



## PARISH OF GREAT BERKHAMSTED

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Meeting of the Parochial Church Council held in the Court House  
Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 8pm

Start Time: 20:01

**Attendees:**

Stuart Owen  
Sarah Elder  
Mike Below  
Tim Hennessey  
Carolynne Charman  
Chris Chatterton  
Susan Holmes  
Hillary Elliot  
Will Gore

### **A G E N D A**

1. Prayers
2. Apologies: Martin Moore, Carole Dell
3. Notification of matters for consideration under Any Other Business
  - churchwarden roles and responsibilities (from SH)
  - PCC communication (from SO)
  - MB objects to not including discussion of Friends' of St Peter's proposed renovation of mezzanine floor in courthouse
4. Approval of Minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September – Approved, subject to following amendments - “PCC decided that heating would not be on for Friday choir practise and Martin would liaise after affects were seen.” CC not CG at the end. Need to bring revisions back from June 24 to approve
5. Matters Arising
  - Rectory Lane Cemetery – pay for 2024, WG SH SO have discussed with James, Rectory Lane Cemetery representative. WG SH SO recommend to the PCC that this payment continues for the following reasons – reasonable, really good service (can build on the relationship – also adds value to St Peter's), safeguards eligibility for heritage funding for the roof. Approve payment for next year, not in perpetuity – TH did their financial plan always involve St Peter's money? WG – didn't come up. MB – where does the money go? SH – £7,000 on maintenance, so St Peter's money not involved in events etc. TH - propose making payment for next year, but not in perpetuity. Approved – 1 abstaining, 8 agree
  - Festival of Light – decision made to carry on even in face of Storm Bert, really good decision, 2,700 people passed through. Everyone very happy. MB - initial numbers on income: 1,635, expenditure: 300, net income just shy of 1,350. SE - raised awareness of the roof as a

community problem. CC - 900 raffle tickets sold. MB - is it specific to the renovation fund? Need to approve money from the raffle tickets going to the renovation fund. SO proposed money from the raffle tickets going to the renovation fund. Approved on general agreement. Formal thanks to MM for all his work in organising.

## 6. Financial Report

### Courthouse

MB - Courthouse in profit as opposed to last year. PAT testing – need to consider whether we should keep the redundant electrical equipment on the balcony. CC - but how will we know if its redundant or not. MB – what if some was kept offsite during the PAT testing, is that right or not? SO – everything used onsite needs to be PAT tested. We would probably be liable, insurance wise. TH - how much did we pay? MB – 250. CC – but we haven't done it for a bit. SO - PAT testing is essential. TH – 250 is acceptable. PAT testing expenditure approved with general agreement

### Wedding and Funeral fees

MB – talking about the ones we have control over them, has offered figures to play with. TH – why is there an increase on the choir but not others. MB - just done on inflation, not in individual pounds. TH – proposed adding £5.00 to each category. Is that going to put people off? SO – probably not, good to have the breakdown. WG – alright this year but will cause problems next year with prices being out of sync. TH – could go by RPI. SO – problem of rising in pounds. WG - maybe do for this year but review in future. £5.00 increase on every line approved with general agreement for weddings and funerals.

### Courthouse and St Peter's hire

MB – hire of the Courthouse. Proposing relatively minor fee increases. SO – happy with the proposed changes. Approved on general agreement.

MB - hire of St Peter's much the same. Proposing minor fee increases. SO – what's heating? MB – done as simply as possible, not based on time used. MB – everyone happy? Approved

### Courthouse cottage rent

MB – what's done about this? TH – tenant receives Dacorum Borough Council housing allowance for a three-bedroom house in Berkhamsted. TH will act to make sure the rent is at the level of the current Dacorum Borough Council housing allowance. Approved

### Lighting

MB - many have failed. Need to do something about it. Have had an offer. But need to find out if they need programming or not. TH – could we not just reposition to where they are most needed? CC - problem of getting up there to move them and not finding electricians willing to work at height. MB - do we want to get more lights? Don't have an exact cost figure yet – £220 retail per unit + agent fees. TH – can't we just move them rather than invest in obsolete system. CC – could just get two to see if they work. SO – conflicting advice around programming. MB - could get them refunded if they don't work. TH offered to go up and look to see if they can be moved. WG – sounds like a good first step. Ch Ch offered to talk to a builder. MB – do we do this now or wait? SO – proposed delegating to TH and CC on the way forward. WG – agree rather than adding to an obsolete system. SO – could add to scope of building works on church. All agreed to delegate to TH and CC, starting with TH investigating and CC on programming

### Reviewing salaries of people employed by the church.

MB - Need to do that this year in January. Gov statistics on average wage growth totals 13.4%. Net increase cost to St Peter's £450 pm across all. TH - clergy sector vs public sector

numbers? SO will try to find out increase in CofE pay and clergy pay. Separate group to meet to agree – SO, TH, CC, MB. Approved

MB – minutes not on the website, need to be there to get financial approval. SO will deal with it.

## 7. Committee/Group Reports

Buildings Committee – CC - haven't met, will meet next week to discuss temporary measures on the roof, electricals already discussed in financial report.

Fundraising Committee – CC - £40,000 ish raised so far, SO - has put together Heritage Lottery Fund Committee to explore options. There is a new step – the expression of interest. We need to decide an approach: maximalist (do everything!) or minimalist (stop the roof leaking). Also need to demonstrate engagement with wider community – what's special about our project. Had guidance from a couple of local experts. In the process of having informal conversations with HLF about the kind of case to make. CC – hopefully pre 20<sup>th</sup> December. SO - focussing on the right thing

Pastoral Committee - HE - all good, jogging along, need more lift givers – a pool of people who can help. Put advertising in pew leaflet in the new year. Appeal for information about those needing support. SO – doing an excellent job.

8. Children and families – SE - James joining as Sunday School leader, plodding along otherwise. Parent prayer drew in a new family. People excited about Christmas story event. HE - travelling crib starting next week in Victoria before moving on to Thomas Coram.

9. Safeguarding – HE - carrying on, more renewing of training, some people need chasing. SO – lots of scrutiny of safeguarding in the CofE going on right now but we have excellent safeguarding officers who bear the brunt of this scrutiny. Massive thanks for all their work. HE - safeguarding Sunday in February.

10. Festival of Light – covered in matters arising

## 11. Chiming of Bells at night

MB - Robin received a message from a lady saying the clock bells were keeping her up all night every night and they should be fixed – i.e. turned off between 11pm and 7am. TH – has she talked to environment agency people? MB – has met the lady, she was positive but still wanted them to be turned off, said people living around her had the same view and wants a public consultation. TH – we shouldn't facilitate it, but she can organise it if she wants. MB – need to go back to her with something. TH – what's the diocesan advice? SO – not much but under same legislation in terms of noise pollution. Respond with compassion and understanding but that there are other views too. TH – don't sign post next steps. MB – so reply with sympathy, acknowledgement of mixed views, we aren't moving forward. SO offered to make contact going forward. TH – might be better, she will feel heard. General agreement to SO making contact. MB to forward the latest email

12. Date of Next Meeting – **25<sup>th</sup> February 2025** - TH will chair because SO won't be here.

13. Any Other Business

- churchwarden roles and responsibilities (from SH) - SO has prepared a document. SH - question particularly around SO sabbatical. Who runs the church? SO – like the interregnum. CC and TH, John, Ben, retired clergy. TH – will act as lay vicechair of PCC. SH – what about replacement for TH as churchwarden? SO – not a manged process, anyone can apply and be elected. MB – is TH still in place until end of March? TH – APCM. MB – churchwardens on the board of local charities. TH – yes, based on their constitutions. Will be updated.

- pcc communication (from SO)

SO - goes through chair in in person meetings. Wants it to work like this outside the meeting in electronic communications. Not wide sweeping emails to everyone. But, of course, still able to ask for things to go through AOB. Approved by consensus

MB objects to not including discussion of friends' discussed renovation of mezzanine floor in courthouse

14. The Grace

End Time: 21:20

### **Future Meetings**

2025

25th February

1st April (Zoom for APCM reports approval, provisional)

6th April APCM (Provisional)

20th May

24th June

23rd September

25th November

2026

24th February