

## THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

### Minutes for the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 4.30pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in St Stephen's church

**Present:** Revd Sheila Swarbrick, Keith Walton (chair), Betsy Allen, Richard Skinner, Viv Asher, Celia Smith, Jessica Claridge, Don Branton, Helen Evans, Claire Mayer, Mary Keaney (sec)

**Apologies:** Sue Blow

Keith welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Prayer:** Sheila read from Isaiah 44: v 3

2. **Minutes of the Zoom meeting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021:**

All minutes from January 2020 to March 2021 were approved and signed by Keith as accurate records.

3. **Matters Arising/Questions:** None

4. **Parish Activities:**

**4.1 Pastoral Care:** unminuted

**4.2 Pattern of services & church opening hours:** Sheila reported that the 3 churches including St Stephen's, St Pancras' and St Martin's are open daily from 10am to 4pm. We hope to open St Petrock's soon but it would be preferable to have a charity display in there to coincide with re opening. The Bellringers Library will be opening up once a month from July. St Olave's will be opening up in late August/September.

For services in June, July & August there will be a prepared service when there is no 10.30am service in St Stephen's. A seasonal Night Prayer has been circulated for people to use when they wish. Chris Bryan will be taking a number of services across the parish during August.

Keith outlined the changes to the pattern of services from September. He said that most people were happy to continue the weekly pattern so far established where there is an in building service each Sunday across the parish. There will be a first Sunday of the month Holy Communion service in St Stephen's with the third Sunday becoming a non-communion service to be known as 'Crossing Place'. This will be an informal lay-led service. A rota will be devised nearer the time. Betsy noted that there are lots of resources available for those wishing to lead one of these services.

A discussion on the future of the Sunday Zoom meetings and prepared materials will be held at a later date.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August:** service to be held in St Mary Arches at 10.30am with the service led by Charles Edwards.

Sheila held a prayer group on Zoom between Ascension and Pentecost.

We have the Orthodox church using St Pancras' twice a month and the Romanian Community use St Stephen's for worship on Saturday evenings and Sundays on the weekends when St Stephen's is not in use. Sheila has been in discussion with the Romanians re: storage of their belongings in the heritage boxes in the Bow. Betsy added that it was wonderful to have the Romanian group using St Stephen's and it should be celebrated.

**Action:** Richard to remove the heritage folders and give to Free Cycle Exeter

**4.3 Living in Love & Faith:** Sheila reported that she will be holding face to face groups in St Stephen's on the 5 Thursdays in July starting at 2.30pm and finishing at 4pm. The National Church are keen for responses to this initiative.

**4.4 Eco-church: Energy consumption** Ecotricity have revised our direct debit to lower monthly debits. We will also get a refund for our over payments.

**4.5 Parish Social: Ham Wall to see the starling murmuration** Helen updated us saying the aim is to visit during the winter months (Nov, Dec, Jan) although this is dependent on the current government guidelines/restrictions.

*Action: Helen and Betsy to begin planning the outing in September with a Plan B as a back-up. Sheila suggested a garden party at Ann's Paddock in August as happened last summer.*

*Action: Jessica to speak with Caroline about planning this and the most suitable Sunday date.*

**4.6 Greeters:** Mary reported that both Bob Snowden and Doreen Hatt have retired from Greeting. Julie has a possible contact to join the team as may Claire depending on her availability. Bookings begin from September onwards with a couple of lunchtime concerts one being Nina Savicevic, whom the parish support.

**4.7 July Lunchtime Concerts & other events:** Jessica reported that all 5 concerts have been booked. They are permitted to go ahead during the extension to Covid restrictions with 50% of normal capacity, the wearing of masks and social distancing. Our Track and Trace poster is in place and someone will count people in at each concert.

*Action: Mary to add small sign to accompany the main poster advertising the concerts that numbers are limited to 60 per concert, masks to be worn unless exempt and social distancing will be in place with advice to arrive early to secure a seat.*

The meeting decided it would be best not to offer drinks to the audience but to offer a picnic lunch to the performers.

*Action: Jessica to contact performers and see if they would like a picnic lunch provided.*

It was also decided that individuals could give a specific informal donation to the performers if they wish by leaving cash in an envelope for Jessica to collect. Jessica will take a general donation from the proceeds for each performer with the remainder going to church funds.

*Action: Mary to email the parish with details of how to give a small remuneration to the performers in appreciation of their time and effort.*

**4.8 Inner Room Update:** Helen reported that Inner Room launched in March 2020 and was conducted via Zoom with the survey conducted at the end of Phase 3 being very positive. The steering committee recommend that Inner Room continues for another year. Helen thanked the steering committee members including Sheila, Keith, Betsy and Richard for their support. Currently, Helen and Richard are putting together an anthology of work from the Inner Room writing sessions which will be on sale and used at the workshop in October. Richard and Claire thanked Helen for her work and remarked on how the sessions have gone beyond the parish. Helen also talked about the CMS course which she is doing via Zoom.

**4.9 Response to Archdeacon Visitation questions:** Keith reported that the parish have been able to give positive responses to the Archdeacon's questions. They were around Safeguarding, clergy well-being and worship during lockdown. Both churchwardens will attend the online visitation.

## 5. Church Buildings:

**5.1 St Stephen's: garden** Betsy thanked everyone for donating plants and reported that the garden is doing well as a result. We now have a gardener who visits once a month to carry out maintenance tasks. The Princesshay gardeners currently water the garden.

Don reported on the ceiling repairs. The builder has given a quote for securing all the joists (the weight of the heaters is causing cracks) at £4,356 (VAT incl). Russ Palmer, architect, will instruct the builder to do the work. Don has also fitted toughened glass to the broken noticeboard door.

**5.2 St Petrock's: damp in cupboard** The damp issue has been resolved by Leslie Boyce, the Bellringer Librarian. Don reported on the blockage of the sink in the Homelessness Centre caused by a fat ball.

**5.3 St Pancras:** We have had a request from Ecclesiastical Insurance for a desktop survey to discuss maintenance, security and health and safety.

*Action: Don to arrange a mutually convenient time for this desktop survey*

**5.4 St Olave's: Refurbishment update & disposal of vestments** Don reported that the electrical work should be complete by July/August. The flooring in the kitchen needs attention along with

disposal of the vestments. The Archdeacon, Andrew Beane, visited St Olave's and was impressed by the refurbishment. The vestments and frontals can be offered via Diocesan mailing or sold via Gumtree.

**Action:** John Dobson to be asked to take photographs of the copes on models

**Action:** Claire and Sheila to measure the altar fronts and put up for sale

**Action:** Don to investigate suitable flooring

6. **Social Media Update:** Helen continues to update Facebook with parish activities, church opening times and other news/info.
  - 6.1 **Social Media Policy:** Helen noted that the link to the Diocesan 'Guidance on safeguarding whilst using video conferencing platforms' didn't open when clicked. Also, she suggested the statement under Emails which states 'Use email as last resort' should be removed as this is impractical.

**Post meeting Update:** Mary checked the link which did open and will add this document to the next meeting's agenda for further discussion.
7. **Deanery Synod Report:** The meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April was via Zoom where it was noted that the parish of Pinhoe with Poltimore joined the Christianity Deanery. During the meeting break out groups were used for participants to discuss what has been learnt from lockdown, what may be returned to and how we move forward. The new Deanery Synod Committee Meeting will take place in St Stephen's on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 7.30pm.
8. **Finance:**
  - 8.1 **Budget for end of May:** Sheila talked us through the latest budget. She noted that we had budgeted for a deficit considering the constraints of the last year. Under 'Use of PCC property' it was noted that the sum of £1,799 comes from the Exeter Network Church, the Romanian Community and the Orthodox church booking St Stephen's and St Pancras' for worship. Other groups making new booking for later in the year will have monies carried over from 2020. Fundraising has come from the sale of Sheila's mum's stamps and her uncle's paintings/drawings.

**Action:** Helen to produce a QR code so people can donate digitally
9. **Safeguarding and Health & Safety:**
  - 9.1 **Unsolicited phone calls to work phone:** Mary reported on a number of long phone conversations she has had with individuals who were wanting someone to talk to and not enquiring about using the church. Various members of the PCC expressed concern for Mary, stating that she is not a counsellor and that she can end a conversation. Richard and Keith had produced a set of suitable phrases for her to use which will be sent to her. There was also discussion about buying a new mobile phone and of encouraging Mary to set more clear boundaries as to when she answers the phone or when messages are left.

**Post Meeting Update:** Mary has received the suitable phrases and made a list of organisations to use as signposts. She has also taken on board the setting of boundaries and has appreciated the support proffered.
  - 9.2 **Action Plan:** The Action Plan was approved by the PCC.
11. **CTAX/CTCE:** Sheila reported that Sacred Heart have a new curate and that the Revd Simon Taylor from South Street Baptist church will be taking up the post of Free Church University chaplain from September for 3 days per week.
12. **ECCC:** Sheila reported that some of the chaplains retired last summer although Norman Wallwork continued and others have stopped this year. There will be a service in September/October to mark these retirements and to recommission chaplains and new trustees.
13. **CMS link:** Sheila has emailed Ruth Sayers to invite her to give a talk at our harvest service this year.
14. **Correspondence:** A few thank you letters from charities in receipt of donations from the parish.

**15. A.O.B.**

**15.1 To note closure of marriage registers:**

*Action: Mary to scan and store safely the Register and Stock Return Receipt forms.*

**15.2 Fairtrade Place of Worship Award:**

*Action: Betsy to look into this further and report to next meeting.*

**15.3 Emergency Funds:** Sheila reported that Jim, our caretaker, gave some money to a homeless chap but we need to remember that the parish is able to signpost those in need rather than act as a charity.

**15.4 Foodbank basket:** Foodbank are looking to see if any city centre churches can act as hosts for food donations. With no CCTV in place we cannot guarantee that the food given would get to Foodbank so this may not be an initiative for the parish to help with at the moment.

**15.5** Claire gave thanks for the work done by Sheila, Keith, Betsy and Mary.

**16. Date and Place of future meetings:**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September at 4.30pm at St Petrock's church **TBC**;

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December.