

**MEETING OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, EAST DULWICH**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 May 2016

Present: Rachel Mills (Vice Chair), Christine Camplin, Anne Coates, Libby Coates, Natasha D'Souza, Sarah Goudge, Sally Gross, Martin Howell, Ola Jibona, Malcolm King, Alistair McCulloch, Gill Nash, James Nurton, Tayo Olatunde, Michael Robinson, Joy Taylor, Vince Turner and Julie Whitney.

In attendance:

Laura Williams and Ben Vertannes (for Safeguarding item)

Dorothy Oxley (Minutes)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Anne Clarke, Alan Croft, Ben Hunt, Alistair Read and Eurica Shaw.

2. Welcome and Opening Prayer

2.1 Rachel, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Laura Williams, who would be giving the Safeguarding presentation under Item 3, and the new Safeguarding team member, Ben Vertannes (Tina, also on the team, had given her apologies, while Libby Coates was attending as a member of the PCC).

2.2 Alistair then opened the meeting with prayer.

3. Presentation on Safeguarding at St John's

3.1 A paper had been circulated, and Laura began by highlighting the importance of ensuring that all the activities of the church are safe, especially for vulnerable people such as children, elderly people and those with learning difficulties. The Diocese offers a full programme of training and information, which can be circulated to anyone who is interested. Awareness of safeguarding issues has grown over the years, and the Church of England has produced its own guidelines, 'A safe church', which provide the framework for what the Safeguarding Team does. *(This can be downloaded from <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/diocesan-policies-procedures>).*

3.2 One of the messages that came out from the Victoria Climbié case is that safeguarding is everyone's business. If you see or hear something worrying, you have a responsibility to tell someone so that action can be taken, and the PCC is responsible for overseeing all of that.

3.3 Although, as Christians, we want to see the best in people and offer a welcome to everyone who comes into the church, there may be some people who pose a risk to others, and we have a responsibility both to help them manage their own behaviour and also to safeguard others who may be at risk. There is a Public Protection Team that liaises with organisations if a known offender moves into a community, and one of the things that the church has to do, under the leadership of its vicar, is to co-operate with the authorities and to work with the London Borough of Southwark's safeguarding procedures.

3.4 Although the ultimate responsibility lies with the incumbent and the churchwardens, everyone has a part to play in helping St John's to be a safe church. We should:

- Share concerns at the earliest opportunity, with the vicar, the churchwardens, or a member of the Safeguarding team. You do not need to carry out an enquiry yourself, just pass the information on. It will be evaluated, discussed, and advice will be sought if necessary from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors.
- In a lot of cases, there are quite grey areas, but these become more clear when

information is pooled.

- If anyone still had concerns and did not think the Safeguarding Team had dealt with a situation adequately, they could contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

3.5 Libby has created a poster with photographs of the St John's Safeguarding Officers on it, which will be placed in various areas of the church so that the congregation can identify who they need to approach. The team have also purchased a mobile phone which will be held in rotation by team members, so it will be possible to contact someone this way if you have an urgent concern about a particular individual or situation.

3.6 Laura then tabled a paper setting out various possible scenarios, and PCC members were asked to discuss with their neighbour, then feed back into general discussion:

- What might you do in this situation?
- Does this reach any threshold for concern or safeguarding?

3.7 In the lively and useful discussion which followed, a few common points arose:

- Some scenarios did raise possible safeguarding concerns and needed to be reported to the Safeguarding team, who could then look into this further.
- Sometimes other individuals in the church might be able to provide useful information which could clarify the issue (for example, the Lunch Club leaders in the case of one example given).
- Some might not be a safeguarding issue, but one for the Pastoral Carers.
- Some issues were covered by existing agreements (for example, the scenario where a group using the Centre did not have sufficient adults to properly look after the number of children – they would have a contract specifying the number needed and this could be enforced)
- It was important to be proactive and put guidelines for behaviour in place in areas such as youth work where, for example, touching – even if meant harmlessly – could be misinterpreted, and to ensure leaders did not put themselves or others at risk.
- It might be necessary to work with external authorities and also draw up management plans if, for example, there was a known potential risk, for example, an ex-offender becoming a member of the congregation (balancing inclusion with risk management).

3.8 Anne Coates mentioned that the Church of England was currently overhauling its safeguarding policies, and explained that she and Joy had learned at a meeting the previous week that Southwark would be taking on another part time member for its safeguarding team. Laura confirmed that the areas covered by safeguarding now had to include such things as cyber safety and the 'grooming' of young people.

3.9 Laura advised that she would now be standing down from the Safeguarding Team. This would leave just three members but Gill would be part of the team when she came.

3.10 The Safeguarding team were thanked for their presentation and Laura and Ben left the meeting.

4. Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 19 April 2016

4.1 Quite a number of corrections were made to the Minutes, which had been circulated.

- Ola Jibona's name was added to the list of attendees
- Alistair McCulloch's name was removed from the Apologies. As he is a co-opted member, he would not have been expected to attend this meeting.
- In 8.5, the date by which a School Governor needed to be appointed was 6 May.
- Minor typographical errors were corrected in 3.2, 8.3, 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 13.2 and 13.

4.2 It was agreed that Rachel should sign a copy of the Minutes once these corrections had been made.

5. Minutes of the APM and APCM on 17 April 2016

(These had not been given as an agenda item but had been circulated to PCC members, so were discussed, later agenda items being renumbered accordingly).

5.1 Minutes of both meetings had been circulated. Some typographical errors and spellings of names were corrected, and other minor amendments made. Both sets of Minutes were then approved by the PCC for presentation at the 2017 APM/APCM.

6. Matters Arising from the PCC meetings of 15 March and 19 April 2016

6.1 **Update from Working Group on the role of Parish Administrator:** Rachel reported that the group (comprising herself, Michael Robinson, Elizabeth Stanton, Anne Coates, Ben Hunt and Gareth Mills) had met on 12 April at Anne's house. They had revised the job description and were also looking at carrying out a 'time and talents' review to identify members of the congregation who might have the time and skills to take on, as volunteers, some of the work which might otherwise be done by the Parish Administrator. This would need to be done when the new vicar is in post, both so that she can give her input in how she sees the role, and also re-invigorate the congregation. The group had also looked at rota software, but this was quite expensive, ranging from £40 a month to £200 a month, and having a volunteer to help by doing the rotas might be a better option. In response to a question from Alistair McCulloch on the timetable for the recruitment process, Rachel explained that she, Michael and Joy had discussed this with Gill O'Neill and she wanted to be part of the process. Anne Coates stressed the importance of not thinking 'Oh, give that job to the Parish Administrator' – a too lengthy job description would put anyone off applying.

6.2 **Sound system:** Rachel and Joy had met with Jim Nurton and Tayo Olatunde on 8 May. There was a need to order new microphones (which would cost £150 each) and an appeal for contributions towards these under the [Simple](#) Gifts scheme was suggested. There were now only 4 people on the rota, so more volunteers were needed. A notice would go in the pew sheet.

Action???

6.3 **Concert by St Martin's Singers:** For the benefit of those new to the PCC, Rachel explained that this choir would be performing a concert in the church at no cost, and sharing the proceeds with St John's. They would however like refreshments between the rehearsal and the performance, and the PCC would need to organise this. Dorothy would ask John Webber for the numbers involved and what kind of food they would expect to be given. *(Note: John has already asked Eurica to organise this, but she would doubtless appreciate help).*

Action: Dorothy Oxley

6.4 **Response to letter from Bishop Michael regarding the review into the Diocese's handling of Fr Charles' suspension and death:**

6.4.1 Rachel apologised to the new members of the PCC, who had not received this letter as it was circulated only to those on the PCC at the time of receipt, in early April. A copy would be sent to those who had not received it.

Action: Dorothy Oxley

6.4.2 In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Everyone knew that the matter had been badly handled, but it would be better not to talk about this again, and to let it be put to rest.
- The letter was fair enough, setting out the review process, key lessons learned, and the reasons why the review itself could not be made more widely available. But it was a

pity that the PCC had needed to ask for a response.

- While members understood the reasons given by the Bishop, it was still disappointing not to have been able to see the actual report, as several people (including some who had participated in the review process) had been given to understand would be the case.
- Although nothing could be changed this time, it was important that should any incident requiring review occur in the future, the Diocese needed to be much more clear on what information would be made available to the Parish involved.

6.4.3 Dorothy, as PCC Secretary, was asked to draft a response to the Bishop's letter, which she would circulate to the PCC.

Action: Dorothy Oxley

6.5 **Support for Churchwardens:** Rachel explained that she and Joy had not had time to prepare a list of areas where they needed help, as Fr Bill had suggested, and had found it more effective to ask people to help with various jobs on an ad hoc basis. The Churchwardens' Handbook, however, provided useful information about roles and responsibilities. Libby suggested that the onus should be on members of the PCC to be proactive and offer help. Julie explained that she was too busy with choir and/or Sunday school on Sundays to offer help then, but might be able to assist during the week.

6.6 **Safeguarding:** This had been covered under Item 3.

6.7 **Co-options:** Although it had been thought that Eurica Shaw should be automatically on the PCC as an SPA, Dorothy had further checked with the Diocese and had been informed that as SPAs were not licensed to a Parish but were commissioned, this was not the case. Therefore to be on the safe side, Michael Robinson proposed and Joy Taylor seconded the co-option of Eurica, which was **agreed** unanimously.

6.8 **School Governor:** Rachel informed the PCC that Nicola Harland had been elected and had attended her first meeting.

6.9 **Children's Society Representative:** This was held over until the next meeting as Alistair Read, who had been going to get information about what the role involved, was not present.

6.10 **Gift Aid:** Sarah Goudge reported good progress; Gift Aid for 2014 and part of 2015 should have been claimed by the time Gill arrives. Maxine Plunkett will start working on 2015 with Sarah and then will do the claims for 2016 on her own and at regular intervals.

7. Minutes of the Standing Committee/Staff Team meeting held on 29 March 2016

The Minutes, which had been circulated, were formally received by the PCC.

8. Matters Arising from the Standing Committee/Staff Team meeting on 29 March

8.1 **Pilgrimage to Winchester:** This has been advertised in the pew sheet and tickets are now available.

8.2 Summer Event:

8.2.1 Libby reported that this would take place on Sunday, 3 July, and as the PCC had decided not to have a 'fayre', it would instead incorporate the best bits, 'bunting, booze and burgers', with a couple of popular stalls and games for the children. It would be an opportunity for the congregation to have a good time together and celebrate the summer.

8.2.2 Julie suggested that 'bunting, booze and burgers' might not be a suitable title for an event involving children; this could be reconsidered.

8.2.3 Anne asked if it might be possible to use the back garden area, as this is contained and would be safer for children. Rachel explained that though this would be possible, the Church would get complaints about the noise from one of the neighbours – this has been a

contentious issue in the past. Anne suggested that if the front garden were to be used, one of the gates should be locked, and Libby explained that a full risk assessment would be carried out.

Action: Libby Coates

9. Arrangements for the new Vicar

As everyone was now aware, the service would be held at 8 p.m on 19 July (finishing around 9.45 p.m.), and would be followed by drinks and nibbles. The timing was set by the Diocese in liaison with the two Bishops who would be participating. It was **agreed** that in addition the Church should hold a Bring and Share lunch on the following Sunday, 24 July; although the schools would have broken up by then, there was a good chance that few of the congregation would already have gone on holiday. **Anne, Julie, Joy, Vince and Sally volunteered their assistance.**

10. Reports

10.1 Finance Committee:

10.1.1 The Committee had met the previous Sunday to discuss various matters including the new bank account, and being frugal. The financial situation was slightly better with the rent for the Hinckley Road property. Sarah had made a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman about NatWest Bank.

10.1.2 Information had been circulated about the Diocese's request that the Parish should make a pledge for the amount they intended to pay towards the Parish Support Fund in 2017. The deadline for receipt of pledge forms was the end of June 2017, and it was **agreed** to put this on the agenda for the June PCC.

10.2 **Goose Green Centre Report:** A short report had been circulated and Rachel added that Pam Kyeyune, one of the part time caretakers who had worked for the Centre since its opening, had left on 6 May. The other part time caretaker is helping out with extra hours in the short term, but an advert will be going on the Church website and also in the School's newsletter.

10.3 **Premises:** Work on the hedge had been briefly discussed at the Finance Committee, but this was not a priority, especially now that the hedge had been trimmed and cut in the area near the noticeboard so this was more visible. Michael Robinson explained that it would be cheaper to raise the noticeboard than to undertake major work on the hedge, and the board would in any case need to be replaced as Father Charles' details were still on it.

10.4 **Deanery:** There was nothing to report.

10.5 **Communications:** Anne was concerned that information such as the new membership of the PCC had not yet gone up, and that since Charles Corbin had made changes to the site, she could not herself remove out of date items and upload new ones. She hoped this would soon be done. Twitter was working very well, and if anyone who tweets puts @stdulwich on the tweet, it will come to her.

10.6 Young People's work:

10.6.1 Anne congratulated the youth leaders and the young people on the Christian Aid 'Big Breakfast' the previous Sunday, which had been fantastic.

10.6.2 Julie reported that some of the young people were now coming up to the age of going to university, but there was also a younger group emerging, between the ages of 10 – 14, and the aim was to start a group for them. They had helped by baking muffins for the Big Breakfast and she hoped to do an activity with them in the half term. The Taize service the previous Sunday evening had also helped the junior choir and musicians to show their talents, though it was a pity more church members had not attended this.

10.6.3 She explained that the course run by the Diocese about children, families and youth work had included planning strategies for the recruitment, selection and employment of a youth worker. Employing such a person was part of St John's Mission Action Plan, but before it could be taken forward the Church needed to have a clear vision of what the Youth Worker would do, and this vision had to be owned by everyone. Thought needed to be given to:

- what age groups would be covered
- what provision already existed
- whether the individual had to be qualified (apparently the qualified ones often preferred to work with an evangelical church rather than an Anglo-Catholic one, and Anne confirmed that the two churches in the Deanery that did employ a youth worker had found recruitment difficult).

10.6.4 Employing a Youth Worker was quite costly, especially if any housing support had to be provided, and the church was not in a position to undertake this in the near future. However this gave time for thorough planning to take place, and it was **agreed** to discuss this at the October PCC meeting. Anne suggested that Julie, Libby, Katherine and perhaps one or more of the young people should meet with Gill and discuss what their vision is, and Rachel suggested doing this over the summer.

Action: Julie, Libby and Katherine

10.7 **Crèche:**

10.7.1 Libby said that another person was now coming off the rota, so there were just four people remaining, which meant that each volunteer is covering the creche every other week, which is unfair. There is no creche in August, so they are trying, with Gareth Mills, to get some DBS (Disclosure and Barring Scheme) checks done for people who are willing to join the rota. Parents relish the opportunity to take part in the service themselves while their children are in the crèche. More help is urgently needed, and volunteers need not only be people in the church who have small children, but Libby thought that, rather than advertising this in the pew sheet, it was better to have initial conversations with likely candidates first.

10.7.2 Julie commented that the family area now looks less than inviting, and when her own children had been very young, and she didn't want them to go into the creche, this area had been important in enabling her to attend church. Anne explained that there had been concerns that the area was getting noisy and children were going there unsupervised; Martin added that there was also less access with the table now back in the church. This might change, but changes should probably await Gill's arrival.

11. **Any Other Business**

11.1 **Marriage Blessings and Renewal of Vows:** A table of charges had been circulated. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The note at the bottom about payment, which referred only to cheques, should be changed to refer also to payment by cash or BACS.
- Martin queried the reference to a Verger, and Rachel explained that Gareth and Kevin shared this role, which ensured that there would always be a second person in attendance (as well as the Vicar) at services during the week. The Church was allowed to charge for this.
- Natasha asked if heating was optional (a charge could be levied for this between September and May, but in early autumn or late Spring it was often quite warm). Rachel said that it would depend on the weather and the temperature inside.
- Ola suggested that there should be fee concessions for regular churchgoers. Rachel explained that there were some fees set by the Diocese but in Marriage Blessings and Renewal of Vows there were more variations which could be made at the Vicar's

discretion, and some fees might be waived. Vince confirmed this. Jim thought that a two-tier system would be discriminatory; the church should be open to everyone and sometimes people who attended church for the first time for a wedding, funeral or baptism then became a regular churchgoer. Libby suggested that if Ola felt very strongly about this, he should discuss it with Gill.

- 11.2 **Movement of Archival Material:** A paper from Clare Brown, the Parish Archivist, had been circulated. Rachel explained that she had some concerns about this, but as it was by now very late, it was **agreed** to postpone discussions until the next meeting, when Clare could be invited to attend.
- 11.3 **Rotas:** Anne proposed asking the staff team to look through the rotas and remove people who had not been coming to church. Michael seconded this and it was **agreed**. In response to a query from Ola, it was confirmed that people who had simply forgotten they were on the rota for a particular duty would not be removed; this applied only to those who had not been seen in church for some time.

The meeting closed with the Grace shortly after 10.00 p.m.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on **Tuesday, 21 June 2016**.