



Minutes of the meeting of the United Church Council

Held on Monday 11 January 2021

Meeting held on Zoom

Present: Gill Bayley, David Carruthers, Buzz Coster, Jane Earl, David Edney, David Gilbert, John Glidden, Martyn Gowing, Petra Hedges, David Hibbert, Sue Hillier, John Rhodes, Adam Shiels, Revd Deborah Snowball.

The meeting was chaired by the Vicar.

1) **Opening prayer** was led by the Vicar.

2) **Apologies for absence** were received from Helen Swain.

3) **Minutes of meeting held on Monday 9 November 2020**

Having been circulated, these were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed.

4) **Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

a) *Pandemic update (item 5b)*: Deborah thanked the people who had assisted in putting services onto the computer and getting the church ready post-lockdown.

b) *Update on staff health (item 5d)*: Deborah thanked everyone for their good wishes following her surgery. She reported that Katrina will shortly find out about the next stage of her treatment.

c) *HSBC bank accounts (items 5e and 5f)*: The Treasurer has not received any correspondence from HSBC that the signatories on the church accounts have been changed, nor has he received any statements. He will contact Rob Kay who previously received statements to enquire as to whether Rob has received any. **Action: Adam Shiels**

David Gilbert reported that the name of the Church Centre account has been changed and a new cheque book and paying-in book have been received. He has not heard specifically that the new signatories have been registered.

d) *Sidespeople (item 8)*: Deborah proposed that this be done at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

e) *Eco-Diocese (item 9)*: Deborah would like to invite interested people to form a group to undertake an audit and review what changes might be made at St Mary's. She noted that this group will not form part of the Fabric & Churchyard Committee although there will be some overlap. She has already circulated details of forthcoming webinars on the subject.

5) **Vicar's remarks**

a) Deborah thanked everyone for their continued presence over the past difficult months. In particular she thanked the Churchwardens for their hard work and Buzz Coster who had kept the website up-to-date.

b) She noted that the current period is one of challenge for church finances as well and that this is also a time to bring our other gifts to the mission of St Mary's and a time to focus on this aspect of the church's work.

6) **Correspondence**

Development of former Bridge Motors site: Correspondence had been received under the Party Wall etc Act 1996 to inform the church of the developers' intention to carry out works that have the potential to affect church premises. Accordingly, it was agreed to appoint a surveyor to act on behalf of St Mary's to safeguard the church's interests. The surveyor will act in consultation with St Mary's and the Diocese and their costs will be paid by the owner of the Bridge Motors site. Deborah had identified Bhamra Associates Ltd as a suitable company to undertake this role and had drafted a letter of appointment which was approved by the Council.

7) Safeguarding

- a) *Training:* Helen Swain reported that there was no change with regard to outstanding training. Two members of the UCC need to do C0 training and Sue Johnson needs to do C2 training. The two UCC members will speak with Helen about booking the training. **Action: Gill Bayley, John Glidden**
- b) *Appointment of new Safeguarding Officer:* Deborah has approached two people to take on this role but has not had a response. This is becoming urgent and everyone was urged to think who might take on this important role. **Action: All**
- c) *Appointment of new Deputy Safeguarding Officer/s:* Janet Lucas has offered to assist Sue Johnson with her responsibilities. It was agreed that this offer be accepted and that they be asked to work together.
- d) *Safeguarding policy:* Martyn Gowing reminded the Council that the Safeguarding Policy is due for review.
- e) *Survivors of abuse:* Deborah has received information booklets along with study guides written by survivors of abuse.

8) Coronavirus COVID-19

- a) *Review of Risk Assessment:* No changes were necessary.
- b) *Worship in church:* In the light of the increased incidence of COVID-19, the Bishop had approved suspending worship in church for the first three Sundays in January. He had given dispensation for churches to make local decisions that were appropriate for their congregations for the coming weeks. Following discussion, it was agreed by a majority vote that public worship will be suspended and Sunday services will be held online, led from church, until the end of February 2021. This decision will be reviewed on 14 February 2021. The Church Centre also remains closed.
- c) Sunday morning worship will take a different form each week in order to provide broad appeal.

9) Charity registration

- a) St Mary's must register as a charity by 31 March 2021. In the light of the impending conclusion of the LEP, it had been agreed by the Vicar and Churchwardens that St Mary's apply for registration as Rickmansworth Parochial Church Council.
- b) All members of the PCC will become Trustees and if, for any reason, they are unable or unwilling to become a Trustee, they will be unable to serve as a member of the PCC. Trustee indemnity insurance will be taken out. Adam Shiels will send out the appropriate forms to UCC members. Details of webinars about the responsibilities and duties of Trustees will also be circulated. **Action: Adam Shiels**

10) Budget 2021

The draft budget for 2021 had been circulated. It was noted that a 3% increase had been forecast for Planned Giving and this was considered optimistic. The budget was agreed.

11) Building works

- a) *Remedial electrical works:* Three quotes had been received against the specification:
 - C Roper Electrical Ltd: £18,126+VAT (additional work at £45 per hour +VAT)
 - Branney Electrical Contractors: £27,619+VAT
 - Andy Avis Electrical Ltd: £18,212+VAT

It was noted that all the works in the specification are deemed to be essential although only £6,000 of the work has been included in the budget. It was agreed to accept the quotation provided by Andy Avis Electrical Ltd.

- b) *Building development plans:* Plans had been circulated but no costings had been done.

12) Church Giving Sunday (24 January 2021): *What can I give Him?*

- a) At the last UCC meeting, it had been suggested that the focus should be on encouraging people to engage more with St Mary's by offering their time and talents. However, since then, the production of a deficit budget for the forthcoming year meant that focus should not be lessened from the financial aspect of church giving.
- b) Letters will be sent out electronically as much as possible. If people are not on the Vicar's or church's distribution lists, hard copy will be sent out.

13) Conclusion of LEP

- a) At the meeting of the Methodist Council in November it had been suggested that the Service of Thanksgiving should be moved away from Easter Sunday as originally envisaged.
- b) The financial implications of ending the LEP have not yet been confirmed.

14) Mission Action Plan

No-one has offered to help with this project. Deborah will progress this with the Churchwardens.

15) Finance report

	8/01/2021	9/11/2020
Current & Deposit	£50,624	£49,067
Epworth (Myers & other bequests)	£231,119	£216,337
CBF	£6,528	£6,528
CBF Plate Fund	£88,993	£88,993

The finance report to 30 November 2020 had been circulated. Deborah queried the amount paid for work on the Vicar's Vestry where no work had been undertaken. Adam Shiels will investigate. **Action: Adam Shiels**

16) Minutes of the meetings of sub-committees (previously circulated)

Minutes were received from:

- a) Community & Outreach
- b) Fabric & Churchyard

It was noted that the Removing Barriers policy is due for review. This will come to the next UCC Meeting.

17) Diocesan/Deanery/Circuit news

- a) *Circuit*: David Edney reported that Revd Rachel Hawkins will continue as Joint Superintendent. Revd Richard Lowson's position as Joint Superintendent is due to be reconsidered in September 2022 although this may not affect St Mary's which may no longer be part of the Circuit. The new minister in Croxley Green & Berry Lane had had to return to the USA for family reasons. She had been holding services on Zoom.
- b) *Deanery*: St Mary's representatives to Deanery Synod had not been sent information about the recent meeting although their details had been passed to the Diocese and Secretary of Deanery Synod. Their details will be sent to the Rural Dean.
- c) *Diocese*: Nothing to report.

18) St Mary's 750

The year of celebrations had officially ended. Unfortunately it was not currently viable to reschedule any of the cancelled events. Thanks were expressed to the people who had worked on the project including Tim Tims and John Shaw (tree-planting), those who had worked on the timeline, Buzz Coster and Helen Swain.

19) Any other business

Bank: Deborah asked that consideration be given to the bank with which we do business and its ethical standards. This will be investigated by the S&F committee.

20) Date of next meetings

- a) 14 February 2021: meeting to review worship arrangements
- b) 4 March 2021: meeting with Archdeacon
- c) 8 March 2021

21) Closing prayers

The meeting closed with the Grace.