

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Minutes for the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 3pm on Wednesday 6th December 2023 in St Petrock's church

Present: Revd Sheila Swarbrick (chair), Keith Walton, Betsy Allen, Claire Mayer, Richard Skinner, Viv Asher, Jessica Claridge & Mary Keaney (PCC sec)

Apologies: Celia Smith & Helen Evans

1. **Welcome & Prayer:** Sheila welcomed everyone to the meeting and read from advent intercessions.
2. **Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 6th September 2023:** The minutes were signed as an accurate record by Sheila.
3. **Matters Arising/Questions:** None

4. Parish Activities:

4.1 **Pastoral Care:** unminuted

4.2 **Pattern of services:**

Sunday 26th November: Thanks were extended to Richard for his work and help with the United service at the Mint. Betsy suggested having a United service more than once per year. A new Superintendent has been appointed to the Mint.

Action: *Sheila to take the suggestion of more than one United service to her colleagues.*

Sunday 21st January 2024: Pulpit Exchange (Crossing Place) Sheila to visit St David's with Andrew Beane, archdeacon. Barbara Easton to preach at St Stephen's.

Action: *Betsy to make contact with Barbara with a view to planning service together. Sheila/Keith to send recent Crossing Place services to Betsy.*

Sunday 4th February: Richard Burrige to preach followed by a Soup Lunch

Sunday 3rd March: Simon Croft to preach followed by a Soup Lunch

Action: *Richard Burrige to be asked to preach on Easter Sunday (31st March)*

Sunday 30th June: Fifth Sunday service to be held in St Martin's

Prepared Service Survey: Sheila and the churchwardens have been thinking it is time to canvas parish opinions on the value of the monthly prepared Sunday service.

Action: *Mary to circulate the survey to the parish with the service sheet on 7th December and ask for replies to be received by 14th December. Keith to collate results.*

4.3 **Parish Social and Events:**

Harvest/Soup Lunches: All went well with these events.

St Nicholas Fair: This was a gentle and lovely occasion for helpers and visitors alike. The combined total for the Fair and St Olave's Fair is £962.50 (£782.50 + £180).

Post Meeting Update: *Sean Swarbrick, treasurer, has provided Sheila with a breakdown of totals for each stall. Preserves: £177.60; Coffee: £131.40; Cakes: £229; Books and Cards: £59; Quiz: £60; Bric-a-Brac: £125.50;*

Knightshayes Visit:

Action: *Sheila to contact those interested in this.*

4.4 **Meeting with St David's update:**

Betsy and Keith, our churchwardens, met with St David's two new churchwardens, Hilary Todd and Robert Mitchell and talked about how and when information could be shared between the parishes. It was noted that St David's circulate a weekly bulletin to their congregation which is something our parish could investigate on a smaller scale. Both Hilary and Robert were interested to hear how well our buildings are used.

4.5 **Formal arrangement with orthodox churches:**

Sheila was to have spoken with Fr Porphyrios from the Orthodox Community of St Pancras about the formal arrangement but both have been poorly.

Action: *Sheila to prompt Andrew Beane, Archdeacon, to act on this issue as the formal agreement needs to be signed by the Bishop.*

5. Church Buildings:

5.1 St Stephen's:

5.1.a Disabled access update: The disabled access door has been repaired and is working effectively with appropriate signage added.

5.1.b Quinquennial Inspection: We are still waiting for the full reports from the architect for St Stephen's and St Olave's inspections which took place in July 2023. Keith sent an email to prompt a response from Jeremy on 27th November.

Gutters: No work needed until Spring.

Action: *Keith to approach Palace Gate Building Services Ltd to clean the gutters of all churches on an annual basis (with exception of St Pancras) and to be our general maintenance company.*

5.1.c EICR work: Mary has approached 2 companies for quotes on doing an EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) on each church in parish. Gaslec Ltd quoted £3,174 and Home Exeter Ltd £175 per fuseboard and £80 for subsequent boards & VAT.

Action: *Mary to instruct Home Exeter Ltd to carry out the EICR work asap.*

5.1.d Storage: Sheila has spoken with ENC about using the chair cupboard as a storage space and they are in agreement. Richard has noticed that the AV cupboard is clearer since Sheila's meeting with ENC.

Action: *Keith to approach Guardian Security for a new key safe for the chair cupboard key and Sheila to speak with ENC again.*

5.1.e Display Board: To be put on agenda for March 2024 meeting

5.1.f Lost Car Keys: Sheila found a set of car keys which could belong to someone who emailed us after an event last summer.

Post Meeting Update: *The Library have taken the car keys from Sheila and will contact the owner.*

5.2 St Petrock's:

5.2.a Solar Panels: Keith has spoken with the probable contractor about costs of panels and cabling needed and the best configuration of panels required to gain DAC approval. An inverter is needed on the Homeless Centre side of the church. Keith has written to the architect requesting a ball park figure. Andrew Beane, archdeacon, has sent fundraising schemes.

5.2.b Homeless Day Centre Door: repairs have been completed by Palace Gate Building Services Ltd

5.3 St Pancras:

5.3.a EICR: See 5.1.c

5.4 St Olave's:

5.4.a QI : See 5.1.

5.4.b Vestments: Sheila reported that Sue Roberts, Vicar at Honiton, took some chasubles and stoles for a retired priest. She may make a donation.

Post Meeting Update: *Following an email to the verger at the Cathedral Luke has taken some of the copes and the matching pink chasuble, burse and veil. He is willing to take other chasubles and possibly the altar frontals. He is also taking the supply of weekly candles and will pay us for those.*

5.5 St Mary Arches:

5.5.a Organ: Keith is working alongside Matt Clayton (Unlimited Church minister) to inform the DAC that all avenues have been explored when trying to finding a local new home for the organ.

5.5.b Building Officer: Keith is also working with Matt on recruiting a Building Officer/Administrator but this is taking time.

6. **Social Media:** Helen continues to update information re: social events on our Facebook page and Mary updates the website regularly with services and documents. Recently we received an email thanking the parish for keeping St Olave's open when many churches have to close their doors.
7. **Inner Room:** Sheila reported, on behalf of Helen, that the National Poetry Day in St Stephen's on Thursday 5th October with Professor Ralph Pite went very well.
8. **Deanery Synod Report:** The DS meeting notes from Wednesday 18th October were circulated prior to the meeting containing information about five chaplaincy ministries in the city – Anna Chaplains, City centre, school, prison, and police chaplains. Tim Hamilton is the new lay chair from St Leonard's church.

9. **Finance:**

9.1.a End of November 2023 Account & Common Fund: Sheila reported on the budget which shows Income is approx. £30,000 under 'Use of PCC property' as Exeter Safe Space paid their yearly suggested donation of £12,000 in January but have paused use since October. It was agreed to carry over approx. £3,000 should they resume their use in the New Year. £962.50 profits from St Nicholas Fair and St Olave's Fair can be added to Fundraising. Grants have £5,000 added from the parish Trusts account to pay for ceiling repairs in St Stephen's church in 2021.

Expenses: Insurance costs from St Mary Arches refund have been paid under 'Church Upkeep'. Sean Swarbrick is in the process of changing the Utility company from Ecotricity to Parish Buying. This should be complete by the end of December 2023.

The Diocesan Share has fluctuated as the amount depends on the number of buildings for which we are responsible and the number of participants in the parish as well as an increase of 6% expected for 2024. Sean is currently waiting for Direct Debit details for 2024.

9.1.b Proposal to increase hourly rates for self-employed staff: The meeting approved the increase from £10.70 to £12 for Julie and Jim and from £11.50 to £13.50 for Mary. This is a 12% increase and will take effect from January 2024.

Action: Sheila to approach the Churches Conservation Trust for an increase to their share of Jim's wage as there has been no increase in many years.

9.1.c Christmas vouchers: The meeting agreed to give Julie and Jim a £40 gift voucher each.

10. **Safeguarding and Health & Safety:**

10.1 **Safeguarding Report:** Circulated prior to the meeting.

10.2 **Review of church activities:** Remain the same.

10.3 **Review of non-church activities:**

Action: Mary to add ENC to the list and send them the Hirers Agreement for completion. Mary to deliver a Hirers Agreement to the AA groups and leave in their St Petrock's cupboard.

10.4 **DBS checks:** Mary to invite Celia and Jessica to complete DBS checks after Christmas.

11. **CTAX/CTCE:** Sheila reported that Mary and Sheila both attended the CTaX AGM on Wednesday 29th November. The parish contributes £35 p/annum to CTaX which helps fund the Nativity, Good Friday & United service events. During Lent Richard BurrIDGE will be holding a weekly Bible Study in the Cathedral on Mark's Gospel. Chris Bryan hopes to have a weekly Lent course in St Petrock's on Thursday mornings entitled, 'Encounters in John'.

12. **Correspondence:** Mary was pleased to receive a thank you letter for her work as the Parish Safeguarding Rep from +Jackie.

13. A.O.B.

13.1 New Speaker: Betsy reported on the time it takes to set up the AV system in St Stephen's and suggested purchase of a wireless speaker as back up.

Action: *Betsy to do research on wireless speakers and report back in March 2024*

13.2 Parish Trusts: Keith reported that Steve Symons has agreed to be the new clerk. He lives at 14 Lower Kings Avenue and has links with Belmont church. As he is not a church member he is a non-trustee but will have signatory powers.

13.3 Climate Hub Clothes Give-Away: The meeting agreed that this charity should be allowed to hold a give-away event with donations to raise funds in January 2024.

13.4 Postcards: Viv reported that stocks are very low. Also the Prayer Pilgrimage is now low and the Parish of Central Exeter leaflet has not been available for sometime.

Action: *Mary to get quotes for new supplies in January and decisions about the Parish leaflet content is needed.*

14. Date and Place of future meetings:

Wednesday 6th March 2024: APCM Sunday 21st April 2024

The meeting closed at 5pm with the Grace.