

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ILKLEY ST MARGARET

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council of St Margaret's, Ilkley held on Tuesday 12 January by 'Zoom'

Helen Pilling in the chair. Meeting started at 7.30pm

Present: C Beaumont, R Beeson, H Buswell, C Cheater, C Gibson, G Hartley, J McGhee, H Pilling, C Ramage, D Shaw, R Smeaton, J Smith, M Still, V Smith, A Stretton, T Warnes, C Webster, S Williams, T Williams, A Wilson

Apologies: B Harrison

Minutes of the last meeting: Unanimously agreed.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Safeguarding Report

Our safeguarding officer, Catherine Beaumont, said there remain outstanding DBS certificates to be completed by some PCC members and asked that they speak to her about this asap as it is a legal requirement of all members and is not optional. She also encouraged everyone to update their safeguarding training; although all face-to-face training has been cancelled, levels CO and C1 can be completed online. Those interested should contact her if they wish to do so.

Implications of National Lockdown

Helen Pilling noted that it was a very difficult decision for the Standing Committee to make to suspend church services and was very grateful for the emails of support and questions around the decision. In advance of the PCC meeting, the following was sent to the PCC members to give everyone the opportunity to consider the process, and she shared it again by Zoom to everyone during the meeting:

'The Standing Committee's decision to suspend the services needs to be approved by the PCC. The suggested wording (taken from the current guidance from the Diocese) will be:

"The churchwardens and the parochial church council of Ilkley St Margaret acting jointly request that the bishop authorise dispensing with the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer as required by Canon B 11 and the celebration of the Holy Communion as required by Canon B 14 on a regular basis during the period of the National Lockdown which commenced on 5th January 2021. The reason for requesting the dispensation is that in the light of the Government's guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus, there is no church in the benefice which can safely be used for public worship and there is no reasonable prospect of any church in the benefice being made safe for that purpose until at least 21st February 2021 because of our concerns for the health and safety of our mainly elderly congregation; the same for our diminishing group of helpers; the fact that we are asking visiting clergy to travel in from out of the area increasing the risk to all. This request will be reviewed at the meeting of the PCC to be held on 16th February 2021."

Gwyneth Hartley wished to state, on behalf of 11 members of the congregation, that they were unhappy with the decision.

Carmel Ramage stated that in her position as a medical professional, it is vital that everybody stays at home, to protect not only themselves but also the community.

Helen Pilling then asked the PCC to vote on the motion by a show of hands. There were 19

votes in favour and one vote against the motion. Therefore, the motion was carried.

The churchwardens noted that in the interim - in readiness for the re-opening when it is considered safe to do so - they will review the risk assessments that were put in place following the first lockdown. They also gave an update that choral singing is no longer allowed in church as part of government restrictions.

The Vacancy

- Appointment of New Incumbent

Helen Pilling made the point that as before, she recognised this matter will polarise views. The congregation had been invited to attend two meetings with the Bishop, the Patron and Archdeacon, and had also been invited to send letters expressing their views to the PCC, which had in turn been shared with the Bishop, Archdeacon and Fr Oswin. The PCC members had also been asked to speak with members of the congregation, to canvass opinions.

Every PCC member was given the opportunity to express their viewpoint, and give feedback on their discussions with other members of the congregation. All did so, except for those who had supplied their views by letter/email previously. The letters received from the congregation were also taken into account.

Val Smith suggested that for clarity, the matter should be put to vote by a show of hands, to which Helen Pilling agreed. The following motion was put forward to the PCC:

“That St Margaret’s Church follow the usual recruitment process in recruiting a new vicar.”

18 votes were in favour of the motion, there were no votes against the motion, and two members abstained. Therefore, the motion was carried: we will proceed with the usual recruitment process.

Helen Pilling will contact the Archdeacon to discuss the next steps.

The PCC recognised that there will be members of the congregation who will be disappointed and concerned about the decision. The PCC agreed that it must work hard to make sure that St Margaret’s is as inclusive as possible for a congregation with diverse needs.

- The Parish Profile

Following the previous PCC meeting which asked for volunteers to help with the preparations for the appointment of the new incumbent, Val Smith kindly offered to help prepare the Parish Profile. Val will work with Vickie Kemp (Parish Administrator) to produce this important document, with support from others. Val noted that we are in a much better position than the last time we prepared a Parish Profile, in terms of our finances, numbers attending church, the fabric of the church building, the choirs, and Sunday School which have both grown. She had begun some research and found All Saints’ brochure to be impressive.

- The Brochure Group

Following the last PCC meeting, Ros Beeson kindly volunteered to lead the Brochure Group, which she will do with Vickie. This will highlight what we aspire to be as a church and what we would like to see in our new incumbent. Ros is now seeking other volunteers to join her to create a Brochure Group, which will ideally be made up of a cross section of our church family, to reflect the different elements of St Margaret’s including, for example, members who attend the Family Service, choir members to reflect our music requirements, and so on. The Brochure Group will do their utmost to try to represent the church family as best they can, with practical, spiritual and emotional concerns properly debated.

- Parish Representatives

The Standing Committee put the suggestion of Catherine Gibson and John McGhee to the PCC, to act on our behalf in the appointment process as our Parish Representatives. Catherine and John then gave an overview of their professional and personal experiences. It was agreed that the Parish Representatives will be discussed at the next PCC meeting, once members have had chance to reflect.

NB, following the meeting, Helen Pilling emailed the PCC members to ask if any of them would like to stand for this role that they contact her; a list of candidates will then be circulated before the meeting on 16th February for the PCC to then decide by vote if necessary.

Wardens' Items

Risk Assessments: Helen Buswell noted that as part of the review of the risk assessments involving re-opening church when safe to do so, the new rules will be much tighter in terms of the Covid safety procedures, as there have been too many people milling around/groups chatting on the pavement following services.

PCC Minutes: Alison Stretton proposed that the minutes of the PCC meeting be made available on St Margaret's website, and pinned to the notice board outside church. Also, that those without the internet will be told that they can request a hard copy of the minutes which will be posted or delivered to them. All agreed.

Finance Report

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. John McGhee said we are now at the Year End position. We have met £90,000 of our share which is a fantastic result considering the situation we are in with the pandemic. Our income from the Hall is down to £10,000 from the usual £30,000. The new boiler should see us through a good number of years. John is now preparing the Budget for next year which he will present to the PCC at the next meeting, and he will arrange to speak with our Independent Examiner. Financially, we are in an 'OK' place.

Chairs of Church Facilities Committee (CFC) and Hall Committee

There are still vacancies for these positions but given there is little activity in church now, together with the more pressing matters requiring the PCC's attention, it was agreed to roll this item forward to the next PCC meeting agenda.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

ENDS