

Minutes of St Sampson's PCC meeting held 11th July 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)

Apologies: none

1. DD welcomed everyone and began with the passage from Hebrews 10:19-25 and thoughts around fellowship and encouraging one another.

2. Minutes from 18th April 2024 were [approved by all as a true record of the meeting](#).

3. Matters Arising

There are still slots available to book for the 24/7 prayer event this coming weekend. Let's try to cover the whole 24 hours in prayer. A prayer area is being set up in church with a range of activities and topics for prayer focus. When praying for an hour, try breaking it up into 5 minute chunks and pray for a different thing every 5 minutes – things at church, world issues, people we know, local community, spend time worshipping/praising too.

4. AOB

JV to add reintroduce 'email votes' as an agenda item for next meeting. Since our last meeting we have formally approved, via email, a survey of the north and south aisle elevations at a cost of £650. Barry is arranging this. **Action – JV/BH**

5. Ride and Stride

This annual event, organised by Wiltshire Historic Churches, is on 14th September. Rob is co-ordinating and is waiting for paperwork to arrive (sponsor forms etc). We hope to have participants, sponsors and welcomers in church for those visiting. A notice will go into the August Chronicle. The Athelstan Way pilgrimage route is also underway in 2 areas of the Deanery now and will add to the interest en route for R&S participants.

6. Litter bins in churchyard (report circulated)

We are grateful to Bev and Jerry for emptying our church wheelie bins on a weekly basis. The PCC would like to pursue having 2 fixed bins in place by the north and south doors, where members of the public often sit and where litter often needs clearing. Maintenance of the churchyard is carried out by the Town Council groundsmen and emptying of the bins would therefore be their responsibility. The bins would need to be fixed down onto a concrete slab, not fixed directly onto the church pathway (this would require a faculty).

[DD proposed and JV seconded that St Sampson's PCC ask the Town Council to help fund and maintain 2 litter bins in the churchyard. Approved by all.](#) Adina will prepare the request to go to the Town Council. **Action - AG**

7. Finance (report circulated)

Current balances:

Main account: £ 13,567

Restricted: £ 30,659 broken down as follows:

Organ fund:	£ 3,155
Fabric:	£ 597
Refurbishment:	£ 22,368 (plus £15,000 in loans to repay)
Children's Educational charity:	£ 3,187
Hymn books	£ 300
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£ 52
Altar Frontal	£ 1,000

Our finances are looking healthier again, we are meeting all our financial obligation and have a surplus.

Our SSE contract expires in August and after exploring cheaper providers we have chosen to switch to Octopus at a fixed rate 28p per unit, day or night. It is a 1 year contract and 100% green energy.

The battery for the contactless tablet is no longer working we need to purchase a new android tablet estimated cost between £129- £679 mid-range £250-£350. Barry will explore the options and seek approval before purchase. Unless anyone has an android tablet, they wish to donate.

Teas and tower tours for Cricklade Festival raised £197.50. [The PCC agreed that this money should go into the fabric fund towards costs for Quinquennial Inspection works.](#)

We have completed the annual finance return to the Church of England. The following information might be of interest:

22 families giving via the Parish Giving Scheme, each month we receive £1819.52 plus £390.86 in gift aid

18 families by Standing Order worth £800

12 Families giving using the weekly giving envelopes varies

1 Family giving by CAF quarterly

Restricted Account

The fabric fund is no longer in the red following receipt of the VAT rebate.

The additional donations were received for Global Mission the balance is now zero

The refurbishment fund has received the VAT rebate on the retention fee for the nave roof.

Craper Community fund has awarded us a grant of £15,000 towards the work needed on the north aisle roof.

8. Fabric and Refurbishment (report circulated)

We have finally received the Quinquennial Report, inspection was carried out last Autumn. PCC noted the recommendations, although Barry is querying some of these. The most pressing is the repair/replacement of rainwater goods.

[The PCC approved work and/or replacement of the Victorian rainwater goods which are broken and causing ingress of water into the stonework. Approved by all.](#)

We discussed the suggestion to change our inspecting architects, Arnold Bartosch, and use St Ann's Gate instead. Arnold Bartosch have been far less responsive in recent times and it would seem sensible to use St Ann's Gate, our refurbishment architects, where Emma Mullen is a qualified architect and very quick to respond and work with. She also has bigger picture of works to the church and can oversee quinquennial repairs within this context. Could there be a conflict of interest using St Ann's Gate as inspection and refurbishment architects? What are financial implications? There is a fixed table of fees for quinquennial inspections and St Ann's Gate are on the diocesan list of inspection architects. After some discussion, [the PCC agreed to switch to St Ann's Gate as we have built up a positive relationship with Emma Mullen and see the logic in having an architect that really knows our building. This will be reviewed following the next inspection in 5 years. Approved by all.](#)

Following a meeting in church on 20th March 2024, where Barry presented information to PCC about the next steps in the church refurbishment project, [it was proposed that St Sampson's PCC approves the next stage of fundraising \(£33,000\) and the immediate commissioning of our architect for the detailed plans. This vote took place via email, but is formally recorded here as 8 in favour, 1 against.](#)

Next steps for the refurbishment are to dig 8 test pits to see what is beneath the floor at various points of the church. We discussed locations of some of the pits (not all are known) and agreed that we could accommodate this without closing the church. It is likely to cost around £2,000 and we have money to cover this. [AG proposed that this work be carried out as we cannot proceed without it. Approved by all.](#)

[AG also proposed that we agree to a survey being carried out on the elevations of the north and south aisles. Again, work cannot proceed without it and we have money to cover costs, around £650. This vote took place via email on 2/7/24 and was approved by all.](#)

The information leaflet that is available for visitors to church has been reprinted. It focuses on some of the historical features of the building. We hope to develop this to include some spiritual guidance too – suitable prayers, reflections etc as people walk round. Debbie may have time in the autumn to work on this but others are welcome to get involved if they would like.

9. Youth and Children

The Spree youth festival run by SWYM took place at the end of June. A super weekend with fun activities, a fairground and teaching/worship was enjoyed by 23 young people from NWMA:Youth. This weekend is a NWMA family fun day/Wild Church.

Laura, Jo, Matt, Dawn and Chris have continued to run children's activities twice a month and will consider best arrangement for serving our families moving forward. Do we continue with the Jenner Hall session or have both sessions in church each month? The Jenner Hall session is often 2 children whereas activities in church are regularly more. Team to discuss.

We continue to make a regular financial contribution to the NWMA Youth project. This money comes out of the Children's Educational Charity and when it runs out we will pay from our main account. Upper Thames have committed to a further 3 years support.

10. Eco Church

Laura continues to collate information and we nearly have everything to apply for our silver award. Recent actions have included raising awareness amongst congregation of ethical investment, promotion of fairtrade and locally grown food and installation of nesting boxes and

compost bin in churchyard. Laura seeks input from others where appropriate on the different topics – worship, buildings, energy use etc. Adina has been using the energy footprint tool and Laura attends the Eco Champions zoom meetings. Harvest celebrations in September will include the importance of caring for God's earth. Dawn continues to find a solution to recycling blister packs.

11. Global Mission

24/7 prayer weekend activities will support our awareness of global needs and give an opportunity to pray for them. The Churches Together sponsored water carry raised £1280. A super effort. Christian Aid week was in May with money collected via the envelopes.

12. Safeguarding

JV proposed that the PCC approve the Upper Thames Group Safeguarding policy with the amended paragraph on the taking of photos. This now states that [‘where an event may be photographed and is open to the public, signs will be displayed inviting anyone NOT wishing to be in photos or video to make this known to the designated photographer.’](#)
[Approved by all.](#)

13. School

The SIAMS inspection took place on 10th July and was an extremely positive day. The final report will be available in the coming weeks. Debbie will extend our ‘well dones’ to the children, especially year 6, next week during the leavers’ service and we will also recognise the efforts of Jen and the staff team once the report has been made public.

14. Jenner Hall

The Jenner Hall have decided to appoint St Ann's Gate architects for some repair work on the building. Structurally it is in good condition. Reserved use for St Sampson's remains intact and we continue to pay our voluntary contribution to cover heating/electricity. Room 3 has now been let.

15. Deanery Synod (report circulated)

We noted the discussion around clergy wellbeing at the last Deanery Synod. Jordan Ling is the Diocesan Advisor for clergy wellbeing and Debbie knows her well. Overall, Debbie finds the diocese very supportive and responsive and has several regular points of contact for professional/pastoral support. Both Debbie and Shirley are good at looking after each other, and knowing where to go for help. They feel that their well-being is not in any danger!

16. Correspondence

Letter of thanks from the diocese for our Parish Share contribution for 2023. JV to display certificate in church.

17. Vicar's heads up

Harvest celebration will be on 14th September, 11.30 service followed by harvest lunch. Carols by Candlelight will be a week earlier than previous years on 15th December and this will mean it does not fall on the same Sunday as the town band concert or Ashton Keynes carol service – people can do both if they wish and choir members who sing at both are not rushing from one service to the next.

Debbie is currently writing a homegroup series following our 6 ‘Just one thing’ themes. This should be ready for the autumn.

It would be helpful to develop more of a team approach to some areas of responsibility at church, eg. for our wardens to have some helpers so that they are not always carrying responsibility at every service. In particular, helpers to set up before a service and pack up at the end. Adina and Rob will prepare a short guide on what they do and we will aim to build a small team of helpers.

18. AOB

Paul Barnes has become treasurer of the church choir accounts.

Next meeting dates: Thursday 12th September 2024 St Sampson's PCC 7.30pm
Saturday 12th October 2024 Better Together 9.30am