

**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE FOR STRATFORD AND HENLEY CHURCHES  
TOGETHER HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM**

**Present**

Graham Collins, Rev. Iain Ballard, Deacon Jane Mills, Lim Ho, Jan Grant, David Loader, David Dumper, Sue Rimmer, Mike Ledgard, Andrew Steele

**Apologies**

Colette Inman, Steve Farmery

The meeting opened with prayer

**RATIFICATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held at Church were confirmed as a correct record with no amendments required and a copy is filed in the folder in the Vestry

**RESIGNATIONS FROM THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Shirley Dumper and Penny Brain have now resigned from the Resources Committee.

We acknowledge the huge amount of hard work which they both put into the Committee and allied activities. We will certainly miss their support.

Graham on behalf of Resources will send a thank you letter to both Shirley and Penny.

**UPDATE ON CHURCH SECURITY**

Penny was a key part of the Ring System, monitoring and overseeing etc together with being an important knowledge of the system and support to Colette.

On the regular weekly rota Penny covered Monday nights and her son Craig covered Friday nights. So now two of the seven nights are not monitored and covered

I have this morning asked Adrienne to put an appeal for two additional volunteers in this weeks notices.

We have had a couple of incidents with people lurking around the Church later at night. One of which was reported to the police and they knew the individuals. The police commented that the presence of the Ring system probably prevented anything further happening.

We still await Phoenix to look at the rear door. The door closure is not working effectively. The door does not close automatically and has to be manually pushed to close. Whilst Colette has advised the groups that use the New Room etc. Sue asked if Colette could put a notice on the doors to ensure people push the door closed. The front access door also could do with checking by Phoenix, there is a gap between the two doors.

## **FINANCE**

Circulated with the agenda were the minutes of the First Meeting of the Finance and Business Committee. David Dumper confirmed that the emphasis is on income generation. The attached budget document will be updated monthly with close attention being paid to overall finances.

The recent Good Energy monthly Bill was £1160 which included two weeks of gas. We are estimating a bill of circa £1500 per month covering November. Good Energy have advised David today -13/12- that as a business user importantly we will be covered by the Government Small Business Energy Discount Scheme which covers the six months from October to March. We are hopeful of knowing more details before Christmas.

Since the recent Church meetings together with the Financial Appeal David has noticed some increases from members. However three members have had to stop or reduce their giving with increasing care home fees giving issues.

David will have more information by the middle of January to evaluate progress.

A Gift Day will be held towards the end of January combined with a coffee morning to appeal for general Church giving. Discussions took place as to whether or not the appeal should be linked to a specific activity and if archive material could be used at the Gift Day Coffee Morning. However the Finance and Business Committee are keen for a general gift day appeal to help our immediate cashflow.

Jane and Jim have ideas later in 2023, perhaps April/May to hold a Vision Day at Church where we focus on this important area when archive material etc can be displayed, this was discussed at the recent Stewards meeting.

David Loader suggested that we individually thank those donors who have increased their giving. However it was felt that individual giving is private and that a general thank you would be best in the notices, pulpit etc. Iain pointed out that in these difficult economic times for some people, keeping their individual giving at the same level is not easy.

Graham will issue his annual letter to confirm amounts to donors which can be claimed for Gift Aid in April. The letter always includes a big thanks on behalf of the Church. Graham will extend this to donors whom are not eligible for Gift Aid.

### **Finance—Cleaning**

Given the usage of our premises and the requirement by our cleaning contractors—Goldhill—that they will not reduce our contracted hours, it is intention to stay with Goldhill until the end of August 2023—however this a fluid and flexible situation depending on finances etc. The fees of Goldhill are cheaper than others cleaning circuit Churches.

Cleaning will go out to tender before August 2023 when it may be possible for cleaning costs to reduce if Church members could take on some of the cleaning duties. However at the moment people resources are an issue.

Iain pointed out that for the next Church Council meeting agreement needs to be sought to reverse the plan to reduce cleaning costs by 50%. An update will be needed and flexibility sought from the CC as progress etc is explained.

Importantly the Finance and Business Committee have already reduced costs by 4/5k pa and also the Church is deferring non- essential property and repair costs where possible.

## **STEWARDS**

From Resources we do acknowledge that with Penny resigning that this leaves increasing pressure on Jan, Sue, Jim and Adrienne and that Resources will seek to take account of this in our planning and decisions etc etc.

## **ENERGY**

Discussed in detail above but that also we are conscious of balancing the requirements of keeping the premises sufficiently warm as well as saving costs where possible and being flexible with our ever changing weather!

## **STRATFORD BATTERY & HENLEY SOLAR PANELS**

The Stratford Battery grant was not successful, there is a big demand for these products and also a long lead time with suppliers not being able to guarantee prices. Lim is in discussions with Andrew as unfortunately the Henley grant application to Warwickshire County Council for solar panels was declined.

Battery-- Iain stated that there was uncertainty at the payback period and that there is no point in burdening Stratford finances with repayments over for example 7 years when the estimated payback period is 10/11 years.

Andrew is exploring the option of combining applications for both Churches and discussing plans with the Circuit to consider Circuit wide applications-- as we are an aspiring Eco Circuit --for batteries and solar panels to achieve economies of scale. Iain added that whilst he thought this was a great idea that the District Grant Structure is more favourable towards individual Church applications as each grant is capped at 10% up to a maximum amount of 10k which would not favour an individual circuit wide application covering many of the Circuit Churches.

Andrew also discussed the idea of Community Bonds where investors obtain a return over a set period.

## **NAOMI**

David met with Naomi and she resigned as an employed Wesley Leader and was paid until end of November. Naomi is continuing as a volunteer Wesley Leader.

## **LINE MANAGER FOR COLETTE**

David Dumper is the temporary line manager for Colette and they recently met to review and update etc. Colette's job description from 2019 was updated and is in line with her remuneration etc. Graham offered to work with David D on a handover basis as he would be

prepared to be the line manager for Colette in due course which would include a quarterly review and update.

### **DAMAGE TO FRONT EXTERIOR WALL**

It looks like that sometime on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December that a turning vehicle reversed into the brick wall. Although the wall is leaning into the front garden importantly it does seem 'reasonably solid'. Graham has just purchased some red tape warning of the danger and he will also contact Martin Malone to have a look and to give us some guidelines. Given the weather we probably can't do much until spring.

### **VACANT POSITIONS OF CHURCH TREASURER AND CHURCH SECRETARY**

It is probable that these roles will need to be split to attract people to these roles.

It is a requirement that the Church Treasurer is a trustee and attends CC & RC together with Circuit Meetings. It could be that the Church Treasurer is supported by a book keeper, people to do the banking and other support etc etc

Similarly the Church Secretary role could be split with this role encompassing many key areas

Iain and Jane added that this is happening in a good number of Churches

The Church Council would need to approve all appointments which the roles of Treasurer and Secretary including 'splitting' roles etc.

The Church is aware of the requirements to resolve these vacancies by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and job descriptions have been circulated.

### **10] MAINTENANCE GROUP/WORKING PARTY**

No progress at the moment, but we took on board the experiences of the Monday group at Kenilworth.

Graham will liaise with Jane with the aim of organising a suitable morning date to hopefully get members together later in January---maybe around Gift Day—donating time etc is also a gift??

An initial get together to discuss ideas and to look at areas we can provide support.

The team hopefully could include in due course a list of people available to be at Church to give support ie to contractors/hirers etc whilst using our premises??

### **11] HENLEY UPDATE**

Andrew gave us an updated report which was circulated on 13/12.

In addition to the update above on Eco Projects:

The integrated of finance is progressing. Bank Accounts to be merged in spring 2023.

Good news about the Community Fridge with a grant from the parish council, providing a valuable service to the community.

Decorator to be sourced to replaster the interior cracking walls, probably not until Spring 2023. Andrew sought guidelines from David D. Essentially for quotes and work under a cost of £500 then David is ok to give sanction, provided it is discussed with him etc . Work above that amount needs to be discussed further and may be needed to be brought to Resources for discussion etc.

In conjunction with Colette Henley will be added to the Hallmaster Booking System in due course, Henley have two existing weekly bookings. Henley will appear as an additional room under the master bookings listing.

## **PROPERTY**

Martin Malone continues to undertake small repair and essential jobs. He has a small list for which Steve and Graham are in discussion.

We are not aware of any significant property expenditure which is currently required

The boiler has been repaired –14/12 and the leak stopped—thanks to Lim and Maureen Beckett . Very impressive support from our plumbers Warmingtons at Coventry—worth adding to the Circuit diary.

Steve is keen to share his knowledge and contacts. We rely upon Steve for his wealth of experience and contacts built up over many years. Whilst Graham and some members of the committee can have some input on property matters, we are as not as confident as Steve in this area..

Iain is keen for use and share experiences with other Circuit Churches in all areas and to use Circuit Resources. It may be helpful to discuss with Catherine Evans Routley—Circuit Property Secretary-- to develop a list of Circuit key and trusted contacts. Graham will progress this early in the new year and discuss with Steve. We have some good contractors and contacts at Stratford which we can share.

David Dumper continues to complete the various reports—including property which is required annually by connexion. Colette manages effectively contractors needing to use the premises

Jane is keen to review the management groups and structure within the Church in light of changing circumstances, requirements and reducing Church members.

## **BOOKINGS AND LETTINGS**

David D reported that we have two new regular weekly users as from January and that the Phoenix Players are using the Church in Jan/Feb for a further three day production. The Phoenix Players gave us valuable hire income of circa 2k for their two productions this year.

Just Oil did not book with ourselves. The Circuit is going to draw up a brochure promoting hire possibilities of the circuit premises including use as Wedding Fairs etc and emphasising that we can perform single sex marriages.

Bookings are slowly picking up and the Finance and Business Group also have additional marketing plans etc.

Jane and Lim are arranging for a video to be taken around the Church Premises to promote the Eco work and redevelopment which has taken place for Circuit and District use.

David Loader has a couple of videos which he can offer which were produced

### **ACCESS TO BOOKINGS**

Additional access is required when Colette is not available. Iain shared with us that at Kenilworth Church that the bookings secretary, together with a steward, has full access to the Hallmaster Booking System whilst several others have a view only facility

We need to create an e-mail along the lines of bookings/lettings @ SMC etc for which some people have access and also a small group of people to have probably view only facility. It would assist if booking enquiries are received.

A general reminder from Church Groups that Colette needs to be informed of all Church Groups and Bookings. We nearly had the Carol Service without heating on Sunday.

### **SUNDAY SERVICES –11/12**

Jane was keen to thank everyone who was involved in ensuring that both services on Sunday in the adverse weather conditions went ahead as planned.

### **AOB--SAFEGUARDING –PROPERTY SECRETARY**

Graham circulated this on 13/12, having received the document from our Safeguarding Secretary Liz Walker. The document is detailed and contains important and significant commitments for the Property Secretary.

Iain asked that we defer discussion on this document until our next meeting—however in the interim can we all please read and digest the document for our march meeting.

Iain stated the background to the document is that the Methodist Church, in general when it was assessed had more robust safeguarding policies than many other similar bodies.

However going forward many posts in the Church will also be required to take on board similar policies. This is part of the audit tools being rolled out across the Methodist Church.

No other AOB

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.30 PM in person at Church

The meeting closed at 9.30 PM with a closing prayer

GRAHAM COLLINS

RESOURCES SECRETARY

14/12/2022

PS Wishing everyone a peaceful Christmas and a happy new year