

**St Mary's Church, Hitcham**  
**Draft PCC Minutes**  
7.30pm on Monday 17.10.22

PCC MEMBER ATTENDEES:

<b>Josie Heffernan (late)</b>	<b>Terry Cheney (Warden)</b>	<b>Chris Berry (Warden)</b>	<b>Carol L Bader (Deputy Warden)</b>
<b>Geoff Day</b>	<b>Debbie Rainer</b>		<b>Marie Hill (late)</b>

APOLOGIES: Jo Cork, Sue Sampson, David Ross-Hamilton      GUEST: Mary Howarth (late)

<b>NO.</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.	Welcome	CB opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2.	Safeguarding and pastoral concerns	DR had invited Sarah Naylor Hagger to contribute and her response via email was nothing to report on safeguarding. A guest attending Alpha last week took a fall on the path leading into church. This was not caused by a health and safety oversight and was duly reported at the time. This report to be updated following hospital diagnosis. Mary Howarth offered to be a point of contact for more challenging pastoral concerns in the absence of Reverend Sue Sampson who is on long term sick. Other clergy might need to be involved in visiting to give Holy Communion. Signposting MH as pastoral coordinator to be added to the notices; MH to be supported by the PCC if necessary.	DR  MH
3.	Apologies	Jo Cork, Rev Sue Sampson (long term sick), David Ross-Hamilton	
4.	Minutes 5.9.22	DR read out the amended section 2. CB proposed the minutes, TC seconded, all who were present approved. To be added to the website.	DR
5.	Current situation, services etc	Rev Sue is on long term sick leave. Alan Bignall is covering Wednesday services, CB shared other cover arrangements to the end of the year. GD asked about the rota organisation, our administrator Carrie compiles this following input from team leaders. Changes should be advised to Carrie and those giving service to check the printed copy in the vestry. MH asked about the Christingle service and this to be investigated further. Terry Gamble has asked CB if the Hitcham Trust can attend our Remembrance Service here at St Mary's. It was agreed to make them welcome. CLB would like to review the organisation of the 9am service, eg we are short of AV support and live streaming creates different pressures. Numbers viewing online are low. To be reviewed early in the New Year.	Team leaders CB  Worship Team; PCC
6.	Finance and fundraising	CB gave a report on gas increased from 2p to 7.5p per unit + increase from £2.04 to £5.54 daily standing charge. Electricity increased from 15p to 21p per unit + increase from 65p to 91p daily standing charge. Both capped at these prices until April 2023. The extra cost per annum will be approx. £3,300 based on previous usage. We are part of a parish energy buying scheme and the diocese has asked for our costs, hopefully they will have some leverage to improve these. There will be some funding from the Church of England but we currently do not know the process. We are facing a deficit of £25,800 if we pay the full Parish Share for 2023. It is a priority to reduce the deficit. CB shared his assessment of the risks facing St Mary's in respect of leadership and financial instability. This is cause for serious concern. Harsh Singh (our accountant) is doing figures until the end of October and a budget for next year. This information will help inform future plans. The Parish Share will increase by 3% next year	CB/HS

		<p>(an increase of £1,500). We will need to make a decision in December about our share. MH shared that at Deanery Synod Sheila Warburton can give further information about the formula for calculating the Parish Share. The data shared from this was interesting as we paid more than other local churches. This was discussed and historical contributions also considered. CB to speak to Sheila to be able to accurately evaluate our contribution to the Parish Share.</p> <p>CB gave all present a copy of the overall <i>projected</i> budget for January 2022 to December 2022 and asked each member of the PCC to consider where we can reduce the deficit. These figures were calculated before the current cost of living crisis. GD highlighted the importance of reducing fixed costs, in particular the Parish Share.</p>	CB
7.	Organ update	<p>We have been trialling an organ over the last few weeks, played by our newly employed musician. During this period church members have shared their thoughts with the wardens. This information was shared. All present gave feedback received from the congregation about the new organ and added their individual contributions. An honest and considered discussion took place, taking particular account of our current financial situation. GD proposed we purchase the new organ; this was seconded by TC. Of those present at the meeting two were in agreement; five were against. A vote against had also been received by email from an absent member of the PCC; this does not count. St Mary's will not be purchasing the new organ.</p> <p>CB led all in prayer. CB will announce the decision at both services on Sunday, emphasising a message of unity and the possibility of review at some point in the future. DR thanked CB for chairing the discussion.</p>	CB
8.	Policies	<p>Equal Opportunities policy (see minutes 18.7.22). DR awaiting input from DRH before re-presenting to the PCC.</p> <p>Charity Commission, IT and Social Media, Lone Working, Complaints – review date to be added by Carrie. DR to check if this has taken place.</p> <p>Rooms Hire policy – CLB shared that in the past this has been considered impractical, lack of parking is a concern, a risk assessment would need creating, insurance reviewed. TC to investigate feasibility of hiring church for film crews.</p>	DR/DRH DR TC
9.	PCC guest proposal	<p>We currently do not have a vacancy but Rae Woodlock to be invited to attend future meetings as a guest, due to her enthusiasm and interest in joining the PCC in the future. Guests do not have a vote in PCC decisions. DR reminded all the importance of confidentiality would need emphasising with Ray. CB proposed inviting Ray to attend as a guest, DR seconded, voted unanimously.</p>	CB
10.	Xplorers and BFG	<p>CB reported that six young people attended session 1, three attended session 2. Next session is pizza making.</p>	
11.	Alpha	<p>JH asked about the cost implications and CB to speak to SS to clarify. MH shared information about catering, there are three lots of six participants, including group leaders and contributors. Sessions so far have been highly positive with growing participation by the guests leading to thoughtful, considered discussions about faith and Jesus Christ.</p>	CB/SS
12.	Any other business	<p>Diocese Development Fund application – JH to research this and other fund-raising opportunities, supported by Susan Dickins.</p> <p>JH has approached a band of musicians to hold a performance as a fundraiser, perhaps at the end of January. Their availability to be checked. To be added to the next agenda.</p> <p>Toilet door accessibility suggestion was shared by TC, including concern about the door opening inwards. CLB recommended a sliding door, which</p>	JH

		includes the option of widening the entrance. TC pointed out that this is a Grade 1 listed building. Whilst this might not be ideal – not fully accessible – we could investigate costs and reach a compromise.	CB
15.	Next meeting	Dates for next year to be set at the next meeting at 7:30pm on Monday, 5 <sup>th</sup> December, including moving to Thursday evenings in 2023.	DR
16.	Prayer and end	Several members contributed to the final prayer.	