

STRATFORD ON AVON CHURCH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Devotions

The meeting opened with prayer

Present

Rev Audrey Simpson, Graham Collins, David Loader, David Dumper, Shirley Dumper, Lim Ho, Evelyn Ho, Liz Walker, Malcolm Smith, Trevor Pethick {Circuit Steward}, Kath Fraser, Brenda Birnie, Jan Grant, Rev Jim Dobson, Mike Ledgard, Sue Rimmer, Sheila Brown, Gillian Edwards

Apologies

Penny Brain, Steve Farmery, Colette Inman, Janet Mee

Ratification of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the two Church Council meetings held on 12th October 2021 and on 14th December 2021 were approved as a correct record. Graham will sign per pro and file.

Matters Arising

Marriage Registration

Under the notes in the October minutes 'The CC authorises Sheila Brown being a trustee to sign and submit to the Superintendent Register of the Warwickshire Registration District the required application. ACTION—Audrey will now take this on board and progress.

Circuit Stewards Report

Report from Trevor was circulated prior to the meeting.

Audrey added that we were fortunate in gaining the appointment of Deacon Jane Mills, given that the Church nationally is short of circa 50 ministerial positions and 8 superintendent positions.

Audrey asked that groups within the Church to include Resources, Financial Reports, Pastoral, Stewards and Green Group each collate their meeting reports for the last 12 months and e-mail them to Audrey whom will pass them onto Kate Tennyson at the Circuit to then give Jane Mills valuable background in due course.—ACTION-GROUP SECS.

There is a possibility that Jane Mills may be able to visit us again. Stewards to discuss. Hopefully will give more people the chance to meet her. ACTION STEWARDS

As Jane is a Deacon she will have different responsibilities to a Presbyter appointment. Jane will not be chairing Church Council meetings. Rev Iain Ballard will take charge.

Rev Jim Dobson is seeking to arrange a visit by a Deacon from Queens College to take part in one of our services and to explain the differences between the two roles—ACTION JIM

Pastoral Report

Liz reported that Pat Griffin and Graham Jervis have died since the last meeting.

New people worshipping are Karen and Richard Hanley, Alphonso and Felicity Moyes and Brian Hughes. Barbara Jones—widow of a minister—is now at Cedar Lawn. Cedar Lawn is currently closed but Liz has made contact.

It was suggested that maybe the theme of a friendship lunch could be a South African lunch as we have a cluster of people whom have lived in South Africa.

All Pastoral visitors have completed their safeguarding training.

Penny Sharples is now the Circuit Safeguarding Officer and Liz has received new posters with her contact details.

Resources Report

Comprehensive update from meeting on 1st February previously circulated.

Ongoing Work in progress continues regarding the issues raised by the Warwickshire Fire Office Report and also in co-ordinating and tidying up the various Church Files including electronic storage.

Since the report we have had issues with flooding in the accessible toilet. Martin Malone is progressing solutions. Wet Floor tiles in the corridor are being lifted to allow them to dry.

Finance Report

Full Report from David previously circulated

The need to appoint a Church Secretary

A detailed discussion took place on the implications of David Dumper having to continue to perform temporarily the dual roles of Church Treasurer and Church Secretary.

The Church Secretary should be an elected trustee or at least someone whom is about to be appointed as trustee. Audrey will appeal in the weekly newsletter with a view to hopefully an appointment at the Church ACM On 30th April.

Jim asked if each Church necessarily needs to appoint a Church Secretary as a specific appointment.

However the prime issue relates to the requirements of all bank mandates and also the Charity Commission in that a specific secretary appointment needs to be made. We are experiencing issues and a specific Church Treasurer and also Church Secretary is required. Therefore addressing this issue is now key.

Colette cannot be officially appointed as a Church Secretary as she is not a trustee.

The Secretary role ideally also includes the ‘legal aspects’ of the Church, David highlighted areas such as liaising with the Charity Commission and with Connexion and our lawyers in Manchester etc for Contracts for hire terms, employment contracts etc

David will draw up a ‘job description’ in order that Audrey can use to promote the role.

Some aspects of the secretarial role could be picked up by others etc??

Lim asked the CC to approve David’s appointment as Temporary Secretary until 30th April—ACM—approved.

Trevor suggested we discuss implications with the Circuit and Connexion if we have issues and concerns further down the line.

Treasurer Appointment

David has given notice to retire as Treasurer as at end of the financial year—August/September 2022

No successor has yet been found. To be raised at the ACM

Church Banking

David has had considerable hurdles with HSBC and unfortunately a large number of charities and churches are receiving poor treatment. Some banks are not welcoming new bank accounts from charities and churches. Increasing FCA and money laundering regulations are also making life difficult.

Trevor added that at the Kenilworth Church Council meeting tonight—15/2 that they are seeking to transfer their account to CAF Bank. In his research David has looked at this and we would still have to use HSBC for banking of cheques and the Post Office for banking of cash as well as still incurring charges.

Green Group

Report from Lim previously circulated.

The planting of a dwarf magnolia in the front garden by the Welcome Area window was unanimously approved to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee.

Audrey and Lim are keen that we join the Eco-Chat which is on Zoom on Saturday morning 5th March. Lim has managed to obtain Austin Ivraigh as a guest speaker for this event. The Eco-Chat last month was informative and of high calibre involving local councillors

Stratford, Mickleton and Henley + matters arising--Staffing

The future of the three Churches was discussed in detail.

The Methodist Conference has decided that Churches with less than 12 members/regular worshippers need to take action or risk closure within the next year. One action to protect the smaller Churches from this course of action is 'to cluster' churches together as one body

Essentially for the three Churches involved, the buildings would remain open for worship, activities and hire etc but the administration and control of the Churches would come under body. Therefore envisaged would be one Church Council, one Resources Committee, one Stewardship Team, one Bank Account probably etc for all three Churches .

Today on 16th February David Dumper, Audrey and two people from each from Mickleton and Henley are holding a meeting to explore options further.

We know that both Henley and Mickleton are keen on progressing the 'cluster' proposal further.

There is certain amount of urgency on this in order to meet Conference deadlines, it should be completed by September.

Trevor added that there will be 'worship stewards' etc and members 'on the ground' at each of the locations in addition.

The appointment of Deacon Jane Mills is to cover the three Churches, which 'fits' in with the proposal.

Other churches in the circuit are also considering such cluster options including the 3W's—Warwick, Whitnash and Wellesbourne.

Audrey added that saw oversaw such similar arrangements during her time within both the Bath and Plymouth circuits. In addition it is only recently our circuit has been re-organised etc.

Given the income levels of the proposed cluster there would be implications and changes needed with the Charity Commission which could cause issues. Trevor added that the circuit retained the Charities Commission Registration Number for the Mid Warwickshire Circuit and that it was able to effect a name change.

Jim stated that we must involve as many members of the three Churches in open discussion, information and updates etc to bring them 'onside'. In particular we need to be sensitive to both Henley and Mickleton members that this not a 'takeover'etc.

Audrey will raise this as a key part of our ACM

Jim added that when he was involved with Churches in South Bristol—that a suitable cluster name was used for each Church—ie South Bristol {Knowle} and South Bristol (St. Peters) etc.

Trevor encouragingly added that our proposals and commitment to progress was considerably further advanced than some other Churches.

Jim stated that we need to progress discussions promptly and proposed –That the three Churches enter into discussions for the merger of the three churches in principal with a view to pursue discussions and to report back to the three church councils—this was carried unanimously

Audrey stated that there is minimal guidance within Connexion. Jim stated essentially CPD Clauses 606 covers what we need.

The proposed cluster would need to be approved at the Circuit Meeting in June

Audrey may need to call a Church Council meeting at short notice—14 days notice required—specifically for this key issue –dependent on progress etc

Future of Welford Church

A proposal elsewhere is that Welford clusters with Kineton and Fenny Compton churches with Rev Jeongsook being in charge of those three Churches. However given the geographical distances and the closeness of Welford to Stratford etc it is possible that in due course that they may seek to cluster with our new group. However at this stage this is simply for information

Welcome Directory

This is a list of Churches whom welcome newly released prisoners into their congregation. We meet the necessary requirements which are:

1] Minister prepared to be involved 2] Have members involved in the judicial and prison system 3] Have members involved with projects with Homeless and/or Foodbanks 4] have up to date Safeguarding policies

The only area is that we don't currently have a named contact

There are sessions of three 90 minute on line awareness courses on 7/14/21 March which Audrey invited us to join. No takers, Audrey will appeal via the newsletter and to discuss at the ACM.

Gillian asked if Deacon Jane Mills knew of this —we believe not at this stage.

GDPR

We are not aware of any breaches

Safeguarding

Liz confirmed above that all pastoral visitors have completed safeguarding training.

A Church Member has asked us to look at the safeguarding policy in respect of On line abuse, mental illness and Internet stalking. It is important to add a clause to cover this. ACTION- David Dumper, Liz and Audrey will sort—there may be suitable information from Methodist Resources

Resignation of Sheila and Bill Giles from the Church Council

With immediate effect Sheila and Bill are resigning from the Church Council and other areas of Church Life after many years making a huge contribution to Church life, will be ratified at ACM.

The organists are organising their own thank you. However we are keen that the Church has an opportunity to say thank you. Discussions took place ,Sheila Brown suggested a collection, Sue a special retirement tea at Church, David Loader planting a tree. We are encouraged to share ideas with the Stewards. We know that Sheila in particular will miss many aspects of Church life

AOB

David Loader stated that at Resources we discussed writing a letter to the Covid Support Team whom helped keep the Church ticking over and safe during lockdown. Agreed, but delayed for a few weeks as we know of four/five of our members unfortunately currently have Covid.

Mike asked about the use of masks in Church premises—Audrey said that it is recommended whilst on the Church premises, particularly during the Church services

Mike said that there have been some difficulties again in the Church Car Park on Fridays with the some U3A Choir members being difficult with Wesley members. Audrey stated that there are designated parking areas for each group and that we will contact each group reminding them where they park. —ACTION Audrey/Colette

Need to be aware that Audrey will also be covering for Rev Jeongsook Kim whom starts her three month sabbatical in march.

Audrey—Sabbatical

Audrey shared with us her experiences of her three month sabbatical including her photography course, clearing out a lot of books and materials gained over the years. A good opportunity to have a well earned rest and to look after her mum as well as preparing her personal plans for retirement. She particularly enjoyed visiting Churches whom have gained the Eco Gold award. She encouraged us all to share Eco experiences with other Churches

Date of next scheduled Church Council meeting

At Church in person—all being well}—on Tuesday 7th June 2022 at 7.30 PM

The meeting closed with the blessing at 9.20 pm

Graham Collins—deputising for Colette—16th February 2022

