



PARISH OF GREAT BERKHAMSTED

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council to be held in The Court House (Long Room)
on Tuesday 25th February at 8pm

MINUTES

Attendance: Christopher Green, Alan Conway, Allison McMunn, Astrid Biddle, Carole Dell, Caroline Charman, David Northcott, Fr Simon Vivian, Julian Dawson (secretary), Mark Grego (Churchwarden), Tim Hennessey (Churchwarden), Richard Currie, Richard Hackworth, Jon Lee, Pru Murray, Christopher Beauchamp

Michael Anderson, Peter McMunn and Bob Thompson (guests)

1. **Prayers**: short act of worship led by Fr Simon
 2. **Apologies**: John Gerry, Hilary Elliott
 3. **Notification of matters for consideration under Any Other Business** - None
 4. **Approval of Minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 19th November 2019** – Approved (authorised by Mark Grego)
 5. **Matters Arising** – None
 6. **Standing Committee Reports** – None
 7. **Committee/Group Reports**
 - **Finance**

RH circulated a report prior to the meeting with a number of items that are on the agenda. In response to his report, PM questioned whether there was to be another Stewardship campaign to which TH suggested this should happen before the new incumbent begins. RH said that before the end of the tax year he intends to send out thank you cards. PM also asked about the success of contactless payments, RH said he could not give an exact figure but that it is being used and donations coming. MG commented on the success after a baptism and JL raised the possibility of having it out more permanently, or certainly improving its visibility.

Action: PM to speak to Hilary Armstrong about making some signage.

Courthouse Cottage – PM suggested Air BNB and the possibility of short term lets, PCC agreed that this was a good suggestion but it is an unfurnished building and of course the organising would need managing.
- 3 Resolutions: (Read on his report)
1. Appointment of the Hon Treasurer, Richard Hackworth, as an Authorised Official for the purposes of submitting on-line Gift Aid claims to HMRC.
TH proposed, AM seconded – all in favour.
 2. Approval of the 2020 Annual Trustee Report and Accounts circulated on 1st February 2020.
DN proposed, CD seconded – all in favour.
 3. Amend the Charitable Sanction of ASH to widen the purposes of the building.
RC asked: what are the chances the charity will turn us down. MA responded that this is the exact wording from the solicitor.
RH proposed, CG seconded – all in favour.

RH has had queries from Ray Ashley Brown (St Frances Hospice Chaplain) and Jonathon Gordon re: letting ASH. Whilst it was clarified that the discussion as to whether to sell the property had not been had yet, and there may be some objection to this, **the PCC gave RH permission to let them both know of the possibility of selling the property rather than re-letting.**

- Buildings Committee

Court House Cottage and ASH will be vacant in the near future and both of these will require refurbishment.

CH also mentioned the work that will need to be in the Rectory before the new incumbent arrives. TH, MG and Stuart Owen will meet with Iain Blythe (estates secretary) to discuss the work of the Rectory before he moves in.

MG will finalise the logistics of CG stepping down next month and thanked him for his efforts.

- Pastoral Group

Have met and visits/lifts are continuing as usual.

- Courthouse Group

Dishwasher – the current one is out of date and frequently leaks. £1200 has been collected for a replacement. The proposed new one is a commercial machine that will be more efficient and more cost effective, costing £1300 (almost self-funded).

Action: Purchase the proposed dishwasher with the collected monies.

AB proposed, JL seconded – all in favour

8. Plans for the Court House

PM proposed to the Churchwardens that we commissioned Bob Thompson (of Thompson Bradford Architects) to do a design study, look at the building and see how we could improve its use. It is up to the PCC to decide where they wish to go with this over the coming year.

BT's descriptive ppt highlighted: 4 x unisex WC's with 1 accessible WC (inc baby changing facilities), lowering the floor to provide step free access into the building, work on the porch exterior that would retain its historical significance but make it more welcoming and reverse the staircase up from the long room enabling internal access into the Church office.

BT remarked that despite being a listed building, there are a number of opportunities to improve the performance of the building, all windows are Victorian and can be replaced (not cheap but a lot more satisfactory), thin outer wall of the Court Room could be lined to improve insulation. Insulation introduced into reroofing. Boiler will be relocated and overhaul of heater and water system. Lighting and wiring in need of an upgrade everywhere except the Square Room.

Courthouse Cottage – no benefit in assessing the buildings as one. Bathroom on top of CH toilets, is very small and inadequate, possibility of extending it in conjunction with the reroofing and toilet work. Modest extension but could be done without affecting anything else (subject to planning permission).

The Courthouse is listed grade 2 but the cottage is not listed (unusual considering they are joined). This building does not come under faculty. Though the majority of changes affect 19th and 20th fabric and BT's proposal will not harm historic aspects of the building.

BT suggested it would be worth doing a pre application consultation, this would become a formal process with a fee, he estimates that the cost of this would be a couple of hundred pounds but would be worth doing because the planning office are very busy and this puts it on their radar.

Costs – BT recommended going to a quantity surveyor and getting a cost plan. Based on other projects gave a ballpark figure for the main changes of £150,000 (toilets and changing the stairs round).

RC queried the possibility of work on the toilets discovering damage in the cottage bathroom. BT suggested that there would need to be a more intrusive investigation before the PCC committed to doing the work.

MG asked whether the work would end up being more expensive if done in stages rather than a single project, and wondered if the work to the upper room could be carried out as part of the Heritage Hub

Timescales – 6 month planning process and then beginning the building work.

TH asked about the increase in thermal efficiency, to which BT responded we're effectively starting at 0 so any work would be an improvement

RH suggested that since the Courthouse Cottage is currently vacant it would make sense to get that work done ASAP. Does require planning permission but no reason why that couldn't be phase 1 of the plan.

Discussion over unisex toilets – PCC agreed that this is more becoming the norm and is an efficient use of minimal space.

Conclusion – fast track work on the Court House Cottage

9. **800th Anniversary** [Pru papers circulated](#)

Response to Pru's minutes:

- Restoration of the organ 10 years ago told us that the organ had 20 years left. Worth considering that the replacement would be a costly endeavour (£400,000).
- Wait for the new incumbent to make a decision re the strategic use of the Church.
- Highlighted that this will also be a fundraising event, not just a spend, but need to know what the PCC and the Church want to do before we can ask for funding. JL added that there are funds you can apply for – involve James Moira – representation of the Friends of Berkhamsted.
- Action: Form a committee and meet before May to bring a more refined plan to the next meeting (12th May). Also give it a push at the APCM (5th April).

10. **New Incumbent**

Stuart Owen of All Saints, Edmonton (since 2008), since 2016 has also been Area Dean for Enfield Deanery. Married to Susie, with two children: James (6) and Barnaby (8).

SV has a profile from SO for the Friends' Newsletter which TH will publish. TH informed the PCC that his current parish is an enthusiastic congregation but doesn't have a lot of resource. Therefore we can offer him a tremendous amount of support and expertise so he can concentrate on being a Parish Leader and Priest.

Finishing date in Edmonton is 17th July.

11. **Diocesan & Deanery Synod Meetings**

Haven't met since last PCC. Next meeting: 4th March.

Deanery lecture: 13th May – Margaret Houston Pritchard (Mission Youth Enabler)

12. **Safeguarding update** [Circulated via email](#)

Nothing to add to that.

13. **Date of Next Meeting** – April 5th 11:00 APCM, Lady Chapel; Tuesday 12th May at 8pm in the Court House

14. **Any Other Business**

Thank the members of the PCC who are stepping down: Alison McMunn, David Northcott and Richard Currie.

15. **The Grace**