

The Parish Church of St Margaret, Rainham
Parochial Church Council

Full meeting of the PCC on Thursday 24th October 2024
19:30 in Church



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); Emi Inetianbor (EI); David Ormiston (DO); Jean Penney (JP); Revd Nathan Ward (NW); Terry Whittaker (TW)

In Attendance: Jo Whittaker (JW) – Secretary; Davina O’Brien (DOB) - Treasurer

PCC MINUTES

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Opening Act of Worship:	
	The meeting started with Evening Prayer.	
2.	Apologies:	
	These were received from Revd Jonathan Jennings (JPJ) and Linda Randall (LR).	
3.	Minutes of the Meeting on 26th September 2024:	
a.	<u>Approval</u> – thanks were given to JP for taking the minutes. A minor amendment to the wording of item 3.b.i and spelling of Fr Farai in 6.iv was agreed. EI then proposed and NG seconded that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. All in favour but for three abstentions from those who weren’t at the last meeting.	
b.	Matters Arising:	
i.	6.iv - NW had met with Fr Farai and agreed they would catch up every two to three months unless needed otherwise. Numbers were growing at St Philip’s, and he was very positive about the possibility of an exchange visit. Thought was to be given as to how this could happen.	
4.	Safeguarding:	
	<p><u>Training</u> – JP confirmed that most volunteers had now completed their training at the required levels and others had indicated why there had been a delay in this happening. There were still some challenges ahead, but real progress had been made. Thanks were given to everyone involved in the process.</p> <p>Those needing to undertake Leadership training was being reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee.</p> <p>One PCC member had refused to complete the Domestic Abuse training and there was debate as how to best handle this as it seemed that the only current recourse was to issue a CDM. Given the outstanding anomaly regarding the lack of required training for Synod members who were then automatically gifted a place on PCC (whose members were required to undergo training), it was agreed that JP would write to the Diocesan safeguarding team for advice.</p> <p>JP presented a list of all current church activities which were approved by the PCC.</p>	JP
5.	Church Overview:	
	NW reported that there was currently a lot of flux and things up in the air – these needed to land, and sense be made of them. This would be helped by dealing with mission strategy and finance.	
6.	Mission Strategy:	
i.	<p>Review Objective Stage 2 Church Environmental Sustainability – develop an operational plan to close identified gaps and implement the operational plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eco-committee was working through this and working towards the green flag award ready for the application in January. 	
ii.	<p>PRF Update - There were lots of moving parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the congregation would launch at the April APCM. • Submission of the key document – expression of interest – to Heritage lottery (£1.5k words). A projected cost of the project would be required for this, which 	

	<p>would only be answered by a structural engineer’s report. Whilst a ballpark figure had been provided by the Quantity Surveyor this was based on the Thomas Ford plans which had now changed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the expression of interest was returned (within 10/15 days), we could then apply for 450k development grant from the Heritage Lottery – this entailed a huge amount of work which we could employ a consultant to do (estimated cost £20k), do ourselves or a hybrid option. It was possible that Heritage Lottery might provide people to help with this. NW was meeting with Chatham Historic Dockyard the following day for advice. A meeting with Medway Council was imminent. A grant from UK Shared Prosperity Fund had been successful. The diocese and DAC had met and required an onsite meeting with all key consultees, e.g. historical societies – this was due to take place in November. The crypt faculty had been extended by the Chancellor and confirmation of dates were awaited from the archaeologist. 	
iii.	<p>NW iterated that St Margaret’s was the largest parish in the diocese, the third largest in the country and was a missional church. JPJ would be retiring at the end of April 2025. Whilst a staffing structure had been approved in principle at the last PCC, we did not have capacity to do everything we wanted to. This raised two questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would we need, regardless of how we get it, to carry out the mission of St Margaret’s Church? How would we enable it to happen (what was the minimum viable structure)? <p>There was a full discussion which covered church growth, enabling members of the congregation to release and develop their gifts, the need for another ordained member of staff after JPJ’s retirement, stewardship, the need for pragmatism, shifts in culture, use of resources (time, talents, money) and the tension involved in this.</p> <p>The PCC were minded to prioritise children and families and community with an additional need for youth, as well as a self-supporting minister (SSM) noting that this was not guaranteed.</p> <p>It was agreed that this was an exciting time and to remember that God had gone before us but there was a need to pray more.</p> <p>Before any decision could be made about additional staffing it was important to look at and understand our financial position.</p>	All
7.	Finance:	
a.	Position against budget – TW advised that the year-to-date figures were good and on track to be on budget by the end of the year.	
b.	<p>2025 Budget – DOB advised that NW had created a draft budget through analysis of the last 12 months bank transactions; this included provision for new roles and produced a £60k deficit. The finance committee had refined and revised this and presented an alternative deficit budget of £4.5k but this could not yet be recommended because the diocese was still to provide their Indicative Offer for consideration. This revised budget included the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An allowance of £5K for the consultancy work of Rob and Vicky Schulz in the PRF project. An allowance of £5k towards the cost of music worship for the 10.30 service, effectively contributing 50% to match the giving currently funding this work. A figure to fund the likely cost of the insurance policy excess for two claims in 2025. Assumptions about the diocesan Indicative Offer had been made and included a figure that was both affordable and provided for a larger contribution than in 2024. This would be tweaked once the actual offer was received. It was also noted that no specific provision had been made for a rent-free period for Acts Six, but was cognisant of the intention to provide the equivalent of three months 2024 rental income value in accordance with PCC’s undertaking to use best endeavours to make this happen. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rent increase for Childscroft Road of 7.5% based on the 5% suggested increase by the ONS plus an extra 2.5% given that the 2024 rent increase had not been paid during the year. <p>A vote was taken to seek PCC's agreement with this increase in rent. FOR: 13 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTION: 0 Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>DOB was tasked with relaying this information to the tenants (one months' notice required).</p> <p>A question was raised about whether Acts Six were likely to deliver a profit in 2024 and so inject a further amount into church income. It was advised that their accounts were due for completion in November so there was nothing to report at this stage, but it was hoped that they would break even for 2024; this outcome could change for the positive if the VAT reclaim was processed quickly.</p> <p>There was a general discussion about the 2025 budget, which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A stewardship campaign - it was important that congregational giving be addressed as well as informing the congregation about the financial situation. It was advised that the diocese offered a stewardship service where they would assume the role of collecting regular giving, deal with gift aid claims but also have the discipline of writing to givers to suggest a giving review, with guidelines. All agreed that this was not an issue for the Finance Committee, and it was to be referred to the next Staff Meeting to come up with some proposals to bring back to the next PCC (PCC members were invited to join the staff meeting on 4th November). Two additional roles that had been included in NW proposed budget were for a children & families role, £5k for one day a week and a community worker for £5k to engage on a Tuesday and Thursday morning. PCC recognised the value of these roles but were not comfortable in budgeting for them given that we already had a deficit budget and could see no way to increase income to increase this deficit by a further 10k. The view was that if we were in a position to afford these roles then they would be wholly supported. NW had met with the Friends of St Margarets with a view to them managing a community campaign to support the cost of maintaining the fabric of the church. If 500 people could give £5.00 per month then this would contribute £30k to our income. Further update to follow. <p>The Finance Committee were due to meet at the start of November when it was hoped that the Indicative Offer would be known so a finalised draft budget could be brought to the next meeting. PCC were grateful to the finance committee and confirmed their support that they were heading in the right direction.</p>	<p>DOB</p> <p>Staff team</p> <p>Finance Cttee</p>
8.	Health and Safety:	
	Nothing was reported.	
9.	Maintenance:	
	Nothing was reported.	
10.	Correspondence:	
	None to report.	
11.	AOB:	
i.	<u>Blessing of same sex marriage</u> – there had been 15 responses from the congregation: 12 for, 1 against and 2 requesting a wider discussion. Time was needed to re-engage the congregation which would likely be in January 2025.	NW
ii.	<u>Heads of Terms with Acts Six</u> – JGW reported that as the diocese held all property for PCC's in trust it was necessary for the diocese to be brought into the agreement and a formal recommendation approved by PCC for the underwriting of the solicitors fees for the diocese (approx. £1.5-3k). JGW proposed and DO seconded the proposal that St Margaret's Church underwrite the solicitor's fees for the Diocese. FOR: 13 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTION: 0 Approved unanimously	
12.	Dates of Next Meeting:	

	<p>Thursdays at 19:30 in Church:</p> <p>28th November – location changed to Millennium Centre due to Christmas tree festival set up in church.</p> <p>23rd January 2025</p> <p>27th February 2025</p> <p>27th March 2025</p> <p>24th April 2025</p> <p>APCM – Tuesday 29th April 2025, 19:00 in church. Change of date due to JPJ's last Sunday being 27th April.</p>	
13.	Closing Act of Worship:	
	The meeting closed with the final part of Evening Prayer at 22:04	