

## Minutes of St Sampson's PCC meeting held 21st November 2024 at the Vicarage, 7.30pm

**Present:** Debbie Dewes (Chair), Adina Grace, Rob Crow, Matt Smith, Paul Barnes, Laura Brierley, Dale Ford, Chris Anota, Jo Valpy (minutes) and Barry Hammond (Buildings Manager)

**Apologies:** None

1. DD welcomed everyone and began with words from Psalm 46 and a reflection encouraging us to be still and surrender to God; when things have the potential to overwhelm He is our strength and refuge.

### 2. Condemned Boiler and Church Heating

We have an oil-fired central heating system and, at the recent annual inspection, the church boiler was condemned by Edward Bays Ltd because of the deterioration of the burner chamber. Sadly, it cannot be repaired as there is asbestos present and we have had to stop using it. As a result there is currently no heating in church.

Barry has been doing much research as to a suitable way forward and has involved the Diocese, our architect, our electrician and heating engineers Ingleton Wood. He and Adina presented several options to PCC. These covered a range of scenarios including, moving out altogether during the cold months and not try to heat, using infrared heaters plus our existing under pew heaters, buying a new boiler (either internal or external), purchasing night storage heaters and installing 3 phase electricity.

During discussion the PCC considered costs, environmental issues around continuing to use oil, safe use of electricity with our current 100amp input limit and the best ways to protect the fabric of the church.

We reached two conclusions:

Firstly, that not heating at all and moving out of the church is likely to be detrimental to the fabric of the building and to its important spiritual place within our community. **Therefore, the PCC agreed that, as a general principle, our preferred option is to remain in the church building as far as possible. DD proposed, JV seconded and all approved.**

Secondly, that using money to install 3 phase electricity would be wise and strategically in line with our plans for extensive refurbishment in the future – we were planning to do this at some point and can fast track the process. Alongside this, we will buy 4 or 5 night storage heaters to use in church. Whilst we still plan to install air source heat pumps in the future, it is likely that these would not be sufficient on their own and night storage heaters will offer a sensible and cost effective top up solution (can tap into cheaper night time tariffs etc). This plan also removes our oil usage completely and is firmly in line with the Diocesan eco strategy. This solution fits with our hopes for the future refurbishment and allows the way forward to be flexible as technology develops.

Our electrician, Butchers Electrical, know the church well and believe that the storage heaters will make an effective difference, although it will still be wise for people to dress warmly in cold weather and we can buy some more blankets or encourage people to bring one. Routine services can continue to be held in the Widhill Aisle. The central heating pipes will no longer be in use and

will be drained and capped off to prevent freezing. We will still have water in the kitchen and toilet.

**The PCC voted unanimously to fast track the installation of 3-phase electricity and to buy 4 or 5 night storage heaters. DD proposed, AG seconded, all were in favour.**

Overall, we recognise that this is an interim solution for the next 2 winters and there is still long way to go on the refurbishment journey.

BH and AD to liaise with Butchers Electrical to arrange purchase and installation of night storage heaters. It is hoped that this might happen by Christmas. Also, to plan for draining of the heating system and investigate selling our remaining oil (around 1000L). Also, to initiate plans for 3-phase electricity, faculty application etc with the DAC. There are strict time limits on when this needs to be submitted and it is important to do it step by step. Emma Bakewell from the Diocese is knowledgeable and extremely helpful. **Action – BH/AG**

BH and AD also to give an update to the congregation in the weekly news email. **Action BH/AG**

### **Test pits**

We recently had several test pits dug in church to see what is beneath the floor. Hardly any of the black and red tiles that were removed survived and replacements are not available in the quantities needed. The pits have been sealed with a lime screed. Even though we have received approval from the chancellor we still have to apply for an Interim Faculty.

**St Sampson's PCC approve the application for an Interim Faculty to lime screed the excavated archaeological test pits. Proposed by BH, seconded by JV, approved by all.**

DD extended very grateful thanks to Barry for his thorough investigation of the best way forward and for presenting it to PCC with great clarity. We are thankful for his time, energy and insight. All agreed that it had been a considered discussion and we are thankful for God's guidance.

Barry left the meeting.

### **3. Approval of minutes**

The minutes from meeting on 12/09/24 were agreed as a true record and approved by all.

### **4. Matters arising**

New bins for the churchyard have arrived and will be installed soon.

### **5. Email votes**

None

### **6. Notification of AOB**

None

### **7. Finance (report circulated)**

The Diocese recalculated our Upper Thames Parish Share for 2025 and notified us that they had made a mistake. This has been rectified and treasurers from our 4 churches have agreed the new amount, to be split using our usual percentage formula:

Total benefice share - £69,168

56% St Sampson's £38,734

38% Holy Cross £26,284

4% St John's £2,767

2% All Saints £1,383

Total £69,168

### St Sampson's accounts:

Main Account £15,284

Restricted Account £31,612 broken down as follows:

Fabric Fund	£ 1,037
Children's Charity	£ 1,743
Organ	£ 3,155
USPG	£ 523
Refurbishment	£23,227 (Loans to repay £15,000)
Hymn Books	£ 300
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£ 52
Altar Frontal	£ 1,000
Christmas Tree Festival	£ 575

- We are meeting all our financial obligations and have a surplus
- Some of the money in the main account will be used to buy storage heaters
- There is one invoice to pay for stonemason's work
- Fundraising events for the refurbishment are planned for the coming months
- Treasurer's Laptop  
AG's laptop has stopped working and is beyond repair. AG would like to buy a new laptop solely for Church Treasurer's use – it will be run offline, so safe for the accounts. Dan Etheredge advises buying from Curry's and taking advantage of Black Friday discounts, maximum spend of £400.

AG proposed and DD seconded the purchase of a new laptop for use by Adina as our Church Treasurer. Approved by all.

The laptop will be owned by the church and will make handover of church accounts at some point in the future much easier. Pete Tuck, Treasurer at Ashton Keynes uses the same programme for their accounts and understands the system – succession planning is in place.

### Restricted Account

- No outstanding invoices to pay
- We are required by law to have a 5 yearly Electrical Installation Condition Report, which was due in September. Estimate for the work is £1,450.00 + VAT at 20%, VAT would be reclaimable.
- Cricklade Town Council have CCTV cameras on the tower connected to our power supply. The additional cost to do this at the same time is £180 +20%VAT. In the past we have absorbed this cost and will continue to do so. The TC are aware.

- Replacement of sodium lights in the chancel with 2 new 100W LED floodlights with hire of suitable scaffolding estimate of £ 1125.00 + VAT at 20%. VAT reclaimable
- Installation of a new LED floodlight in the Nave estimate for additional light at same time, £360.00 + VAT at 20%. VAT reclaimable

### **8. Emergency Protocol**

AG, JV and CA to discuss and produce Emergency Protocol guidance in case of emergencies during church services. It can be displayed in the vestry and shared appropriately. **Action – AG/JV/CA**

### **9. Youth and Children**

Children's work continues twice a month, either in church or the Jenner Hall. Several members of NWMA youth were confirmed earlier this month.

### **10. Eco Church**

We have been awarded the Silver Award! Excellent progress. Laura plans to share details of the new Gold categories over the coming months with PCC at meetings and wider congregation through the news email. We are unlikely to achieve Gold status, because of our ancient church building and its eco limitations, but there are many things we can be aware of and build into our collective and personal habits. All Upper Thames Churches have Bronze and 2 now have Silver. Thank you Laura for your work on Eco Church for St Sampson's.

### **11. Global Mission**

Updates continue to go out on E3 and Compassion UK – the last ones were at Harvest time.

### **12. Safeguarding**

At the last joint PCC morning in October JV presented information to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

JV reflected that it is important and necessary to carry out DBS checks and safeguarding training, but there also is so much value in the conversations that we have within our churches, professional curiosity, vigilance and care for each other that grows our safeguarding culture. This makes safeguarding part of the everyday, not just when there is a crisis.

### **13. School**

JV attending the Diocesan Education Conference.

Please do pray for St Sampson's school – it's staff and children. There are many challenges, especially with finances.

### **14. Jenner Hall**

The Committee is getting smaller and new volunteers would be very welcome. Bookings have increased and the Hall is financially stable. PB to put a request for new Cttee members in the news email. **Action – PB**

### **15. Deanery Synod**

A meeting has just taken place. There is currently a period of exploration and consultation to decide whether to merge the North Wilts and Chippenham Deaneries. There are pros and cons. Discussions are in the early stages.

## **16. Just One Thing**

DD handed out an illustration called the Parish Cultivation Map and asked us to consider it prayerfully ahead of our next Better Together joint PCCs in January. Where/how could we be doing things?

## **17. Correspondence**

A letter from Bishop Viv following the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A letter from CARE asking us to engage with our MP about the Assisted Dying Bill.

A letter of thanks from the Town Council for the Remembrance Day service. DD also expressed grateful thanks to Barbara and Laura for their much valued involvement preparing for and at the service.

## **18. Vicar's heads up**

Nothing for this meeting

## **19. AOB**

It would be good to circulate small fliers inviting people to the Carols by Candlelight service. AG to talk to Jane. JV to check what we did last year. **Action – AG/JV**

**Next meeting dates:** \_Better Together joint PCCs – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January 9.30am Jenner Hall  
St Sampson's PCC – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 7.30 Vicarage  
St Sampson's APCM – Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025