

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes
Wednesday 13th December 2023

Attendees : Bernard Hunter, Lorna Spears, Kit Tranmer, Andrew Dodd, Donna Patros, Fr Michael Copps, Matthew Ives, Peter Robson, Mike O'Sullivan.

Apologies for Absence: Michelle Spears, Rob Fernandez, Geraldine Mansbridge, Sarah Dodd. Paul Turpin.

Bernard chaired. As there was no volunteer, he also took the minutes.

Fr Michael opened the meeting with a bible reading and a short period of reflection.

Minutes of the last PPC meeting (13th November 2023)

The minutes of the November meeting were approved.

PPC Surgeries

It was agreed that this had been a good initiative, but given that responses had tailed off we would only repeat it quarterly.

As previously agreed, Bernard transcribes questions and suggests responses and asks Paul Turpin to review his proposals (and Fr Michael where desirable) before they are published.

Bernard stated that sashes would be made available, the use of which was encouraged but not required.

It was agreed to have a suggestion box as well, ideally managed by the ushers, and to actively solicit feedback in occasional newsletters and on the website.

Those **PPC members** who had not looked at the questions and responses on-line were encouraged to do so.

No responsibility for taking this forward was agreed at the meeting – action by **Bernard**

Car Park Management

Bernard's paper, which built on previous work by others was not discussed in any detail, but was thought incomplete by some members, whose view was that other options existed. Matthew was concerned that there should be enough space for those attending funerals and suggested a hierarchy of priority of users.

Kit was concerned that the parish pays for maintenance etc while others, especially school parents cause the wear and tear.

He and others also described some of the bad behaviour that is sometimes exhibited. Fr Michael urged a simple approach to the problems, one which makes visitors to the parish feel welcome and does not put barriers in their way.

Suggestions included seeking contributions from/through the schools and maybe cordoning off the grasscrete area at times.

Kit and Mike offered to consider other options and bring them back to the PPC.

Health and Safety

Kit explained the role of PIB (brokers) and PIB (risk management) in assisting the Friars and the Parish in response to a question from Michelle.

The PPC agreed the previously circulated draft terms of reference to formalise the status and operation of the Health and Safety committee.

Scout Hut

Following the previous PPC, another H&S assessment of the building was done, and simple measures put in place that obviated the need to vacate it. Remedial work remains urgent though, and tenders have been sought from contractors, the required work having been specified by the Fabric Team.

The PPC agreed the previously circulated draft Terms of Use of the Scout Meeting Hut. The PPC was pleased that its status as a Parish facility has been formalised, and confirmed that the Parish would pay for the required work.

Project Update December Status Report.

Notable points therein: -

1. Sound system.

Bernard related that many outstanding issues had hopefully been resolved that day by a contractor on-site visit, and more visits and tuning were likely; more equipment might also be ordered, depending on feedback from parishioners.

Bernard was asked to seek such feedback soon, and would try to have an item put in this week's newsletter.

2. Christmas Fair.

All affirmed this as an excellent event, with an amazing number of people getting involved. Mike reported a profit of over £6,000

3. School (Well-being support)

Andrew resigned from his role as PPC liaison with the schools, citing what he described as terrible governance arrangements, with too many people involved and resulting confusion. Mike was clear that this was intolerable.

Bernard will take over the role for the time being, and **Andrew** will send him details of contacts to ensure a smooth transition.

4. New parishioners

Bernard outlined that we hope to arrange socials for newly registered parishioners, perhaps quarterly given that there are about 4 such each month. And a rota of volunteers with a template script and material to visit them in pairs at their homes (where permission has been granted).

Donna described some of her experiences in greeting new parishioners, and wondered what happens to the forms they complete when they offer assistance. Fuller recommendations are being prepared by **Donna** and **Bernard**.

5. Advent reconciliation (new)

Peter told us that this service had been poorly attended.

Bernard suggested that we need to put more effort (probably a suitable new volunteer) into promoting & advertising such events to take advantage of the great lengths people go to in planning and organising them by trying to increase participation

Summaries to be published on the projects list to be provided by **Mike** (Christmas Fair), **LeslieB via Bernard** (Bereavement), **Peter** (Advent reconciliation)

Church Diary for 2024

This was noted, and members encouraged to review it and identify any potential problems quickly. **ALL**

The plans for Lent (starts on 14Feb) are tentative, and subject to someone leading this initiative, maybe based on Bishops' conference material about the 2024 Year of Prayer. The Franciscan 800 year anniversary in the UK is on Tuesday 10th September.

Next PPC meeting: Scheduled for Monday 8th January at 7:30pm

Please keep this in your diaries for now; however, there may be too little business to be dealt with and Bernard will cancel if possible, and confirm within a week.

Later note: January meeting cancelled.

The following meeting is on Monday 12th February at 7:30pm.

Chigwell

Fr Michael described urgent electrical problems that have just been identified in the Chapel. H&S risks mean it cannot be used beyond Christmas until repaired.

He pointed to the increasing possibility of the nuns vacating the premises and the consequent loss of the mass centre. The ability of the Friars to continue with so many masses is also obviously reducing all the time. Morning mass is usually attended by about 5 nuns and 3 or 4 parishioners, while Sunday mass attracts about 60 people. Kit pointed out that the value to the Christian community there goes beyond attendance at mass. It was agreed that **Bernard** and **Kit** would canvas view at the appropriate time.

The meeting closed at 21:10; refreshments were provided that 3 members stayed for.