

St Simon Stock Parish, Walderslade

Minutes of A Meeting of The Finance Committee

Via Zoom Wednesday 11th November 2020

Members Present: Mavis Westbrook, Chairperson (MW), Fr Pawel Sobol (FrP), Deacon Martin Smith (DcM), Tanya Wilkins (TW), Lynne Pearson (LP), Stephen Pike (SP), Sylvia Berko (SB), David Redding (DR).

1. The meeting started promptly at 6:30pm with prayer led by DcM.
2. Apologies: Peter Machin (PM).
3. MW announced a change to usual proceedings with a presentation by Alfredo De Vergori (AdV) prior to the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.
4. AdV outlined the main points of a summary entitled *Outstanding Works* (attached) detailing projects he has led/been involved with that require the involvement of the Finance Committee. There are three points which are as follows:
 - a. Pruning of Trees: Residents at 7, Greenacre Close and 12 Knole Road have written to the parish regarding the overhanging of trees which they believe have the potential to damage their property, with the expectation of a resolution as soon as possible. Planning Applications have been submitted to Medway Council as these trees have a Preserved Tree Order (PTO). AdV is in contact with key staff at the council and we await their decision. True costs are unknown until we understand the amount of work permitted. However, one local Tree Surgeon estimates a cost of £1,390.00 (inclusive of VAT) for the full completion of works at one site. LP questioned the responsibility of the trees as they may fall under the care of the school. AdV confirmed they are on parish property. AdV will continue to liaise with Medway Council.
 - b. Heating in The Church: Following on from discussions between AdV and Fr Bart Dudek prior to his departure, there is a need to replace our heating system. AdV has been in discussion with local contractors and both the advice and costs are varied, with the option to replace with a like for like system or move to another method ie independently heated units for the main body of the church aswell as the office and hall. Prices range from the repair of our existing boiler @ £768.00 (parts may also need to be replaced inflating the cost) to individual units @ £13,800.00 to a new boiler @ £14,400.00. Opinions were shared by members of the committee based on personal thought and experience. MW and LP spoke of fundraising options from the Diocese and LP outlined the positive reception from Roisin McLaughlin from the Diocese with the promise of further assistance. Bernie Long has also been working with LP thus far. MW, LP and FrP outlined the need for a final cost to be known before funding can be seriously requested.

MW highlighted the need for a member of the committee to be involved in subsequent actions suggesting LP continuing to work with Berni Long and parallel with AdV.
 - c. Alessandra Rocco has enquired if she could swap a new urn that she has purchased for the one in the kitchen. This is to assist both parties as each function in a manner that is better suited to the other party. LP raised the question of PAT testing and therefore this will have to wait until the next tests are made.

ADV left the meeting.

5. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
6. MW formerly welcomed FrP, LP, SB and DR to the committee.
7. Hall Hire: There is a need to update the Terms and Conditions for hire of the church hall following several occasions when the hall has been left messy or damage has occurred. FrP asked about previous arrangements. MW and TW gave details of the previous arrangements whereby whoever happened to be in the office at the time of the hall being hired would give a walkthrough for hirers. TW spoke of the need for a deposit to be held. LP confirmed a deposit is usual for hall hire. FrP requested the current rates for hire which were given by TW as £30.00 for the first hour followed by £10.00 for each additional hour. FrP then agreed to the taking of a deposit with the amount to be agreed and for a designated person to view the hall with hirers before and after the hire period. **TW** will consider options. MW went on to advise the Scouts to have accepted they must clean the hall after use. FrP advised the committee that Fr Bart had informed him that in his opinion, if the Scouts are able to use the hall then they have the responsibility to clean it every week even if they have not used it. FrP shares this opinion. **MW** will advise the Scouts of this.
8. Gardening: The area where bags of good soil have been left requires attention. It has become overgrown where it previously provided a natural screen between residents and the field. MW has already sourced suitable plants which are currently in storage and there is an option to plant flowers, some of which could perhaps be used in church. **FrP** will oversee.
9. Donation Boxes: FrP has been brought upto date by Fr Bart regarding the placement of four secure boxes around the church where donations can be left by parishioners/visitors. These will be like the design of a post box with the fixings hidden. **FrP** advised the cost is approximately £25.00 per box and will action this.
10. Counters: TW spoke of the need for Counters of the collections once services return to normal. Currently two parishioners have taken on this responsibility during lockdown and are happy to continue for now. However, training needs to be provided for any new Counters and a refresher for those that were counting before the lockdown. **TW** will look back at the names of the Counters prior to Covid restrictions in order to bring them upto date.
11. Handrails: TW spoke of the need for an additional handrail for the steps outside of church. Currently one set has been installed but it was agreed by those present that two rails are preferable with one each side. MW highlighted the need for choice for those that have mobility difficulties. DcM advised the original set had been installed by John Warren-Hayes and Adv. **DcM** will approach them regarding the installation of a second one.

Any Other Business

TW gave details of the way the Diocese receive and distribute Gift Aid that is obtained through parish giving and that a substantial sum currently rests with the Diocese. Ideally, a request for the full amount currently held should be made but can only come from FrP. **FrP** acknowledged this and will approach the Diocese.

MW raised the subject of funds held for anyone struggling during the Covid Pandemic that was initiated by Fr Bart. Currently £2,373.00 has been raised which DcM confirmed was started by the generosity of Fr Bart in foregoing the Easter collection. As yet, no requests have been made but LP highlighted that no policy had been written for the transparency of giving. MW advised Fr Bart may have linked the Donation Boxes to this fund. **FrP** will consider next steps.

TW raised the issue of a second computer previously agreed but not yet supplied to the church office. John Warren-Hayes had supplied a laptop to the parish via AdV which is currently being used by FrP to support the live streaming of services. **FrP** will approach John Warren-Hayes with regard to sourcing an additional computer.

MW highlighted the retirement of the Housekeeper to the Presbytery and enquired of FrP if he would consider a replacement from inside rather than outside the parish. FrP advised he does not currently require assistance but will review the situation in a few months.

LP enquired of TW if a second reserve account is held. TW advised there is not and gave a breakdown of how funds are automatically moved to and from the reserve account that we do operate.

LP enquired of TW what the Bishop's fund is. **TW** will confirm and advise.

TW gave details of a new accounts system the church is using and that she is currently learning. Only a Totals Sheet can be produced for sharing.

LP questioned how each meeting agenda and minutes will be offered to the view of the wider parish during current restrictions on gathering. DR suggested the website. This was agreed. **DR** will action this.

TW responded to two questions raised in writing by PM. One being the reason why the Christmas offering falls into the following year. This is because donations continue to be received into January. The other regarding Mass intentions and the reason why they are often held for a long period. This is due to the money being transferred when the mass is said.

FrP enquired of the collection for Fr Bart's leaving gift. MW confirmed £1,500.00 had been raised and that she was meeting with LP on Thursday 12.11.20 to sign a card and post it to him. MW requested **LP** to use Recorded Delivery.

The meeting was closed at 8:14pm with prayer and blessings from FrP.

Next meeting 6:30pm Wednesday January 27th, 2021 (location to be confirmed).