

Parish Church of St Luke - Holmes Chapel (Church Hulme)

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Zoom meeting

Monday 11th January 2021, 7.30pm

		Actions
	<p>Present: Canon Rob McLaren (Vicar and Chairman), Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver, Rachel Copley, Val Cragg, Tim Fryer, Stephen Haigh, William Hall (Treasurer), Lee Hardy, Yvonne Janvier, Trevor Jenkins, Paula Lavin, Wendy Macdonald, John Oram, Fiona Pullé, Alan Rickards, Barbara Smith, and Steve Smith (Secretary).</p>	
1	<p>Welcome and Opening – Rob welcomed everyone to the first Church Council meeting of the new year. He then set the context by reading from 1 Samuel 12, starting at verse 1 (the importance of integrity, followed by prayers including the collect for the 4th Sunday before Lent.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for absence – Peter Cotton, Alison Dale, and Ray Davies.</p>	
3	<p>Chairman’s report – (<i>reprinted as Appendix 1</i>).</p> <p>Rob drew attention to the note from Tim Fryer, already circulated to the Council before the meeting and informing of his decision to withdraw from the Diocesan Reader training. The note gave the background to Tim’s considered decision which Rob fully understood and supported. He looked forward to Tim’s continued active contribution and personal support in lay ministry at St Luke’s.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of meeting on Monday 9th Nov 2020 – these had been circulated and were adopted <i>nem. con.</i> as a true record of the meeting (as proposed by Alan Rickards and seconded by Tim Fryer); the minutes will be signed by the Chairman in due course.</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting – there were no specific items other than those dealt with during the rest of the meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Standing Committee, Churchwardens’, and Treasurer’s Reports</p> <p>These Reports (<i>reprinted as Appendix 2 and 3</i>) had been circulated before the meeting and were taken as read.</p> <p>In relation to the Treasurer’s report and the expected 2020 annual deficit, Alastair commented that, in view of the deficit expected for 2020, income and expenditure for 2021 will need to be carefully monitored to ensure a repeated annual deficit is avoided. John Oram asked whether the parish would benefit from the sale of the old vicarage in London Road. The Chairman stated that the sale by the Diocese had been provisionally agreed but had not yet been completed. The parish could then apply to receive 10% of any profit, capped at a maximum of £20,000 towards specific projects rather than to meet routine expenses. There were no other specific questions on the reports.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Alastair, Jayne, and William for their continuing care and oversight in managing parish affairs effectively during the continuing difficult situation.</p>	

		Actions
7	<p>Organ & Lighting Projects</p> <p>a. Organ Replacement</p> <p>Steve Smith provided an update. Following faculty permission, the Heswall organ was dismantled and transferred to Cartwrights workshops in Newcastle-u-Lyme for secure storage. The only issue found was that the pedalboard was in poorer condition than expected and not cost effective to refurbish. Provision of a new pedalboard for the new console has been agreed at an extra cost of £2,831 (+VAT), taking the total project cost to £58,097 (+applicable VAT). It is expected that any VAT will be recoverable.</p> <p>No objections were received by the Diocesan Registrar during the public notice period of our own faculty application to replace our existing organ with the refurbished Heswall instrument. We expect the faculty to be granted during January 2021¹.</p> <p>b. Lighting Project</p> <p>Alastair reported that with the recent tightening of COVID-19 restrictions, the on-site meeting with Gerry Browne of Lighting Dynamics, arranged for early February to reassess lighting project details and costs, might not now be possible. In the interim, we need to update our requirements in a Zoom meeting with Rob who has worked with LD in a successful lighting project at St George's, Poynton. It is not currently intended to extend the project to cover modifications to the audio-visual systems.</p> <p>c. Organ & Lighting Appeal</p> <p>The Appeal has now reached just over £50,000 which is an excellent result in the first three months since its launch to church members on Harvest Sunday. A further £1,000 has been raised from sale of copies of the new History of St Luke's. The Appeal sub-committee [Rob (Chair), Peter Cotton (Secretary), Stuart Gammon, William Hall, Steve Smith, Mike Street] has met several times by Zoom to review approaches to potential grant awarding bodies. Local companies will also be approached e.g., Recipharm, Sainsburys, Aldi etc.</p>	<p><i>Alastair, Rob</i></p>
8	<p>COVID-19 restrictions – Rob introduced discussion of the impact of the latest “National lockdown: Stay at Home” conditions announced by the Prime Minister on 4th Jan. Limited communal worship is not prohibited under these new restrictions. However, Rob and the Standing Committee, believe that in our church building we are unable to guarantee the precautions needed to protect everyone entering church, especially the clinically vulnerable. Consequently, they recommend that communal worship in church should be suspended but the church will continue to be opened on Wednesday and Sunday mornings for individual private prayer under the usual safety arrangements. This was unanimously agreed by the Council. Zoom services will continue as at present.</p> <p>Rob explained that, as under the law governing the Church of England, we are required to hold regular services of communal worship in church, it was necessary for the Council to approve a motion authorising dispensing with these services, pending review of the situation at the next meeting on 8th March.</p> <p>The Secretary had prepared the following motion:</p>	

¹ Post meeting note: faculty granted 19th Jan 2021

		Actions
	<p>The vicar and the parochial church council of the ecclesiastical parish of Church Hulme (Holmes Chapel) acting jointly under the provisions of Canon B14A para 1(a) authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14 on occasions from Sunday 4th January 2021 to Sunday 7th March 2021 inclusive. The reason for the dispensation is that, in the light of the Government's regulations and guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus, there is no church in the benefice which can be used safely for public worship on those occasions.</p> <p>Following some supportive discussion, the motion was proposed by Alastair, seconded by John Oram and approved nem. Con.</p>	
9	<p>Safeguarding Matters – Paula Lavin reported that she had so far received 15 certificates from Council members confirming that they had completed the basic safeguarding awareness course conducted by the Church of England. Feedback was positive about the content and presentation of the course and the Chairman encouraged the remaining Council members to complete the basic course before the next meeting. The intention is to extend more detailed training to others in the parish with particular involvement with vulnerable/at risk individuals/groups.</p>	Council members
10	<p>Deanery Synod matters – nothing to report since the Synod had not met since the last Council meeting.</p>	
11	<p>Any other business - no items had been received.</p>	
12	<p>Date of future meetings: PCC: Monday 8th March – 7.30pm Annual Church Meetings: Sunday 9th May – time and venue to be decided. PCC: Monday 10th May – 7.30pm, venue to be decided</p>	
13	<p>Close of Meeting – there being no further business, Rob closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer and the Advent collect at 8.50 pm.</p>	

Appendices to the minutes of PCC meeting 11 Jan 21

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report

The last two months have been a lockdown sandwich, but we were at least able to have some special services at Christmas. As soon as the November lockdown finished, we were able to restart restricted communions on Wednesday and Sunday mornings. Numbers were not as good as in September and October, but the services were appreciated. We were able to have the Midnight Christmas Eve and Christmas morning communions. Numbers were quite low but singing a final carol in the churchyard went down very well.

Zoom services have continued to be our best attended fellowship. Special services at Christmas did not attract large crowds but the Carol Service and the 5pm Crib Service went very well. The 3pm Crib Service had just one family. Christmas morning 10.30 was a happy time.

We sent a Christmas book on Advent Sunday to our members who have come neither to church nor Zoom church.

For Jan/Feb/Mar we plan a new teaching series from the younger years of David's adult life (1 Samuel 16-23) to help us seek the Lord during our time of national crisis. It is hard to make many plans at present, but it is good that we have been able to have a consistent pattern of services and small group fellowship over the many months affected by Covid-19.

Yours with prayers,

Rob

Canon Rob McLaren

Appendix 2

Standing Committee and Churchwardens' report

Since the last PCC meeting in November the Standing Committee has met three times via Zoom. The arrangements for the Christmas services in church and on Zoom were discussed.

The ongoing remuneration of the cleaners in Church and the Church Hall was raised and it was agreed that consideration would be given to furloughing the Church Hall cleaner given the continued closure of the hall.

The plaque showing past and present incumbents which is situated above the north door will be engraved with Rob's name. Alastair has arranged for the work to be carried out by John White in his workshop on the Wirral, at a date to be confirmed.

A letter from Rob and a book of Christmas songs was delivered to those members of our congregation who do not use Zoom to access our services.

The Standing Committee agreed to underwrite the cost of production of 'The Story of St Luke's – Church Hulme' which has been written by the Local History Group of Holmes Chapel & District U3A. The cost of production of 100 copies is £530 and the books will sell at £15 each. Any profits will go to the organ and lighting appeal.

The Standing Committee would like to express their thanks to Alan and Ann Lane for providing and decorating the Christmas tree and to Ann for organising the floral decorations in church.

The walkway between the church and the Hall carpark was temporarily closed to public access on Boxing Day to ensure our legal rights were maintained.

Alastair Cragg and Jayne Weaver: Churchwardens – Jan 2021

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report

During both November and December our income was insufficient to cover our expenses and we ended the months with deficits of £1,213 and £10,304, respectively. Due to the difficulties many of us have faced attending the restricted services this autumn the amounts donated under our Planned Giving scheme and moneys received from Christmas visitors has been much lower than in past years.

During this year lockdowns and restricted services have considerably limited the amount received from envelope givers though many parishioners have been at pains to deliver their donations to me at least monthly.

Looking at the day-to-day figures for the whole year we had a surplus in six months this year though in two of those months we had received Gift Aid tax repayments. In 2019 we had a surplus in only four months of the year. At the year end, instead of breaking even we have a deficit of nearly £6,500 on income of £120k. However, these figures are provisional only. I have included donations and tax repayments for the Organ Fund which was credited to the General account and later transferred to the Barclays account during November and December. This has distorted the figures for the last 2 months of 2020. As with previous years, our overall income and expenditure figures will not be known until I receive the accounts from the Church Hall and Social Committees as well as the Bell ringers.

We continued to make our annual donation towards the work of St Luke's Brinnington, though we had not been able to deliver items for their weekly sales since last March. The "get-together" with our friends at Brinnington did not take place due to the pandemic but their vicar, Rev Lynne Cullens is very keen for the relationship between our congregations to continue in 2021.

Our Organ and Lighting Appeal has been open for 3 months during which time we have been fortunate to obtain over £45,000 from donations mainly from our members. We also received a grant of £5,000 from Holmes Chapel Parish Council which brings our current total to just over £50,000 or 60% of our target. We hope that members of our community who are not worshippers at St Luke's will wish to donate to our projects in 2021. We also hope to obtain grants to bring us nearer towards our target this year.

I have not yet finalised the budget for 2021 but I can tell you that the rise in our Parish Share will only be 1% and not charged until April, bringing the total for this year to £81,109. For the last 4 years our Parish Share has increased by 2.5% so this is a welcome change.

If anyone has any questions about these figures or comments on the church finances generally, please let me know.

William Hall – Hon Treasurer – Jan 2021