New home pack. 'St Luke's CofE' is a much easier brand for people to engage with than Churches Together, but we have not been promoting it clearly. The exterior of our building is obvious and attractive to most, but we do not communicate so much of what we stand for and what we are about, and we have work to do in order that our interior is seen as attractive.

"We want to share our faith with the rest of our community, especially younger people, but we struggle to know how best to do this. Our new vicar will help us to grow as disciples who share God's love with the people we meet and make a real difference." (Introduction page of the Profile)

### **General strategy:**

**Making Disciples: (Come to Christ).** Have a higher priority for newcomers and seekers. Become better at intentional evangelism (involving the spoken sharing of the gospel) and follow-up.

**Growing as disciples (Love to learn)** Jesus' great commission was to make disciples of all nations, baptising them and teaching them to obey everything Jesus has said. So good Bible teaching is essential for making disciples. My main spiritual gift is teaching. We would maximise its effectiveness by following up Sunday sermons with small group discussion/encouragement. Therefore, good teaching series and a dynamic strategy for small groups should help us have a better spiritual cutting edge which helps us grow disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Sharing God's love (Learn to love)** The most effective love is shown in daily acts of kindness and if we model/inspire these amongst us, we are more likely to extend them to others. Corporately it would help our reputation as a church which shared God's love if we were able to set up a relatively high-profile St Luke's project which expressed such love effectively to a needy portion of the local population.

### **Within 6 months?**

To set up a work amongst parents/pre-school children (including some provision at 10 o'clock services)

To set up a work among HCCS aged students.

To reset our lighting project and open the way to other possible church interior improvements

To relaunch our weekly notice sheet to be clearer/fuller in communication to newcomers and regulars

To change our logo/interface strap line to be crisper and clearer in communication to strangers

### **Within 12 months?**

To reset our services to reflect our desire to attract more young adults, teenagers, and children.

To reset our 'small group' strategy for making disciples

To reset our policy for preparation/follow-up for infant baptism parents

To make a clear supportive pathway for bereaved spouses/others to join a congregation or group

To make clear routes for unchurched locals to become disciples of Jesus and committed members of St Luke's

### **Within 3 years?**

To set up a work amongst the locals as a high-profile example of our (normally low profile) acts of love and kindness.

### **Punchier strap line?**

"Making Christ known in the community of Holmes Chapel so that all can share in the joy of God's love"

Might become "Come to Christ, Love to learn, Learn to love" on external communications

### **More recognisable logo with relevance to the strap line?**

Rather than the communion table frontals (really an insider symbol) we do well to associate with our tower (instant recognition by all) and maybe a blue L-plate (L for Luke and L for learners) to tie-in with our more punchy strap line.

**Rob McLaren** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 with tweaks for 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020