

St Simon Stock Parish, Walderslade

Minutes of A Meeting of The Finance Committee

Via Zoom Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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 at 18:42 with prayer by DcM. This was slightly later than scheduled due to internet connection issues for some members.
2. Apologies: Peter Machin (PM).
3. Acknowledgment was given that the minutes of the previous meeting having been agreed upon by all members of the committee had been signed in the presence of TW.
4. MW thanked DR for the timely distribution of the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. **Matters arising from the last meeting:**
  - a) Pruning of trees:

FrP gave an update to further action in relation to the pruning of trees that are adjacent to households in Greenacre Close and Knole Road. Work at Knole Road will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February at a cost of £1,500.00. This was the cheapest quote. Work at Greenacre Close requires further debate as the required trimming height of seven metres is lower than residents would like and shared cost must be considered. The matter is therefore ongoing. SB asked if council permits had been received for this work. FrP replied that he understood they have been. FrP concluded his summary with thanks to Alfredo De Vergori (AdV) for his continued assistance.
  - b) Church heating:

MW gave notice this subject would be discussed in greater detail later in the meeting and led by LP.
6. **Hall Hire (Scouts responsible for cleaning):**

MW referred this subject to FrP. FrP said he had received a copy of the email MW had sent to Richard Simmons, Scout Leader (RS) advising of the responsibility (in FrP's and previously Fr Bart's opinion) that they have toward the cleaning of the hall whether they have used it or not as they enjoy free use at all times RS had replied to the email questioning the use of money raised through the 100 Club being used in this regard. FrP said he has chosen not to reply to the email from RS as the hall cannot currently be used due to Covid 19 restrictions and this will be revisited when use returns.
7. **Donation Boxes:**

Attention was drawn to a document entitled DONA (Contactless Giving) previously circulated by LP. LP gave reference to a webinar she attended and outlined how the system is set up and how it functions ie contactless giving with free entry of an amount aswell as pre-determined amounts of £1.00 etc. LP advised PM had raised concern over contactless giving being placed in St Benedicts School. LP confirmed there was no intention to place devices in schools. LP went on to say a question of personal security had been raised should a device be stolen. LP confirmed that no data is stored in the device and no personal data can be accessed via the device. FrP reiterated there is no need to pursue this way of giving for now as the footfall through the church is reduced due to Covid 19 restrictions.

**8. Handrails:**

**DcM** advised that the introduction of a second handrail remains ongoing and will be reported upon at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

**9. Gift Aid via the Diocese:**

FrP confirmed that on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the Diocese held £20,555.80 in Gift Aid that is to be returned to the parish. However, the Diocese suggested a return in installments of £12,000.00 in order to benefit from further interest. Interest earned for 2019 was £45.63. Interest for the half year upto June 2020 was £69.31. FrP said he had opted for one payment prior to Christmas and others to be received after Christmas. TW confirmed that a payment of £12,000.00 had been received on the 8<sup>th</sup> December.

At this point MW raised the question of the adoption of a new budget with the whole of available funds divided appropriately between the different cost centres. Discussion around the inclusion of the budget at the next regular meeting or an additional meeting to solely discuss the budget ensued. There was general opinion that a special meeting was more appropriate. FrP asked how the budget was usually decided upon. TW advised of the work PM does in piecing together a proposed budget for each part of the parish and then how this is discussed and agreed or not agreed upon. A date for a special budgetary meeting is to be discussed.

**10. Charity Box as started by Fr Bart:**

TW noted that £2,373.00 rests in the First Reserve account for the use of parishioners in need as a result of the effects of Covid 19. FrP listed concerns surrounding the distribution of money such as how do we advertise the availability of it? How should it be accessed? What amount to give? How often should we help the same person if they continue to make requests for assistance? How to acknowledge proof of giving? FrP also raised the point that perhaps the request will likely come from someone else in support of the person in need. MW remarked that Fr Bart had said the same thing. SB asked if the fund was open to more donations or will it be run down? FrP said to just keep the current funds for now. A lively debate ensued with commentary from the majority of team members. DR suggested that perhaps a supermarket voucher for food only would be a simple solution. MW remarked that a parishioner who is very involved with the Food Bank has said that swift support can be given concerning food. MW also advised that her neighbour is also involved with the Food Bank. This takes away the need for a food voucher. LP commented that other items may be a priority such as shoes. FrP questioned if a signature for receipt of money should be obtained for transparency of giving. LP suggested a receipt for actual items purchased. MW suggested a receipt for the exchange of the funds in total from a regular receipt book. DcM confirmed that to date nobody had requested assistance from this fund. **LP** offered to create a draft policy which was gratefully acknowledged by those present. FrP asked LP if she would write a short notice about the availability of the fund for the church newsletter. **LP** accepted.

**11. Computer:**

FrP was asked if he has been using the laptop donated to the Church. FrP advised that it is not used often. However, he was able to confirm the church office is now adequately supplied with hard and software, all of which are working well.

**12. LP had previously questioned the Bishops Fund:**

LP outlined the progress achieved in regard to the application to the Diocese for funds to assist with a new heating system. Valuable support had been gained from Roisin McLaughlin and Bernie Long resulting in a written application for the maximum amount of support offered through the Awards for All Grant which is £10,000.00. Whilst the full amount is not always granted, LP feels confident that a substantial amount will be forthcoming.

**13. Circulation of Minutes for Parish:**

It was agreed the circulation of Minutes would be as those of the last meeting. Once completed a copy will be sent to AdV for uploading to the Parish Website.

At this point MW handed over to LP to discuss the current situation in regard to establishing a viable Central Heating system:

LP had previously shared a document entitled 'New Heating for St Simon Stock Church' (attached) giving a detailed walkthrough of actions and findings. LP noted specifics such as limited correspondence from the first company to quote for business who no longer appear to be interested in the work. LP has met with a different company that she is impressed with and they have spoken of the inclusion of air conditioning within the central heating package for not a great deal more. LP also corresponded with Bryan Hall who is responsible for grants given in the South East. He spoke of the LoCase grant (Low Carbon Access South East) via KCC. This scheme ran from May to September 2020 and is likely to run again this year. If so, it is understood we will be eligible and if successful could receive upto 40% of the project costs via this route but need to match their funding. LP highlighted that FrP noted some areas of the church had not been included in the original quote requested. However, further quotes encompassing all requirements are expected soon and more detail will follow.

**14. Any Other Business:**

TW spoke of a change to access to our Bank account via a new device and card.

Unfortunately, it did not work to start with but is now working successfully.

TW went on to say she had received an email from AdV requesting access to the online account of the 100 Club. TW spoke with Maria Carneiro (Diocesan Finance Office), who advised access is only available for FrP and TW. FrP said he had advised AdV that it is not easy to add other people to the list of those with authorised access and is therefore not possible to include him.

TW advised payment of £5,000.00 had been received from Gillingham for Chaplaincy services carried out by Fr Bart.

TW advised the counting and banking of donations taken at services is currently carried out by Steve and Mary Duxbury. Whilst they are willing to do this it has been difficult banking due to continuous changes of procedure the bank has adopted and it was suggested they bank monthly instead of weekly.

TW advised of an email received from Canon Richard Hearn in relation to the hard work carried out over the adoption of the new accounts system (IQ). TW went on to say the transition has been and continues to be difficult as the system does not run well and has missing information. She is having to use the old system for the compilation of accounts and then transfer the data to IQ. TW advised of a forthcoming audit due in March or April which will probably take the form of a phone call or meeting via Zoom. SB asked if the outstanding information relates to the end of year accounts to which TW replied it does.

SP gave a summary of personal trading expected to yield profit that could be shared with the parish highlighting this is the reason why he wanted to be part of the Finance Team. Unfortunately trading with the US had not yielded the expected reward. However, expansion into other countries that had been slowed by Covid 19 was none the less expected to be good and he hopes for profitable trading that can be shared.

LP asked for all to be vigilant in watching over the church and its grounds in order to highlight possible future works that can be planned and budgeted for. The potholes in the car park were given as an example. This was received positively. MW reminded all that finances for projects require authorisation first. FrP stated that small works could be undertaken by members of the church rather than tradespeople.

FrP asked for a draft of the Agenda for future meetings prior to circulation to the wider team. MW agreed to do this.

The meeting was closed with prayer and blessings from FrP.

Next meeting 6:30pm Wednesday March 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 (location to be confirmed).