

St. Mary's Sprotbrough Parochial Church Council
Minutes of Meeting held in the Stable
Monday 9th October 2023 at 7.30 pm

The meeting opened with a prayer by James.

Attendance:

Present: Amanda Barraclough (Chair), Derek Barraclough, Betty Brockman, Robert Heaton, Christine Herbert, Angela Hudson, James Inglis, Robert Paskell (left meeting at 8.10 pm) and Rachel Towers (9)

Apologies: Lyn Hopson, Andrea Offord, Carol Palmer, Therese Paskell and Janet Scott (5)

1. Minutes of the Minutes of the Meeting held 11th September 2023

The minutes were tabled and agreed to be a true record of the meeting held on 11th September 2023. *Proposed by Betty Brockman and seconded by Robert Paskell. Agreed unanimously by all those present at that meeting.* Minutes signed by Robert Heaton.

Amanda asked that in future it should be good practice that when actions are identified as being needed to be taken, it is clearly noted by whom and that if that person is not present that they be notified and reduce delays.

2. Matters Arising

- **Vision Day – Saturday 4th November 2023** – It was confirmed that Toby Hole, Director of Mission and Ministry for the Diocese will be attending the meeting to help facilitate our discussions and identify our key priorities to finalise a Mission Statement. The day will start at 10am in the Church Hall and finish at 2pm. Betty has kindly offered to arrange a light lunch. Attendees include all PCC Trustees, Ministry Team and Vision Development Team (there are overlaps).
- **Hall – Sound & Projector** – Though agreed to go ahead with Scratch Music's quote in September; the company were only instructed to do so on 8th October. Amanda clarified that the cost will not need to be met from the Hall maintenance monies, as a kind benefactor is prepared to cover the cost. The PCC were very grateful for this support.
- **Cadeby Gravestones** – A verbal approval by Faculty to lower dangerous/listing headstones has been received and Derek considers that the SMITE team should be able to undertake the lowering of the identified gravestones safely.
- **Disability Access Report** – Having taken rather a lot of the PCC's time last month, it was agreed that a small designated working group, to include Christine who is the Author of 'A Place to Belong', should be set up to consider the document and then come back to the PCC with their overall advice. Volunteers to be part of this group are hoped to be identified from the Church, Grounds and Buildings Committee. Amanda will email the Committee members to ask for said volunteers before their next meeting.
- **Hot Spot Update** – Amanda attended a community partner's meeting to discuss a plan for providing 'warm spaces' in the Parish over the coming months. The overall decision was not to follow last year's pattern which was much hit and miss. Instead, the Parish Council has produced a poster (tabled) that identifies St Mary's and other

community partners in the Parish has having various activities that people are encouraged to come to over the winter months. Rachel tabled a poster for St Mary's using the Parish Council's poster but highlighting the various weekly and monthly cafe's and groups that are open to all.

Hereafter the tabled Agenda items were discussed out of order to allow Robert P to be able to leave the meeting in a timely manner.

3. Treasurer's Report / Common Fund

In addition to the monthly Treasurer's report tabled, there was the correspondence from the Diocese requesting the PCC to consider St Mary's Common Fund pledge for 2024.

Robert was able to confirm that overall things have improved slightly regards income, though still running behind there was nothing significant to report. He confirmed that the 2024 budget should be available for consideration at the next PCC meeting; however, there are three issues that are going to be significant:

1. The current utilities contract coming to an end in March 2024 and the increase in charges for electric and gas should be considered as going to be quite significant. St Mary's has requested a quotation from Parish Buying Energy Basket which purchases energy in bulk for churches nationally.
2. Planned giving is down, with the sad loss of members of our current congregation who were very generous we need to encourage giving by newer members of the congregation and increased giving by others. Hopefully the Generosity week services held in the last week or so will have had an impact.
3. The Common Fund request has been received by the Diocese. This year we should fulfil our promise of £43,000. However, the uncertainty of our utility costs moving forward is going have a major impact on the commitment St Mary's can make to the Common Fund. The Diocese identifies an increase of 6.7% = £45,881 and discussion was centred on the figure St Mary's can pledge. It was agreed that we will defer a pledge until outgoings on utility costs are clearer.

4. Hall & Stable Hire Charges

It was agreed that any increase in fees should be from April 2024 and a decision on the percentage of an increase across all hire rates can only be made once we are in a position to identify our utility costs moving forward which is going to be a major factor. Rachel confirmed that she will make sure any 2024 private bookings are taken from April on the understanding that there will be an increase in rates and these will be provided as soon as they are available. Rachel also requested that regular users of the hall be given at least three months notice of a price increase. The increased charges will be reconsidered again when the situation with the utility charges is clearer.

5. Correspondence

Cusworth & Sprotbrough Parish Council – Historic Stone Cross

The Parish Council had made a request for the PCC to consider accommodating the relocation of an historic stone cross boundary marker from a garden on the corner of Spring Lane to the Churchyard. After a brief discussion it was considered that it is not something the Church could take responsibility for as it already has one such marker in our Churchyard. It was considered that movement of such a historic edifice was probably something that just could not simply be moved as various organisations such as Historic England etc would undoubtedly have to be applied to. Amanda will encourage the PCC and Parish Council to liaise with the homeowner whose boundary it is on to ensure its prominence and significance is understood.

6. Policy Review – Safeguarding Policy inc Children / Promoting a Safer Church

The document was tabled and two amendments considered:

1. Removal of T-Time as a current group (page 2).
2. Removal of Food & Hygiene paragraph (page 3), as this is no longer required as we are a Charity and the course certification not required.

As our Safeguarding Officer was not at this meeting, it was agreed that Rachel would alter the document and this would be put forward at the November PCC meeting for final approval.

7. Safeguarding

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer Amanda reported that the DBS certificates for members of the Bell Ringing team were outstanding and discussions being had around the 'automatic renewal' which members have opted in for but actually not the system that the Sheffield Diocese Safeguarding endorse, they want DBS to be applied for when expired. In addition there is an issue of Bell Captains having to take a leadership course which is proving problematic too. However, the importance of having undertaken the course is pivotal to be able to work and supervise young and/or vulnerable people. It is hoped that these issues can be resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner.

8. Events Team Update

A report provided by Andrea was tabled and provided a summary of this year's events including up to the end of the year. Due to the limitation of numbers on this team it was thought that the wider congregation should be appealed to for volunteers to join the team. One of the casualties of limited resources is the annual Christmas Tree festival which this year is scaled back. Schools are being invited to put a tree up on the North window ledges and there will be the large tree in the Chancel area for people to hang their memory stars. The efforts of the team throughout this year was acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

9. September Deanery Event Feedback

A brief discussion concluded that people who had attended did not find it inspiring.

10. Re-Development Proposal

Amanda voiced her disappointment that the momentum for the re-development of the kitchen/store area to be extended to a wider area considered as far back in June after being proposed by the Architect and plans being painstakingly drawn up by Roger Offord (saving the PCC considerable cost of having them drawn by the architect) had been so clearly opposed at the September PCC meeting. The initial discussions earlier this year by the PCC are recorded as being open to exploring something more radical as 'positively received'. Discussion focused on the change of appetite by some Trustees after having seen the drawings.

Amanda highlighted that though it was reported that a DAC meeting was to be held in September to consider our Faculty for the first Phase of our re-development plans to develop the seating/kitchen area this was not actually accurate. However, going forward Option 1 having been identified as the preferred plan, this will mean that the access to the Prayer Chapel will not be obstructed and will allow for wheelchair access into this space. The decision on what to do with the pews that have been removed going forward

is also having to be considered.

Phase II of the re-development regards the front of the Church and the long awaited wood survey needed, Amanda confirmed that our Architect has secured the services of a York based Chartered Institute of Archaeologists to help certify his findings. The cost of this service should be in the region of £1,000 and on the Trustees behalf Amanda directed the Architect to continue and progress this.

As a side item, it was noted that the statute of Mary will be moved in the next few weeks to the new position in the window. The popular opinion being that it will be provided a more unobstructed view.

11. AOB

- **Christmas Lights** – after a request that the lights be checked from the Sprotbrough Christmas Lights Committee before the 25th November, some of the lights have been identified as needing replacing. Roger and Andrea Offord have costed the replacement lights to be £110. Amanda had instructed the purchase of the said lights on behalf of the Trustees.
- **Church Wi-Fi** – The Church has incurred the cost of £70 to register the Church's address with the Post Office, without which the broadband provider could not identify our property. This has also necessitated a placement of a post box outside the Church (this can be removed once paperwork is in order and Wi-Fi installed). Thanks go to Roland Lumby for continuing to facilitate this on behalf of the Church.

The Meeting closed with the Grace at 9 pm.

Date of next meeting – Monday 13th November 2023 7.30 pm in the Stable.