

Minutes of the Christ Church Council Meeting

20 March 2018

Present: Judith Bishop, Georgina Bowman, Revd Lore Chumbley (chair), Mark Elliott, Matthew Jones, Sarah Kerr, Virginia Knight, Janet Mahto, Jane Nicholson, Sharon Rawlings, Alex Soboslay (secretary), Will Willans. **In attendance:** Charles Rice

1. The meeting opened with a prayer. **Apologies** were received from Penny Edwards, Rowena Hall, Brenda Wall and Malcolm Wall.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting (23 January 2018) were accepted with minor amendments as a true record (proposed Mark, seconded Judith).

3. Matters arising

- (1) Instructions for the dishwashers and coffee machines in the church and Lower Mews are on display.
- (2) A-board. Judith verified that this has been purchased, though not yet the laminates. The meeting thanked Judith and Sarah for their work on this.
- (3) Lore confirmed that Revd Narinder Tegally is now part of the ministry team at Christ Church.
- (4) Burlington House. Lore confirmed that we have five volunteers to visit this local charity, which we support.
- (5) Finance. Our Diocesan Contribution for 2017 has been paid. David Bishop will arrange for our 2018 contribution to be paid monthly.
- (6) Voting on manifestation design. Virginia expressed reservations about the way the congregation were being asked to vote on the designs for the glass on the church entrance doors: without signatures or other verification of identity against the names on the electoral roll, the vote was too easy to rig.
- (7) Minutes of Trustees meetings. Noted without discussion.

4. Deanery Synod report

It was reported that all the elected positions for laity were filled, but there is room for lay members on General Synod. Attention was called to Community Houses of Prayer in the deanery, about which there are information sheets at the back of the church (although we received these only on the day of the first meeting). Each of these Community Houses of

Prayer is in someone's parish; the nearest to Christ Church is at the Hare & Hounds in Lansdown.

5. Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care group will meet on the first Friday of the month, probably every three months. Members include Rebekah, Greg, Jonathan, Malcolm, Jane, Janet, Narinder, and Jenny Hesketh. More people are always welcome to help with aspects of pastoral care, so meetings will be advertised.

6. Local Ministry Group

It was noted that people from St Stephen's were reluctant to travel to Christ Church for our Agape meal. Next year we'll go to St Stephen's again. There are Compline services in Holy Week around the LMG churches. Will said the invitation was always there for ringers from our LMG churches to come to Christ Church.

7. Reordering

Charles Rice, Chair of Trustees, talked through the proposal for the reordered east end of the church. He said Trustees had looked at a lot of different ideas and proposed a three-phase project:

- Phase 1 altered the chancel to reflect our current style of worship, maximise space for the choir, and make some improvement in access;
- Phase 2 was to create a more private chapel than the current Lady Chapel, which could be done at the same time as Phase 1 or separately, depending on finances;
- Phase 3 was to improve disabled access, but this was "nice to have" rather than urgent, and he explained some of the complications of building a fixed ramp for wheelchair access to the chancel level.

Charles said the present proposal concerned only structural changes, not furniture. The original aim had been to expand the chancel floor area for both the choir and concerts, but expanding eastwards into the apse proved to be impractical for structural reasons: it would require major structural alteration to lower the Victorian apse floor levels, so to increase the chancel floor area it has to come out to the west. Handrails at the sides will make access easier. Options included raising the apse floor to the same level as the high altar platform, but it was felt that the altar should remain higher, so the proposal was to return the apse to its Victorian layout.

Charles said the proposal included getting rid of the pulpit: if it's not in use, he said he saw no great purpose in retaining it.

In discussion, Judith said it was nice to have the curved shape reflecting the apse. She said she also liked the curved seating on one drawing, facing the chancel, which was more flexible.

Georgina asked whether it was feasible to *lower* the floor level in the new south chapel, so it's the same level as the nave, for easier access.

Concerning the pulpit, Lore said she'll use it if it's there but would be happy for it to go. Sarah said a pulpit is necessary for all the congregation to be able to see the preacher. Mark said we could construct a slightly raised ambo or preaching platform. Judith said it would be good if we could shrink and move the present pulpit. Alex presented a photo demonstrating how someone preaching from chancel level could not be seen, and made a plea for the pulpit to be retained somehow. It was an integral part of the Victorian apse design, he said, designed by the same architect who designed the apse and the tiles on its wall. He proposed lowering the pulpit and moving it hard up against the north pillar at the front of the chancel. Alternatively, he said, the architects had presented several possible alternative locations, including at the edge of the apse step. It would be a little odd to have the pulpit west of the altar, but it would still be east of the high altar, and the apse was otherwise very empty. Mark and Lore said they quite liked it empty. Georgina commented, "The Victorians had put their stamp on the church building, and now it is our chance to do so."

Georgina moved, and Jane seconded, a motion that Council accept the proposed plan (marked SK16 rev B in the document from Manifest) and take this to the congregation for a decision. Passed (10 for, 2 against). Lore said we'll leave this till after Easter.

8. Churchwarden's term of office

Last year's AGM passed a motion that s.3 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001, limiting churchwardens to six successive terms of office, should not apply to Christ Church. (This is allowed under the Measure.) Council was asked to approve a motion to be put to this year's AGM rescinding this again and reapplying the "six-year rule". Alex said that as the churchwarden affected by this he was deeply hurt, particularly because nobody had taken the trouble to say anything to him in advance. He pointed out that historically Christ Church has had churchwardens serving for long terms, they have to stand on their record and offer themselves for re-election every year as it is, and there were no arbitrary limits on the terms of office of any other officers including incumbents, Directors of Music or members of Council. Mark said the "six-year rule" was intended to allow more people to take on the role and prevent churchwardens going stale, and he voluntarily stepped back from various jobs himself. Lore said there was nothing personal in the motion and asked for a vote of confidence in Alex to be minuted.

Mark moved, and Georgina seconded, the following motion: "Church Council is of the opinion that Christ Church should reintroduce a limit of six years continuous service as churchwarden, as set out in the Churchwardens Measure 2001 (Section 3), as this brings potential

benefits to both the church and our churchwardens. Council therefore recommends that Standing Committee includes a motion to reintroduce this limit on the agenda for the 2018 AGM." This was passed (9 for, 2 abstentions).

9. Any other business

- (1) GDPR. The new General Data Protection Regulations come into force on 25 May. Sarah Jones is leading on this for the Trustees, and it is proposed to invite her to explain the implications for Council at our next meeting. An advisory briefing for PCCs from the diocese will be circulated for information.
- (2) Rebekah and Greg offered the loan of an upright piano to be kept in the Lower Mews. Mark said it might be useful for choir practice when it was held there, and save them lugging the electric piano over. A query was raised about damp, and whether we'd be happy to tune the piano regularly and insure it. Council decided to accept the offer.
- (3) Premises licence terms. Sarah mentioned that at the last Toppings book signing, when we had around 400 visitors, some had wanted to take their drinks upstairs with them and the stewards could not explain why the terms of our premises licence did not allow this. Alex said we had not received detailed explanations of the terms but it was understandable that the licensing authorities did not want glasses of drinks being carried around the building, taken into the toilets and other areas, or potentially dropped from the gallery. He said stewards simply had to enforce the licence conditions: the penalty for breaching them was potentially an unlimited fine and six months in jail. The meeting, however, felt we should look into questioning the licence conditions.
- (4) Judith handed out printed copies of the minutes of last year's AGM.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 21:35.

The AGM is Sunday 22 April; the **next meeting** of Council is Tuesday 22 May 2018 in the Lower Mews at 7:30pm.