

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Minutes for the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 2.30pm on Wednesday 4th December 2024 in St Petrock's church

Present: Rev Sheila Swarbrick (chair), Celia Smith, Richard Skinner, Betsy Allen, Viv Asher, Claire Mayer, Jessica Claridge & Mary Keaney (PCC sec)

Apologies: Keith Walton, Helen Evans

1. **Welcome & Prayer:** Sheila opened the meeting with a welcome to everyone and a prayer in praise of soil.
2. **Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 4th September 2024:** Sheila signed and dated the minutes as an accurate record.
3. **Matters Arising/Questions:**
 - 5.2.c The Spill Kits are located in the servery of St Stephen's
 - 5.6.c Sheila has given any outstanding St Mary Arches keys to Revd Matt Clayton, minister of Unlimited Church.
 - 8 Jessica to visit the archives at the Devon Heritage Centre for any information on the chalice inscribed with St Pancras' name now residing in St David's church.
 - 10.5 Betsy and Mary to meet on **15th January 2025** to discuss current Safeguarding procedures and access the parish laptop in an emergency.
 - 13.1 Mary to contact regular users of PCC property of the 10% price increase to take effect from January 2025.
 - 13.2 Sheila is to take the Devon Deaf Church January service and will find out if they wish to use St Stephen's for their monthly services.
 - 13.3 The swift boxes have been installed in St Stephen's and St Petrocks. Ownership of these boxes has been passed from Devon Birds to our PCC. The letters from Devon Birds confirming this are to be kept with our Terrier and Inventory. Mary to keep them for the moment.
 - 13.4 The piano tuner advised getting a lighter piano as our current one is so very heavy it prevents ease of movement and any repairs needed. Jessica to speak with Andrew Daldorph about this issue.
4. **Parish Activities:**
 - 4.1 **Pastoral Care:** unminuted
 - 4.2 **Pattern of services:**
 - Sunday 15th December:** Keith will lead but will send information to Richard as back up.
 - Sunday 22nd December:** Holy Communion service in St Pancras and not St Olave's
 - Sunday 29th December:** No service in parish but people are encouraged to worship at other venues.
 - Sunday 5th January:** Revd David Gunn-Johnson to preach at the Epiphany service
 - Sunday 19th January** Crossing Place led by Richard
 - Sunday 26th January:** Pulpit Exchange at St Olave's with Norman Wallwork as visiting preacher
 - Sunday 26th January:** Homelessness Sunday service in St Petrock's at 4pm
 - Sunday 2nd February:** Revd Mark Bate visiting preacher with Soup Lunch afterwards
 - Sunday 16th February:** Betsy to lead/organise Crossing Place
 - Friday 7th March:** World Day of Prayer hosted by St Stephen's at 11am
 - Sunday 30th March:** Lent 4 & Mothering Sunday with Kathy Robert as visiting speaker
 - Sunday 6th April:** APCM followed by a Bring and Share lunch
 - Sunday 27th April:** Civic Service at 3pm in St Stephen's with Lord Mayor

4.3 Parish Social and Events:

St Nicholas' Fair: Saturday 7th December Sheila has the floats and people can arrive from 6.15pm on Friday 6th December to help set up.

5. Church Buildings:

5.1 St Stephen's:

5.1.a Gutters: An annual clearing would be ideal. We need to organise a contractor to do this.

Action: Jessica to research a contractor to clear gutters.

5.1.b Storage: Betsy has purchased 4 new, lighter tables and sold four of the old ones on Gumtree. It has been noticed that some of the tables are not being put away very carefully by our users.

Action: Richard to take photographs of how the tables should be stored and display.

5.1.c. Display board: The current one is gradually disintegrating. We need to review the St Stephen's Project images for a new display on the new board.

5.1.d Fridge: The fridge in the servery has a broken door. The meeting decided not to replace the fridge.

5.1.e. Hand washing supplies: Betsy suggested we should have supplies of soap in the servery for users and the parish to use.

Action: Betsy to research handwash and a possible fixture to the wall.

Action: Betsy to confer with Julie about who replaces washing up liquid in the servery.

Post Meeting Update: The User Guidelines do state that they should bring soap and hand towels when using the church for an event.

5.1.f Safe Space: They have used the church on 16 occasions this term. They have £1,755 remaining as the amount held over from Autumn 2023.

Action: Mary to contact Laura Wright with regard to a review of their use this term and their future use of the church in 2025.

5.1.g Plaster Erosion: This has been noticed for some time and the matter has been raised with the Romanian Orthodox church as it is possible that some of their children pick away at the unbonded plaster during the services when unattended. Sadly, it continues to happen even after reassurances that it will stop.

5.2 St Petrock's:

5.2.a DAC & architect: Michila Wilks, parish architect, continues to communicate with the DCA re: solar panels.

5.2.b Guttering: Repairs completed.

5.3 St Pancras:

5.3.a. Quinquennial Inspection: The QI was done during the summer by Michila. We are currently awaiting the report.

5.4 St Olave's:

5.4.a Window repair: To be considered once the damp issues have been resolved.

5.4.b. Damp issues: Sheila has a meeting planned with the DAC advisor in St Olave's for **Thursday 5th December** so they can see the problems first hand. Scaffolding is due to be erected in January 2025 so repairs to the guttering and rendering of the wall can be completed. We have St Olave's Trust money to cover the cost of the rendering and a grant for the guttering costs. Clare conducted research into the ownership of EX4.

Action: Clare to contact Land Registry to find owners of this building which abuts onto St Olave's church.

5.5 St Mary Arches:

5.5.a. Organ: No progress to report

5.5.b Building officer: Matt Clayton, Minister from Unlimited Church, has a possible candidate for the Building Officer/Resources Coordinator post. The parish will be involved in the interview process.

6. Finance:

6.1.a End of October/November accounts: Sean, the treasurer, has completed the November Budget which will be circulated with the minutes. Our total Income to year end is £54,455 with Expenditure at £67,952. Sheila explained that Unlimited Church will pay most of their insurance costs, approx. £2000 and grants from other parish trusts will help the balance. The Diocese gives us a reduced rate for the Parish Share as we are steward for so many buildings. This partly offsets our insurance costs. Planned Giving for 2025 is reduced as a number of generous benefactors have died this year. The cathedral will be continuing their use of St Petrocks and St Pancras' until at least March 2025. The Churches Conservation Trust give the parish £647 toward our caretaker's wage. Under Expenses the Church Upkeep will rise due to the works at St Olave's but there is Trust money to help with this. Parish Giving will donate to the same charities as this year.

6.1.b: Wage Increases: The National Living Wage is set to increase to £12.21 in April 2025. The meeting approved an increase in wages for Julie (parish cleaner) and Jim (parish caretaker) to £12.25 p/hr to take effect from January 2025. Mary's (parish administrator) wage to increase to £14 p/hr from Jan 2025 also. Thanks were expressed for the work of them all.

7. **Inner Room:** Report from Helen read out by Mary. *Inner Room* held a successful National Poetry Day in St Stephen's: many thanks to all the volunteers, who worked so hard. There was a workshop, a lunchtime reading, and a well received talk by poet Anthony Wilson. Next year's event is likely to be smaller. *Inner Room* is largely in abeyance for the next few months for health reasons, except for fortnightly Room2Write sessions (ably facilitated by Peter with support from Claire, Betsy and the rest of the group). There are also sessions every couple of months, facilitated by Helen, where this group shares their work. It is great to see their writing and their confidence as writers develop. The next *Inner Room* team meeting will now be in the new year.

8. **Deanery Synod Report:** Jessica reported on the meeting held in October. In September 80 members of St Leonards church left to form a church plant, All Saints, under the International Presbyterian church under the leadership of pastor Paul Sutton. The treasury report announced £6,000 available for grants. There is a £2.5 million deficit across all dioceses so they are using up reserves. St Michael and All Angels, Heavitree, recorded 22 baptisms. There is a new vicar at St Andrews, Exwick. St James' church spoke about running their Messy Church. Mike Clark is the interim minister at St David's church.

9. **Social Media:** The parish Facebook page continues to promote parish events and organisations we support, as and when appropriate. Betsy reported that St Pancras is soon to be promoted as a Small Pilgrim Place on the SPP Facebook page.

10. Safeguarding and Health & Safety:

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

10.2 **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy Statement/Parish Safeguarding Policy & Statement:** All 3 documents circulated prior to the meeting. All 3 approved at this meeting.

10.3 **Action Plan:** Approved. A separate meeting is to be held in St Stephen's on **Thursday 30th January 2025** to discuss a number of new documents/policies featured on the Dashboard.

11. **CTAX/CTCE:** CTaX had their AGM via Zoom on **Wednesday 27th November**. Minutes have been circulated to the parish. **Sunday 15th December** is the Nativity in Exeter Cathedral at 4pm. Tickets are free and booked online. St David's Carol service is at 6pm also on 15th December. The Skylarks Christmas concert is at St Stephens at 4pm on **Sunday 22nd December**. The annual Pulpit Exchange takes place across January and February. Richard Burridge's Bible Study course on John is at the

Cathedral and South Street Baptist church next January to February. Available Lent courses will be circulated early next year.

Sheila is meeting with other City Centre ministers and will discuss the possibility of further United Services. We are in favour of an additional service in the year.

12. Correspondence:

- 12.1 **Letter of thanks from Bishop Mike.** Circulated prior to the meeting. +Mike thanked Sheila and the parish for the use of St Stephen's on his Enthronement Day (2nd November).
- 12.2 **Letter from Kimbilio Project.** Circulated to the parish.
- 12.3 **Bishop Jackie** is retiring in January and there is an open invitation to her farewell service on **Saturday 18th January** at 3pm in the Cathedral. Tickets can be booked online.

13. A.O.B.

- 13.1 **Flower Arrangers and Bow door key:** The meeting approved a roving key to be given to Claire for the Flower Arrangers use. Claire has signed for this key. In addition, Claire is to have a key for the caretaker's cupboard. Any St Pancras' flower expenses to be given to Claire to get reimbursement. Claire and the flower arrangers to make decision about the flowers for Christmas.
- 13.2 **The Autumn Flea Market:** raised £137 profit.
- 13.3 **Jill Grainger is to be our Church Ambassador for Foodbank** where she will support Foodbank by sharing information about their work with the parish.
- 13.4 **St Mary Steps:** Crypt open from 8.30-4 till Christmas to view the Holy Family.
- 13.5 **St Michaels and All Angels, Heavitree:** Christmas Tree Festival from Friday 13th to Friday 20th 2024.

14. Date and Place of future meetings:

Safeguarding Meeting: Thursday 30th January at 2.30pm in St Stephen's;
Wednesday 5th March at 2.30pm (& Ash Wednesday service);
APCM Sunday 6th April

The meeting closed at 4.30pm with the Grace.