

**Minutes of the Christ Church Council  
Extraordinary Meeting  
“The Future of the Christ Church Christmas Fair”**

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

**Present:** David Bishop, Antony Claridge, Mark Elliott [Chair], Jane Kirkbride [by invitation], David Marles, John Metcalfe, Tom Morley, Yvonne Morris, Martin Palmer, Andrew Sillett, Clive Tilling, Dorothy Twissell.

**Apologies:** Judith Bishop, Jane Fletcher, Nicky Gladstone, Sarah Hiscock, Bob Siderfin, Margaret Silver.

This being a single topic meeting, there was no approval of previous minutes.

**Report by Jane Kirkbride**

JK provided a history of the event. Changes at the Guildhall included the regular hire of the Ballroom for weddings etc, which had made it harder to get the special charity rate that we have traditionally enjoyed: this is no longer available in December. If we were to hold the event there this year it would have to be on or before 24<sup>th</sup> November. There is a precedent for the earlier timing during Vaughan XXX's incumbency.

The cost of hiring is a key issue; having more than doubled from £240 two years ago. The possibility of moving to a different venue would have to be investigated.

The catering continues to be the best fundraiser – returning over £800.

But one of the key problem areas is that far too few people volunteer to take on organisational roles. Organisation is left to one or two, and much of the work is carried out on the day by others who are pressured into helping.

**Analysis**

Council members analysed the situation.

An approximate financial analysis showed the 2006 Fair with gross revenue of around £2300, and costs accounting to around £1000, (including Hall £500, Press advertising and printing £100, Food £135 etc.). Reported costs hid a huge amount of goodwill (donated food, prizes and other materials). Lease of stalls to external craft sellers added greatly to the ambiance of the day and raised money, but the stall holders were mostly new each year, suggesting that they did not find it worthwhile and that it would become hard to find replacements. There is less public interest in buying homespun produce and bric-a-brac than in the past, whereas in contrast there are many quite craft and produce stalls licensed in the streets giving the public considerable choice.

There was general agreement that, viewed as a fundraising event, the required effort was out of proportion to the £1500 raised, - especially if that sum was vulnerable to steeply rising costs. We are in the happy position currently that the event is not essential to our financial wellbeing.

The Fair's benefits were discussed. It raised the profile of Christ Church in the broader Bath community and worked well as an act of witness. Many members of the congregation attended and enjoyed the day itself, and so it also worked as a social event internally. Prizes such as hampers had brought genuine joy to members of the public who could not afford such things.

It was agreed that the provisional booking for the Guildhall be cancelled (Action Jane Kirkbride) and that the Fair should not be held in 2007. (Proposed: DJB, seconded: AS, passed unanimously).

### **Alternatives**

It was generally agreed that three key aspects of the Fair must be replaced: 1) the revenue, 2) the act of public visibility and outreach and 3) the internal Christ Church social interaction. This required debate at future Council meeting(s). themed dinners (with Clive Tilling's offer of assistance gratefully noted) and auctions of promises were raised.

### **Church Clearing**

The decision not to proceed with the Fair raised the opportunity to clear the gallery of all stored material, including books. DT volunteered to talk to Adrian Pegg about the books.

In view of the volume of material stored it was generally agreed that we should pay to have the place cleared, and JM volunteered to arrange this. The congregation would be advised of the decision and the gallery would be opened after Sunday services for three weeks and the congregation invited to take anything they wanted for a donation.

The Bath Festival has booked the church for a concerts on 27<sup>th</sup> May and 2<sup>nd</sup> June, - the latter (Joanna McGregor) being recorded by the BBC. It was agreed that a deadline of 27<sup>th</sup> May be set for the gallery to be clear, clean and fully operational. DT offered her services although it was clear other volunteers would be essential due to the large area. Volunteers would be sought.

### **AOB**

While the meeting was essentially about the Fair, Antony raised one urgent issue. *Chalice Assistants* - Volunteers were needed to be licensed as chalice assistants. Offers had been received with thanks from Andrew Sillett, Angela Soboslay, Ann Kemp, Margaret Heath and Bev Pont.

24/04/07 djb