

**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN SIDEROOM 1 ON THURSDAY 20TH
OCTOBER 2022 AT 1PM**

Present

Graham Collins, Rev Iain Ballard, Deacon Jane Mills, Lim Ho, Colette Inman, Jan Grant, Steve Farmery, David Loader, David Dumper, Shirley Dumper, Sue Rimmer, Rev Jim Dobson, Penny Brain.

Apologies

Mike Ledgard

INTRODUCTION

The meeting opened with prayer and a very warm was extended to both Rev Iain Ballard who chaired the meeting and Deacon Jane Mills for their first Resources Meeting.

The Steward team were invited to the meeting to share in particular discussions on the Church Finances which are in a delicate state as we start to develop an action plan over the next few months.

It was also suggested that it would be a good idea for the Stewards to join the Resources meeting for the first meeting of the Church Financial Year—generally this Resources Meeting is held in October or November—this was adopted as a good idea.

RATIFICATION OF THE MINUTES OF RECENT MEETINGS

The minutes of the two meetings held on 9th July 2022 and 16th August 2022 were both confirmed as a correct record and have been filed in the master file in the Vestry.

MATTERS ARISING

1] UPDATE ON CHURCH SECURITY

a] alarm system

Colette has done some research and knows an expert close to where she lives. The Church would need a panel in the foyer with a PIR box on the reverse. Approx cost would be £1250 and the alarm connects to an app on a mobile phone. Therefore control and operation can be done remotely. Activation times could be set to something like between 11pm and 6am.

Several of the Committee still have concerns regarding the installation of an alarm system which they felt is not always appropriate and gives a mixed message for a Church. Iain added he believes that only Warwick Church in our circuit has an alarm system.

b] front and rear door access systems

Lim has overseen the installation of a replacement powerpack in the rear door last week by Paul Hunt Electrical which it looks like has solved issues with the rear door—cost circa £250.

Graham has been called out three times in the last two weeks as hirers could not access the front door. When the door code is input the green access light is in order but the front door

will not open. In addition there is no access inside the foyer with the green access button. Jason Keyte from Paul Hunt Electrical is coming down to Shirley and Graham on Tuesday 25th to hopefully sort.

Additional front door access door keys have been cut –there are now 4 holders of the keys--Graham—David & Shirley---Jan---Lim

Graham has had two additional keys cut—one for Jane and one for the Circuit files

We need to note that the current door access systems were installed in 2014. In the medium term we may need to consider alternatives, we had a very interesting discussion with Richard Thomas at our last meeting and Colette has been in touch with Taylors of Ettington who has quoted £2378 for a keyfob system which includes circa £1800 for the software.

Such a system would enable us to issue numbered keyfobs to hirers and Church members which would be ‘unique’ to the individual and access could be restricted to the requirements of each keyfob holder to certain times or withdrawn in case of misuse etc.

A ‘non-intelligent’ keyfob system would cost circa £1000

The rear door access system is different to the front door access system and would need looking at separately.

c] Ring System

Generally the system is working well and has settled into a routine with each of the seven volunteers monitoring the system overseeing one evening each week and covering for each other with holidays etc. An effective Whats App group is in operation.

The Ring system is operational between 10pm and 6am weekdays and between 2pm and 6am on Saturday into Sunday and on Sunday into Monday. The current rota list is listed below:

Monday-----Penny

Tuesday-----Jan

Wednesday-----Graham

Thursday-----Sue

Friday-----Craig---Penny's son

Saturday-----Maureen

Sunday-----Colette

The operators are woken up sometimes in the night, particularly if animals are roaming around and if it is a windy night. However with settings adjusted these are controllable issues.

Iain has some concerns about the responsibilities of the individuals monitoring the system and at Church volunteers being on call during the night.

Attached to the minutes are the finalised instructions and guidelines for the seven rota volunteers. Graham will circulate individually to all of us.

CONCLUSIONS

We have not had a break in since May 5th—it is felt that with the notices on the premises showing that the Ring system is in operation is helping to act as a deterrent.

There were mixed views on whether we needed an alarm system as well as the Ring system which currently seems to be working well.

The Ring system has also enabled us to address security issues with certain hirers etc—eg wedging doors open and leaving doors open for other members of that hire group to follow in etc, consequently helping to improve overall security.

We will look to hide the door wedges

Security will remain under constant review and we also now have a link with Holy Trinity relating to security.

In addition with budget constraints, expenditure is on hold

FINANCE

Members were aware of the serious financial issues with David's Financial Report and Accounts circulated prior to the meeting.

IMMEDIATE ISSUE

At the end of September 2022 our reserves have reduced to 18k. We will be able to make our quarterly circuit assessment payment on December 1st of £10,284 but there is a serious concern about our ability to make the same payment for the next quarter due on March 1st 2023

David added that on average that the income of the Church is approx. £1500 less than expenditure per month. General Church giving is not increasing and whilst Hire and Lettings Income is steadily improving at circa 30k pa it is only 60% of our Hire Income Pre Covid Levels.

The Church has unfortunately lost members in recent years making an impact on Church giving. Current membership is 93.

ENERGY UPDATE

Good Energy continue to be our provider and our previous fixed tariff which was due to finish in December 2021 was extended until July 2022 which helped us during that period.

Our estimated energy bill of £4,500 pa is due to increase to circa £14,000 pa---see energy report from Lim below. As we are a business customer with Good Energy and also as HSBC classify us a business customer we should qualify for the 50% rebate for business announced by the government from October to March 2023 —however nothing is certain in that area at the moment!

CONSEQUENCES—SPECIAL MEASURES

Iain informed us that if the Church is unable to meet its quarterly Circuit Assessment then that Church will go into special measures. In effect Stratford Church will cease as a fully operational Church and will become part of one of the other Circuit Churches. For example Dale Street would worship on two sites—Stratford and Leamington but the management of Stratford Church would be undertaken by Dale Street and we would not have our own Resources Committee and Church Council amongst many other changes. The assumption being that one of the other three main Churches in the circuit would have the capacity, resources and desire to take on these responsibilities for Stratford Church.

Iain added that the payment of our Circuit Assessment is the first payment that must be made to the Circuit in case of difficulty—like HMRC being a preferential payment for businesses.

The Circuit acknowledges the financial difficulties of Circuit Churches, accelerated by Covid and has frozen this year's Circuit Assessment for Churches. The circuit is budgeted to operate at a sizeable loss in the current financial year. Our individual assessment is based on the offertory income of the Church and only half of our lettings income.

Approx 80% of the Circuit Assessment relate to staff costs.

STRATFORD CHURCH MEMBERS GIVING IN COMPARISON TO CIRCUIT CHURCHES

Iain gave us individually a sheet of paper showing:

CHURCH	OFFERTORY PER MEMBER PER YEAR	PER MEMBER PER WEEK
1]	£508	£9.77
2]	£427	£8.21
3]	£394	£7.57
4]	£322	£6.19

The four churches are ==Stratford==Kenilworth==Dale Street and Warwick

Stratford is number 4, our average weekly giving per member being £3.58 less ==36% less than Church no 1.

Iain has set a challenge for us to seek to increase the average weekly giving per member by circa £2 per member per week---£8/£10 per month.—to circa £8.19 per week.

If this was achieved our deficit in the y/e 8/22 accounts of 6k would have been a surplus of 6k, giving us a good start with the increased energy costs.

THE WAY FORWARD

A] Appeal to members to increase giving ---the date of Sunday 20th November has been set aside to hold a special meeting after morning worship explaining and highlighting the financial issues of the Church. Iain was able to use Standing Order 9.10 5G to authorise and to call the meeting.

B] David Dumper is to set up a working party as soon as is practical to review the complete finances of the Church---David does not need to wait for formal Church Council approval in November. David is keen to involve additional people within the Church whom have financial background as well as probably some representation from Church committees and Stewards plus importantly Andrew Steele at Henley.

THE ROLE OF THE WORKING PARTY

B1] Primarily to come up with an effective plan to protect Stratford Church from having to enter into Special Measures

B2] If the Church runs out of money in January/February 2023 the other 11 Churches will at the very least expect from us a comprehensive business plan as to how Stratford Church is working on an effective action plan to address the financial issues.

B3] If we have an effective plan then this could be sufficient to give Stratford Church 'breathing space' and valuable time to hopefully steadily improve the situation and to give confidence to the Circuit that there is light at the end of tunnel and that we can be self financing again.

C] Iain observed that on average other main Circuit Churches have appealed to their members over the last 5/10 years to review their individual giving annually in line with inflation etc . After the redevelopment in 2014 the Church was able to pay off its loans promptly and we were in a strong financial position until 2019/2020. Consequently we did not have to appeal to members for additional giving during that period. To some extent – this is now 'catch up' time.

D] Naomi at Wesley's is willing to review her renumeration

E] Can we set up a working party/maintenance group ==a task team ==which we had some years ago---this perhaps could be done at Brunch and assist in doing some of the more straightforward upkeep of the Church—tidying the Church inside and out—Cleaning windows==Simple decoration etc—this could also help to reduce our maintenance and probably cleaning costs which is one of our main costs??---Jan discussed with us a similar team at her former Church in Cardiff who played an important role in the Church as well as it being a social occasion etc.

F] With many members paying by either S/O or on line banking there can be less flexibility in changing payments etc---a comment made was that £10 per week in envelopes is £520 pa whilst £40 per month by S/O is £480 pa.

G] Inflation is now unfortunately 10% so giving needs to be up 10% at least just to stand still

H] The Church held a Gift Day last year which raised £6,500 which helped significantly in the y/e 8/22 accounts. Although effective, David is keen to secure increases in the regular and sustained ongoing giving

POSITIVES

We have several new members and people coming to Church—David is seeing some new donors. Nice to see the Sudanese family with us on Sundays.

Comments made--A significant amount was achieved with the £1 million redevelopment programme in 2014—I am sure we can get over this hurdle

There appears to be a determined attitude from committee members.

Jane is meeting with hire groups in the Church once a month to develop relationships and links with the Church. Positive conversations including already an additional hire enquiry

CHURCH TREASURER POSITION-No Treasurer no Church

David has kindly agreed to continue for a further year. However this is definitely David's final year as Treasurer. He will retire as at financial year ending 31st August 2023 but will assist the new treasurer in the handover period etc.

Iain insists that David will retire as at 31st August 2023. If no replacement is found then the Church cannot operate and that effectively we will cease being a Church in our own right.

This situation will be included in the presentation on November 20th at Church.

We are aware that David has spent a considerable amount of time in recent months being worried about the financial position of the Church—both Iain and Jane thanked him for his support and stated that he must not feel that he carries sole responsibility for the situation—it is the problem of the whole Church. Iain and Jane were keen to thank Shirley for her support and help to David.

PROPERTY REPORT

Ongoing scheduled maintenance and servicing continues to go ahead.

The water boiler in the foyer and surrounding areas have been replaced

Importantly at the moment we are not aware of any significant major expenditure

The Ground Source Water Pump has been serviced twice since 2014 and cables repaired—all is working effectively. The filters of the Rainwater Harvesting Tank are regularly cleaned by Martin Malone. Whilst all is working well a deep clean may be required in due course but this is an expensive item. Solar panels are working well. However we need to be aware that all these pieces of kit are approaching nine years old.

Martin Malone has filled in the fire stops in the basement as part of the Fire Safety Report

In addition he has painted the front lounge window and also repaired and painted the boiler house door in the summer.

Although not an issue at the moment the high roof valley gutters will need cleaning in particular if we have a stormy winter. Iain suggested Steve contacts Mervyn Harvey at Kenilworth as they have similar issues. Colette has contact details.

We are aware that there are areas in the Church that ideally need decorating—two of these jobs are on Martin Malone's list--hopefully in due course with Finances etc--- redecoration of the Church Notice Board and also painting of the new vestry door.

In due course we could do with a skip to clear out old items which are in the basement and other areas. In addition the Water Heaters in the Toilets need looking at by Martin

We are slowly reviewing and progressing the implications of the Fire Safety Report---we need to arrange a Fire Safety Drill at a morning service

There are issues with the Lighting in the Gents and Ladies Toilet together with two replacement lights in the Sanctuary—in process of being sorted

We know about the door access issues!

THE MERGER OF HENLEY CHURCH

It is important that Andrew Steele at Henley is invited and able to attend future Resources Meetings. Given that he works, future Resources Meetings will be held in the evening.

The Henley Church Bank Account remains operative, primarily because of their application in progress for the 25k solar panels grant. Upon completion and in due course the bank account will probably be merged.

Henley is a small community Church where the members look after each other—they have their own pastoral committee which will continue

The Church has an important use in the local community with the Library and the Community Fridge.

Henley will become part of Stratford Church worshipping on two sites. The Resources Committee and Church Council at Stratford will need to ensure that we have Henley representation. The merger will 'evolve' over time.

The Finance element of Resources will need to be joint whilst property could remain separate with Henley continuing to oversee their own property issues subject to budgets and finance etc.

Iain asked that if there are issues or practicalities with the merger of Henley Church to discuss with him direct.

Good news from Welford

With the closure of Bidford Church they have welcomed 3 new members but also have recruited new members locally and now have 15 members.

ENERGY REPORT—LIM

Lim's energy report was circulated with the agenda.

Lim suggested that light switches be labelled to 'please switch off' and communicate with hirers.

Both Church users and Hirers automatically switch the lights on is this really necessary? Also the lights in the foyer are left on unnecessarily.

Discussions took place on the water heaters as they are on 24/7. It was decided that the water heater in the kitchen will be switched off. Users of the kitchen to be informed if they wish to use the boiler to switch on prior to their booking and off at end.

In an ideal world we would look at replacing the three water boilers with new increased energy efficient ones which come complete with timers.

The new Hallmaster booking system allows for an additional notes to be added to hirers.

Battery

Discussions took place in that we are only able to export 47% of our electricity generated into them Grid. A battery would enable us to store more and thus export more electricity into the grid having the effect of increasing our income

Although the cost of the battery is between 5k and 6.5k. Iain discussed that this expenditure may be viable as follows:

A] Increasing energy costs reducing payback period

B] The Circuit Ecofund has funds which can make available a grant of up to 25% of the total cost. The Circuit Leadership Team meet on 10th November and could consider an application

C] The District Resourcing Committee meets in February and may be able to add a further grant of 10%--however we were not too sure if this can be retrospective or if it would apply to new applications only.

D] Lim is asked to bring a proposal to the Church Council in November for discussion. I know from previous Church Council minutes that Janet Mee offered to assist with these grant forms etc, she is familiar with them etc at work.

Heating

The building was previously set at 21c now set at 20c. Suggested reduce to 19c. David Loader requested that for the Sunday Service that this be maintained at 20c. New Room now set at 19c. Corridor radiators to be set at 18c and see if there are any issues.

The Base Heating for the corridors is now set at 15c. when the Church is not in use. There are four heating zones in the Church which can be individually controlled these are a] Sanctuary b] Siderooms 1 &2 c] New Room d] Wesley Hall.

Colette has reduced the pre- heating time for each hire group and heating is being switched off 15/30 minutes at the end of a hire or a set of continuous hire periods.

We cannot do much to reduce our costs on kitchen gas oven use or photocopy/printing costs, although as an eco church we continue to seek to reduce the amount of printing and photocopying.

Jane suggested the purchase of a carpet sweeper.

It is worth looking into installing high type valves on each of the radiators which would enable the temperature of each radiator to be individually controlled. Again-- suggested we contact Mervyn at Kenilworth Church –Lim to follow up to see if viable etc

EMPLOYMENT OF COLETTE AND NAOMI

Audrey was previously the line manager for both Colette and Naomi.

Iain stated that he could not be appointed as their line managers as this creates a conflict of interest. It is not appropriate for Jane to be involved either.

The Church Council needs to appoint someone within the Church whom is prepared to take on this role—needs to be on the November Church Council meeting.

DUTY OF CARE TO EMPLOYEES AND DISCLOSURE

Iain was very concerned that we all pay specific attention in this area as there can be some severe consequences as follows:

A] Colette has been contacted out of hours on her mobile by Church members and hirers this has to stop. Colette now has a circuit mobile and she has changed all the details in the notices in the Church premises giving contact details. We need to do likewise –NB Colette does not work on Thursday PM, Friday or at the weekend.

The item needs to be included on the Church Council and addressed. Individual trustees on the Church Council are covered for a personal liability of up to 250k for negligence providing that there is no criminal negligence

Iain warned us that he could not tolerate any individual disclosures or issues in this area where we have a duty of care to both employees and to ourselves. We must respect holidays and no contact when not on duty etc.

BOOKINGS AND LETTINGS

Continuing to steadily increase with new enquiries. There is a second booking in the winter from the Phoenix Players.

The new Hallmark booking system which has been rolled out in the Circuit is saving Colette and others many hours of administration. Although the layout of the printed bookings schedule is in a different format and not as easy to follow. Colette will keep an eye on software updates etc.

The weekly booking listing schedule after discussion is to remain posted inside the foyer.

Colette asked for an additional point of contact/referral for bookings and lettings when she is unavailable. Graham had offered to have e-mail contact details but in view of the above Iain suggested we create a Lettings @ SMC or similar e-mail address created and that Graham and others if required can have access to etc.

SUNDRIES & AOB

With time moving only a couple of issues were discussed

Liz Walker has got one key to the Old Safe in the Vestry—Graham has now cut two additional keys one to be held by Jane/Collette and one for the Circuit Files

Maureen has discussed with Jane the need for a Card Reader to be used at Brunch, Christmas Bazaar and similar events. Wesleys are looking at this as well with two options under review being Sum Up and Square Up with similar fee structures. Radford Road have a Card Reader

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In view of all of the above. A meeting to be called before Christmas on Tuesday 13th December—evening meeting at Church 7.30 PM—Resources Team only envisaged.

The meeting closed with prayer after a two hour 40 minute meeting at 3.40 PM

Graham Collins

Resources Secretary

24/10/2022

