

St. Mary's Sprotbrough Parochial Church Council
Minutes of Meeting held in the Stable
Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.30 pm

The meeting opened with a prayer by Amanda.

Attendance:

Present: Amanda Barraclough (Chair), Derek Barraclough, Betty Brockman, Robert Heaton, Christine Herbert, Lyn Hopson, Angela Hudson, James Inglis, Andrea Offord, Carol Palmer, Janet Scott and Rachel Towers (12)

Apologies: Robert Paskell and Therese Paskell (2)

1. Minutes of the Minutes of the Meeting held 13th November 2023

The minutes were tabled and agreed to be a true record of the meeting held on 13th November 2023. *Proposed by Robert Heaton and seconded by Janet Scott. Agreed unanimously by all those present at that meeting.* Minutes signed by Amanda Barraclough.

2. Matters Arising

- **Events Team** – The Christmas Fayre and display of School's Christmas trees in Church on 25th November was a great success and raised over £2,000. Amanda extended the thanks of the PCC to the team and volunteers who made it happen. Andrea confirmed that a meeting of the Events Team is to be organised for the new year to consider plans for 2024.
- **Hall – Sound & Projector** – Installation of the new sound system has been undertaken and agreed to be better. The company installing the projector recommended that the projector remain ceiling mounted as this allowed it to be directed at the screen correctly and that leaving it portable would be problematic for the plug sockets available in the stage area. Amanda agreed on behalf of the PCC to follow their advice. Conversation turned to the purchase of another projector that is portable for the Stable at a cost of £360. It was agreed that the 'old' projector in the Church would be checked over by Robert Heaton to see how well it works with modern technology but if it proves to be too outdated, we will go ahead and make a purchase of a new portable projector. *Proposed by Betty Brockman and seconded by Carol Palmer. Agreed unanimously by all those present at the meeting.*
- **Church Wi-Fi** – The Faculty has come through and the contract with the broadband provider signed. We are just awaiting an installation date.
- **Quinquennial Update** – Report still awaited, however, the issue identified in the report regards the water ingress at the East end as penetrating damp is becoming a significant concern. Three options for correcting the issue had been submitted by the Architect. The cheapest option (£1,400) was to widen the fissure and fill with sealant. This 'quick' temporary fix was considered to be imprudent. The other

alternatives are to cap the stone copings at the lower level with stainless steel and upper coping with lead at a cost of £8,050. A similar approach but using all stainless steel would cost £9,000. It was noted that £3,000 of each quote included the provision of scaffolding to undertake the repairs. After consideration it was agreed that the PCC would go with the Architects recommendation of the quote that included the stainless and lead provisions at a cost of £8,050. *Proposed by Derek Barraclough and seconded by Angela Hudson. Agreed unanimously by all those present at the meeting.*

3. Correspondence

A letter from Mr E Rimington had been received outlining his concerns regards the removal of the pew cushions (purchased by Mr Rimington) as a consequence of the re-ordering. It was noted that the cushions are actually continuing to be used and those extra to requirements are being repurposed as a back rest. When the centre pews are shortened to provide space for a wheelchair there will be a requirement to shorten a couple of the pew cushions. Amanda will have a discussion with Mr Rimington to address his concerns.

4. Committee Dates 2024

Amanda tabled the dates proposed for the Vision Committee and Fabric & Grounds Committee for next year, encouraging people to make sure the dates go in diaries and on calendars.

5. November Deanery Synod Meeting

Notes had been provided by Lyn (thank you) after the November meeting at Bentley. Amanda flagged that the Diocese's 'Starting Something New' initiative is providing small grants of up to £2,000 for new groups/projects etc and should be considered if we decide to start a new initiative in 2024.

6. Treasurer's Report

The monthly report was tabled. A brief discussion was had regarding the continuing concern of planned giving significantly declining. The Generosity week had no impact on giving and the lack of understanding by the general congregation of how monies held by the Church were restricted or unrestricted was perceived and how we could overcome this. It is agreed that the congregation need to be more aware of how monies can be used or not and this needs to be a continual conversation.

7. Hall & Stable Hire Rates and Church Fees Increases for 2024

- **Hall & Stable Hire Rates 2024**

The current fees were tabled but the increase was hoped to be considered in line with the costs we will incur in March when our utility costs will increase, the figures for which we are still waiting. It was agreed that a decision would be made at the January meeting with advice from the Treasurer if the figures were still not available.

- **Church Fees 2024**

These fees are 'Statutory' set by the Church of England and accepted. The only fees that the PCC do control are those paid to the organist and verger. Amanda proposed that these remain at current level, £40 for the verger and £85 for the organist (weddings) and £70 (funerals). *Proposed by Carol Palmer and seconded by Angela Hudson. Agreed unanimously by all those present at the meeting.*

There was a brief additional conversation over the digging of a hole for the cremated remains in the Churchyard. This service is undertaken by Derek and not charged for. It was agreed that this would not change however; cover for digging holes will be needed in 2024 when Amanda and therefore Derek are on sabbatical.

8. Policy Review – Ex-Offenders Recruitment

The document was tabled; no amendments considered necessary the document was duly signed by the Rector, Safeguarding Officer and PCC Secretary.

9. Safeguarding

A meeting has been held with the Bell Captain and their Safeguarding Officer. The undertaking of the Leadership Training required by the Church of England will be done, however, it was recognised that as they are not necessarily practising Christians and have little biblical teaching it makes it unnecessarily difficult for them to comply. The availability of a 'renewing DBS' option which the Church of England do not support is causing the issue with outstanding DBS certificates. This continues to be an issue, however, the PCC's hands are tied as this is a national requirement within Church of England. The Bellringers will be asked again to have their DBS requirements by the Church updated by mid-January as the out of date situation cannot continue indefinitely. Andrea did express how good it was to understand how well the Bell Ringing team instigate good practice when it comes to Safeguarding overall.

10. Advent/Christmas Update

The Church is now in full-swing with Advent and Christmas based events. Teamwork ensures the smooth running of events. However, Amanda stressed she cannot carry the load alone especially when it comes to Christmas Eve and the back to back afternoon crib services. More volunteers the better. Discussion turned to a request by Mr K Mears to install the 'staging' for the Christmas Eve afternoon services to be installed on Friday 22nd December. It was agreed that as long as a school choir event was avoided this would be acceptable.

11. Re-Development Update

The Faculty for the kitchen in the west end is just awaiting consent from amenities bodies Historic England, Church Buildings Council and Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings before submission to the Chancellor. Also a Faculty for permanent removal of the pews in this area and permission to sell those removed and not of further use has reached the stage where the public are consulted for any objections.

12.AOB

- Disability Action Plan – Christine confirmed that she had had a meeting with Janet and Roger to consider an action plan. She will put this into a report and provide it to the PCC early in the new year.
- Hall & Stable Electrical Safety – Rachel explained to the PCC after a visit from Thorpe Electric to undertake repairs in both venues that it had been identified that neither buildings had an up to date EICR i.e. a full check of our electrical provisions. Also, that the 'emergency' exit lighting was inadequate in the Stable and both venues required certification. A crossed wire situation was also identified regarding the wall and main lights, this has been causing issues historically. The costs of these works were likely to be expensive but necessary. Thorpe Electrical have proven to be a reputable company that do not cut corners and their advice will be taken and they will be asked to undertake the work as necessary.
- The Church is taking part in a national programme regards Net Zero compliance and the carbon footprint Churches make. This is at no cost to us but the Cheribim device is plugged in near the audio system in the Chancel and should not be unplugged. Sensors are distributed in Church and the South porch, measuring the impact of our heating use etc. It was suggested that a member of the congregation be approached to monitor the feedback. Amanda stressed how important it is not to move any of the sensors!

The Meeting closed with the Grace at 8.55 pm.

Date of next meeting – Monday 8th January 2024 7.30 pm in the Stable.