

St Peter's Church PCC meeting

30 January 2024 7:00pm – 8:20pm

Minutes

Present: Mo Atkinson, Hannah Beck, Ian Birt, Bella Blake, Kate Blake, Helen Camm, Chris Clayton (Chair), Jan Edwards, Rachel Fell, Alan Garrow, Steve Gibbin, David Hipkin, Sian Lockwood, Catherine Medforth, Felicity Moss, Karin Shaw and Roy Taylor.

Apologies: Catharine Davies, Stewart Davies and Ruth Thompson-Vear.

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Chris welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer.

Chris paid tribute to David Fisher, who has recently died, for his long service to St Peter's including over 30 years as Treasurer and PCC member.

2. Bible reflection

Karin led a reflection on Matthew 6 and led the meeting in prayer.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and were noted.

4. Acceptance of the minutes of November's meeting

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 28 November 2023 were unanimously approved, subject to noting Jan's apologies.

5. Matters arising

Following up on the Away Day outcomes, the PCC will look at the Inclusive Church Network at its next meeting, inviting Mike Davies to speak.

Proposed actions in relation to communication in the foyer are still to be actioned.

6. Finances

General update

David presented a short update on the 2023 position – there is some good news as the investment portfolio with Cardale made 4% last year, adding around £11k to reserves.

At the end of 2023, our overall reserves were in the region of £260-270k, however some of these reserves are restricted funds (meaning they can't be used to fund day to day activities).

Reserves position

Despite a reasonably healthy position at the end of 2023, the 2024 budget anticipates a deficit of £162k, meaning that only around £100k will be left in reserves. David asked the meeting to consider what the appropriate level of reserves should be. We currently have a reserves policy which says that we should keep £115k of reserves split between cover for running costs (£65k) and building costs (£50k). This policy may therefore need to be reviewed in light of the expected deficit in 2024.

Expenditure

The parish share amounts to £220k (2024) and makes up 50% of our expenditure. Our parish share has increased because our congregation numbers have recovered somewhat since Covid, unlike other churches.

After the parish share, our biggest expenditure is energy. Although electricity costs are protected to 2026, the gas contract is up for renewal (we saved £5k last year negotiating a tariff with British Gas). David proposed a new two year fixed contract with Opus, which was agreed.

Typically, our expenditure usually exceeds our income by approximately £100k a year. We have been fortunate in recent years to benefit from large donations and legacies which has enabled us to continue to pay our parish share and reduce our yearly deficit significantly.

Like many other organisations and households, our costs have generally increased due to wider economic conditions.

Income

Although take up of the parish giving scheme has been encouraging, the 2024 budget adopts a prudent approach and assumes only a small increase in planned giving.

Although we will continue to benefit from a donation in relation to Chris' ministry, there are no large legacies or donations in the pipeline as far as we are aware.

Start, stop, continue?

David encouraged the meeting to consider the things we should start doing, stop doing or continue doing to improve our finances.

Some initial proposals include:

- A stewardship campaign. We have not had one for 6 years and one is planned for May. The challenge is to communicate the need for giving whilst not pressuring those who can't afford it.
- Roll out of the freestanding donation/sumup machine for church. We are awaiting artwork to accompany this but it can be installed in church pending this.

The meeting broke out into small groups to discuss finance action points. The proposed action points arising from this were as follows:

- Look at cheaper options for communion wine.
- Target planned givers not currently using the parish giving scheme.
- We should not cut down on our welcome/warmth/openness as this was felt to be central to our mission.
- Consider more publicity about what things cost eg breakfast club running costs. Could messaging around this be included on or around the donation machine?
- Increase the number of "St Peter's" refreshment days (subject to volunteers). Consider increasing refreshment day pricing. Have a clearer booking system for refreshment days.
- Could the church look at a developing a retail function?

- Set up a Stewardship group and grants group – volunteers are needed.
- Use the screens in church to publicise the letting space. Spread awareness of the space in our local networks.
- Sell advertising space in the Weekly News.
- Utilise social media better in relation to giving/finances.

Next steps – the above feedback will be reviewed and in particular grants and stewardship teams set up. The stewardship campaign will take place in May.

7. Fabric

Sian reported that our architect is meeting with our roofing contractors in a couple of weeks' time to review the leading on the roof (identified in the Quinquennial report as a medium term action).

Sian then referred the meeting to the quotes circulated in relation to the renewal of the air circulation system. One quote was for replacing the whole system and came in at £21k. The second quote – preferred by the maintenance team – covered only the part of the system that needs replacing and was for £8.6k.

The latter, cheaper option was unanimously approved.

8. Mission Possible donation

Alan and Hannah reported that Richard Wallace, the leader of Mission Possible, is retiring and handing over the charity to a larger charity called Christian Hope. In principle, Christian Hope appears to cover the same focus areas as Mission Possible (Ukraine, Russia and Rwanda). It was agreed that further information would be sought from Christian Hope before making a final decision about whether to keep them as one of our nominated charities.

9. New Administrants

Rachel Fell, Catherine Gibbin, Graham Shaw and Leigh Thompson were unanimously endorsed as new Chalice Administrants.

10. Alan's sabbatical

Alan reported that he is going on sabbatical later this year, from 12 July to 15 October. Cover will be available for services.

The PCC wished Alan well with his upcoming sabbatical.

11. Safeguarding

There were no incidents to report.

Alan noted that future meetings will report on the number of safeguarding incidents and that they have been dealt with.

12. Acceptance of minutes of the standing committee

The standing committee minutes for January were tabled and accepted.

13. AOB

There was no other business.

14. Review of meeting

There was a brief review of the meeting.

The meeting concluded with prayers at 8.20pm.

The next meeting is on 19 March 2024 in church.