

St Luke's Parish Church - Holmes Chapel

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Zoom meeting

Monday 11th May 2020 7.30pm

		Actions
	Present: Canon Rob McLaren (Vicar and Chairman), Alastair Cragg, Rachel Copley, Peter Cotton, Val Cragg, Alison Dale, Tim Fryer, Stephen Haigh, William Hall (Treasurer), Trevor Jenkins, Wendy Macdonald, John Oram, William Paton, Alan Rickards, Barbara Smith, Steve Smith (Secretary), and Jayne Weaver.	
1	Welcome and Opening – the Chairman welcomed everyone to the first PCC meeting held by Zoom and set the context by reading from Acts 7.55 followed by introductory prayer.	
2	Apologies for absence – received from, Ray Davies, Fiona Pullé, Anne Smith and Jane Thomson.	
3	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>It has been a challenging two months and this has been our strategy and initial feedback. We had already introduced gradual social distancing measures from the beginning of March but it came as a shock when the church building was closed on the advice of C of E authorities on Friday 20th March, the day after two large funerals.</p> <p>Pastoral arrangements. We recognised the importance of keeping in touch with members of the church, and through Judith, Jean and the Networking scheme, we encouraged networkers to keep in regular communication with their networkees, especially those who were vulnerable for health or isolation reasons. There has been a lot of phone fellowship, especially among the senior members of the congregations, but also facilitated by networkers.</p> <p>Services provision. We recognised the importance of trying to signal and resource festivals, particularly with Mothering Sunday being disrupted and Holy Week/Easter approaching. Our use of the church porch as a collecting point for Mothering Sunday gifts and service sheets didn't work well. Pretty soon we closed that and, once we were advised against hand deliveries, decided to send a palm cross and service sheets plus a letter from vicar and one from warden/treasurer in the post. This was costly but appreciated by a lot of people.</p> <p>We realised the importance of our website and FaceBook page for those with internet access. Rob started recording a short piece for these platforms, which we kept to about 10 minutes, recognising the shorter attention span for screens. Extra clips have been done to help celebrate festivals eg Easter hymns quiz, Good Friday all-age service, St George's Day talk. Rob has done three or four clips for the Dane Sound Sunday hymns programme started at a similar time to our Sunday morning Zoom.</p> <p>The second Sunday of lockdown we trialled 'After Church Coffee zoom meetings with breakout rooms to enable chat between smaller groups, and the following week we started Zoom Morning Prayer leading to Zoom Sunday services. Gradually the take up has increased and we have tried new things and our technical competence has improved. On 3rd May the Zoom Sunday service had 40 screens with 60-65 people, after church coffee had 35 screens, and Tuesday Morning Prayer had 11 screens (12 people).</p> <p>3 Housegroups are meeting weekly on Zoom, each with 6 to 10 people. Zoom is not as good quality as some video conferencing apps but it is relatively easy to use and to access for a lot of people, and has proved a good help to maintain fellowship with larger numbers, and to maintain an authentic experience of Sunday church and midweek prayer/bible study.</p> <p>We have endeavoured to follow through certain plans like Music Festival and VE Commemoration to maximise our familiarity, even though the lack of Holy Communion and church building is a great bereavement for many.</p> <p>The first foray into St Luke's Zoom quiz was successful and we are considering doing that or similar every week or fortnight, to encourage social interaction between church households and provide a bit of upbuilding local mixing.</p>	

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	<p>All of these have taken a considerable amount of work by certain church officers and helpers for which we are very grateful. Feedback to help our development of these platforms is welcome but do be aware that we have been working hard at understanding the limitations / problems and seeking to improve the benefits for all involved.</p> <p>Progress towards faculties for organ removal/ replacement and lighting replacement/improvement has been stalled, as has our plan to launch an organ appeal more widely. These somehow need to get back on track and maybe ought to be the subject of a brief PCC discussion.</p> <p>Occasional offices: Weddings are unable to happen due to government decree, one has been cancelled, one postponed, one on hold and one waiting to decide. Funerals are happening in a limited way with other ministers deputising for Rob while he is shielded. This month we have 3 crematorium funerals and one graveside burial so far.</p> <p>Church Hall: all activities have stopped for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The situation has presented considerable pastoral and evangelistic challenges but we are seeking to rise to the challenge, take advantage of new opportunities and see good ways forward. Things will not return to normal for a long time, and there will most likely be a new normal even then.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of meeting on Monday 9th March 2020 – these had been circulated and, with an amendment to item 8¹, were adopted as a true record of the meeting (as proposed by Alan Rickards and seconded by Bill Paton); they will be signed by the Chairman in due course.</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>a) Readership applications –applications for Readership training for Tim Fryer and Yvonne Janvier have now been made to the Diocese.</p> <p>b) Church Organ –the April meeting at St Luke’s arranged with David Wells, the Liverpool organ builders was cancelled because of COVID-19 closure of their firm. The meeting was to provide the necessary outline details of the positioning of the Heswall organ in the chancel at St Luke’s for the faculty application which has consequently not been filed. Attempts to contact David Wells to rearrange the meeting have so far failed. The organ sub-committee, now comprising Rob (Chair), Wendy, Stephen, Peter, Alastair, William and Steve, is to meet by Zoom to progress the relocation/installation project and the appeal for funds and grants.</p> <p>c) Quinquennial Inspection – the report from the inspecting architects had not yet been received.</p> <p>d) Developing a future vision for St Luke’s – the Chairman reported that, unfortunately, the Thursday morning “mums and toddlers” session in the Church Hall planned with Alison Wright for pre-school children/parents could not proceed because of the COVID-19 restrictions. He continues to seek volunteers to help with forming a youth group for the late/post Genesis ages.</p> <p>It was agreed that further discussion of the proposed St Luke’s future vision and strategy document (circulated at the previous meeting) and specific targets should be deferred until a future meeting.</p> <p>e) Commonwealth War Grave Notice – our application for a notice to be erected on the gates of the Knutsford Road churchyard signifying the presence of the grave of a war veteran has been granted. The notice will be installed at no expense to the PCC during the next 12 months.</p>	Secretary

¹ We are allowed to elect four lay people to the Deanery Synod this year – two more than at present

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6	<p>Churchwardens' report – <i>Jayne reported as follows:</i></p> <p>Standing Committee - Since the last Council meeting, the Standing Committee have held meetings by telephone conference and by Zoom video conference every week. The major points discussed by the Standing Committee are included in the Chairman's report above.</p> <p>Email addresses for the congregation have been collated from the electoral roll and Planned Giving records to enable us to communicate en-masse with parishioners.</p> <p>The Standing Committee also discussed the need to communicate to the members of the congregation who were unable to access church services on Zoom and YouTube.</p> <p>If you are aware of any parishioners who have not received our email communications or would like some help accessing church services on Zoom and YouTube, please contact the Secretary.</p> <p>General Matters - The church has been closed since the end of March and Stephen Haigh is checking the building every week to ensure that no problems develop.</p> <p>Work on the new vicarage is progressing well and the roof is complete and the scaffolding is being taken down. The plumbers and electricians have commenced working inside, observing social distancing requirements.</p>	
7	<p>Treasurer's Report – <i>William Hall reported as follows:</i></p> <p>During the lock down period which started at the end of March our income stream will be reduced considerably. When we resume our services, I am expecting those who donate to the church by envelopes to bring their contributions up to date. However, we cannot easily replace the donations that come in during services by white envelopes and cash collections each week, particularly at Easter. I estimate our lost income amounts to about £850 so far.</p> <p>Our income in March of £8,725 was in line with expectations. Our outgoings were low at £1,471 so we had a surplus for the month of £546. However, I had drawn a total of 11 cheques during the month and as only a few were cashed in March I expected our expenses to be high the following month. And so it has proved. In April our income was limited to Planned Giving by standing orders and a few cheques I have received direct from some envelope givers. These totalled £5,814, at least £2,000 lower than our average in 2020. As expected, our expenditure was higher than average at £2,788 giving us a deficit for the month of £3,682.</p> <p>The Government's restrictions on the number of mourners at funerals have also had an impact on our income as recent funerals have been conducted in the local crematoria and at the graveside and not in church. However, it is not easy to quantify our losses for a number of reasons. We are awaiting the Gift aid tax refund of nearly £4,500 which I hope will arrive in May. This will bring the tax recovered to £17,906, slightly higher than 2019. I am hopeful that we will continue to meet our financial obligations during the present crisis but we may have to dip into our reserves in the event that the pandemic restrictions continue for most of this year.</p> <p><i>The Chairman thanked William for his report and invited questions:</i></p> <p>The financial statements for the year 2019 are now with the new Examiner, Jeremy Bostock. A stock of new weekly Planned Giving envelopes has been obtained and arrangements will be made for their delivery.</p>	
8	<p>AOB</p> <p>Alan informed the Council that the Church Magazine could no longer be printed and distributed during the current restrictions. However, he was producing an online version the e-magazine which would be available through the Church website.</p> <p>Contributions for the e-magazine, website or FaceBook page should be sent to media@stlukesholmeschapel.uk</p>	

		Actions
11	<p>Dates and times of further meetings²:</p> <p>Monday July 13th ³, 7.30pm – by Zoom teleconference</p> <p>Monday Sep 14th, 7.30pm - by Zoom teleconference</p> <p>Sunday October 25th, 9.30am – Annual Meetings</p> <p>Future meetings of the new Church Council</p> <p>Monday Nov 9th - appointment of Sidesmen and other Church Council Officers</p> <p>Monday Jan 11th, 2021</p> <p>Monday Mar 8th, 2021</p> <p>Sunday May 9th, 2021 – Annual Meetings in church</p> <p>Monday May 10th, 2021 – appointment of Sidesmen and other Church Council Officers</p>	
12	<p>Close of Meeting – there being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting with prayers at 8.05 pm.</p>	

² Arrangements for the Annual Church Meetings will be reviewed in the light of changes to the Government social distancing requirements during the pandemic.

³ Date amended after the meeting to 7.30pm on 20th July