

**The Parish Church of St Margaret, Rainham**  
**Parochial Church Council**

Full meeting of the PCC on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024  
19:30 in the Millennium Centre (lower hall)



**Present:** Heather Baker (HB); Lorna Dyer (LD); Janet Garnons-Williams (JGW); Nick Grief (NG); Simon Hall (SH); Philip Holdcroft (PH); Charley Holden(CH); Felicity Holton (FH); Revd Jonathan Jennings (JPJ); David Ormiston (DO); Jean Penney (JP); Linda Randall (LR); Revd Nathan Ward (NW) - Chair; Terry Whittaker (TW)

**In Attendance:** Jo Whittaker (JW) - Secretary

**PCC AGENDA**

Item	Details	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Opening Act of Worship:</b>	
	NW welcomed everyone and explained that meetings would now start and finish with an Act of Worship.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>	
	These were received from Emi Inetianbor (EI).	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting on 16 April 2024:</b>	
a.	TW proposed and JGW seconded the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. <b>All in favour.</b>	
<b>b.</b>	<b>Matters Arising:</b>	
i.	Consultation status re. prayers for same sex couples (3.i.) – it was hoped that this would be actioned this month.	<b>NW</b>
ii.	Implementation of recommendations from accident report (3.ii) - TW had organised the buying and planting of hedges in line with previous PCC instructions. The need for any additional fencing was being looked into.	<b>TW</b>
iii.	(4.i.) NG had researched other volunteer policies and these were being looked at to help form our own disciplinary procedures for volunteers. It was noted that it was both important and good practice to draw a distinction between volunteers and employees. It was advised that NCVO offered support and training for small charities and NW proposed and JGW seconded the proposal that St Margaret's join NCVO for a fee of £201 to benefit from their information and guidance. <b>FOR: 13   AGAINST: 0   ABSTENTION: 0 Proposal carried</b>	<b>NW</b>
iv.	Childscroft rent (5.ii) – TW, NW and the Churchwardens were to meet to agree a way forward.	<b>TW/NW Wardens</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Appointment of Officers:</b>	
	Officers were appointed and agreed as per the attached document. There were some roles that still required confirmation. It was noted that Jill Barfoot (JB) would need to undertake the necessary training as PSO and LR would continue in role during this handover. It was likely JB would attend PCC quarterly. DOB as treasurer would also attend quarterly for the quarterly financial review. It was agreed that the Maintenance and Utilities Committee would be renamed as the Maintenance Committee, with the Finance Committee taking on responsibility for utilities.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Safeguarding:</b>	
a.	Concerns – NW had been in contact with the company running the safeguarding portal regarding a change in the recording of concerns; it was hoped to have a breakdown of trustee and non-trustee concerns at the next meeting. It was noted that in 2023 there had been 12 concerns reported over 12 months, and in 2024 there had been 10 concerns in 4 months.	
b.	Safer Recruitment – NW had circulated the current position. Thanks were given to JW and the safeguarding committee for their hard work.	

	<p>Training - it appeared that 29 people still required training – whilst face to face courses had been offered only one person had signed up, further courses were being offered in June. It was agreed that individual letters be sent to those still to complete training. Interview and induction – the launch of the volunteer handbook would facilitate the completion of these with induction being completed by group leaders.</p> <p>It was hoped that a decrease in these numbers would be seen in three months' time. PCC approval was requested for 8 people who had completed Safer Recruitment (forms complete and 2 references received). <b>All in favour.</b></p> <p>Basic DBS Checks – information was still being sought and no action was to be taken at this stage.</p>	Safeguarding Cttee
<b>6.</b>	<b>Church Overview:</b>	
a.	<p>Attendance (services and groups) – NW advised that, as trustees, it was often easy to get caught up in business and it was good to take the opportunity to assess how church was going. Average church attendance in 2023 was 76 and so far in 2024 this was 91 (a 19% increase.) These figures were just for the 10:30 but going forward, it was the aim to have these for the 8:00, 6:30, Wednesday Communion and 252Kids as well.</p> <p>There was some discussion and it was agreed that that it would be good to celebrate positive things like this and the weekly news sheet would be a good place for this as well as at the St Margaret's Day event. NG reported that the Thursday prayer group regularly prayed for the life of the church and should be considered a significant factor. There were two factors to reflect on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Was the 19% purely due to an increase in housing and new people in the area or something St Margaret's had done differently.</li> <li>2) 91 people reflected 0.03% of the Rainham population.</li> </ol>	
b.	<p>Pastoral Services (baptisms, weddings, funerals, banns) – 57 had been carried out so far in 2024 with the 'busy period' still to come. There had been a total of 110 pastoral services in 2023.</p> <p>It was questioned why the reading of Banns was lower than the number of weddings - it may just relate to away banns but this was to be checked.</p> <p>Looking ahead to next Easter and JJ retirement, there would be a resource issue with pastoral services.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Mission Strategy:</b>	<b>NW</b>
i.	<p>Review Objective Putting Rainham First Stage 1 – the churchyard survey had been completed which suggested there were 191 available grave spaces within the churchyard; more work was required to check whether any of these graves had headstones and/or were attended by family.</p> <p>Crypts – the report from Adrian Miles (leading archaeologist in the UK on crypts) had been circulated. A highlight was that we had the third best crypt in the country.</p> <p>A statement of need would be required by the diocese to see if we could extend the current faculty or whether a new one would be required to carry out the work outlined below. It was noted there could be risk of damage in turning the coffins. After some discussion DOB proposed and LD seconded the motion that:</p> <p>A statement of need be produced which outlined the need to undertake further archaeological work in the crypts, which would involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Undertaking a detailed archaeological record of the eastern and western vaults and their contents as it stands</li> <li>2) Removal of disassociated coffin wood and, where appropriate, recorded</li> <li>3) Where possible, reposition any coffin wood where an association is possible</li> <li>4) Dispose of any disassociated coffin wood</li> <li>5) Continue cleaning and tidying of the vault in previously inaccessible places</li> <li>6) Recover any disturbed remains and place them in a suitable container</li> <li>7) Place the infant coffins on stack A the correct way up</li> <li>8) If space allowed move the four modern coffins from the western crypt back into the eastern crypt</li> <li>9) Reboard the eastern crypt</li> </ol> <p><b>FOR: 14   AGAINST: 0   ABSTENTION: 0 Motion carried.</b></p>	<b>NW</b>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Finance:</b>	
a.	<p>Position against budget – TW reported there some points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were still a month in arrears on the Childscroft rent</li> <li>• Tied income to PCC was yet to be included in the April figures</li> <li>• Q1 Gift Aid recovery was still awaited from HMRC</li> <li>• Acts Six income was a month adrift</li> <li>• The cash at bank position was being monitored</li> </ul>	
b.	Any unusual or unexpected expenditure – none to report	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Health and Safety:</b>	
a.	Checks – a table was being worked on with the maintenance group to bring monthly checks to PCC.	<b>NW</b>
b.	Accidents – none to report	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Maintenance:</b>	
	<p>Damaged ceiling plaster by the tower and in the chancel – quotes for repair had been received from BW May of £39,938 plus VAT for tower area and £16,850 plus VAT for the chancel area.</p> <p>There were several options to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out the works</li> <li>• Use the chancel repair liability to fund the repairs to that particular area</li> <li>• Stop bellringing and/or introduce electronic bells</li> <li>• Put up netting in the affected areas in the short term and explore a longer-term resolution</li> <li>• Add ceiling repairs to the PRF project</li> </ul> <p>There was a discussion about the best way forward. It was advised that the chancel area was not identified as ‘at risk’ and repair was not necessary at this stage, but a watching brief would be kept. DO advised that internal works were not covered by the chancel repair liability fund in any event. TW advised that finding money for the repairs would be a significant challenge in our current budget. It was possible we could take out a loan or use up our reserves, but PCC had no appetite for either of these options. The quote for netting was £414 and this would be a robust enough solution to take the weight of a fall of plaster although a solution on how to fix the netting in place would need to be investigated.</p> <p>TW proposed and LR seconded the proposal that the PCC accept the suggestion to introduce appropriate netting into the area with suitable fixings, to cover the tower area identified as at risk.</p> <p><b>FOR: 14   AGAINST: 0   ABSTENTION: 0 Proposal carried.</b></p>	<b>NW</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Correspondence:</b>	
	None to report.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>AOB:</b>	
i.	<p>Heads of Terms with Acts Six – JGW reminded the new PCC of the background to the setting up of Acts Six in that income from the Millennium Centre had been crucial to the running of St Margaret’s church and following the loss of a long-standing tenant last year the opportunity arose for a new tenant, the Primary Care network, to take on a large proportion of the Centre. Charities were unable to trade above a certain level and it was likely that income generated by the PCN would be above this level, hence the creation of Acts Six Ltd as a trading arm. A draft document had been received from Acts Six with regards to the formalisation of the Lease between them and the PCC. There were some matters that required further exploration as they appeared to be different to the original verbal agreement made; the two most notable issues being that Acts Six were seeking a six-month rent-free period and the suggestion that the maintenance of the exterior of the building to be a cost to PCC. NW was asked to speak on these two proposed changes from an Acts Six perspective and the directors of Acts Six then left the room to avoid any conflict of interest as the PCC discussed this further. Following a full discussion, a significant concern was that PCC had agreed a budget which incorporated a full year of lease income from Acts Six and had no way, other</p>	

	than going to the congregation, to meet any gap created as any events and associated income fell within the remit of Acts Six. PCC gave JGW authority to engage with both the lawyers representing the PCC and the jointly appointed surveyors to further investigate these requests and report back at the next PCC.	<b>JGW</b>
ii.	NW reported that TW currently held a licence to take funerals and a process had taken place to put TW forward to undergo LLM training and licensing. The meeting was in full agreement.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Dates of Next Meeting:</b>	
	Thursday at 19:30 in Church on: 27 <sup>th</sup> June 25 <sup>th</sup> July 26 <sup>th</sup> September 24 <sup>th</sup> October 28 <sup>th</sup> November	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Closing Act of Worship:</b>	
	The meeting finished with a closing Act of Worship at 22:06	