

Meeting Notes of Christ Church Council

Thursday, June 20th 2024 at 7.30 pm in Christ Church Mews

Present: Judith Bishop (Chair), Carol Hussey, Maggie Willans, Emma Elliott (Clerk), Sarah Jones, Jane Nicholson, Brenda Wall, Jonathan Stead, David Rawlings.

Opening Prayer

Jonathan opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. **Apologies:** Pauline Swaby Wallace, Lucy Humbert, Malcolm Wall, Morny Davison.

2. Meeting Notes from the last meeting

The meeting notes from the last meeting were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Sarah, Seconded David

3. Matters Arising

a) Farewell gifts for Kara and Jane

Thanks were expressed to Jane and Nick Wells for coordinating farewell gifts for Jane and Kara. Thanks were also expressed to the people who made it a special occasion, notably, the choir, the catering team, the bell ringers and the flower team.

b) Safeguarding Pathway

Members of council were reminded that everyone needs to complete the safeguarding training Judith will re-send the email with the link to the website (done since meeting).

Action: all council members

c) Lower Mews tidy up

David Bishop has the interior decoration in-hand. Brenda and Malcolm have agreed to take on the re-distribution of the books and they were thanked for agreeing to do this.

Action: Brenda and Malcolm

Emma and Sarah reported that they would like to bring the Junior Church cupboard over to the Mews (currently in choir vestry). It was agreed that it could be positioned on the concrete plinth next to the window. There are also about 6 large plastic boxes that they wish to store in the Mews. The area to the rear of the toilet has been inspected, but there isn't room currently, and there is also crockery stored there. Sarah and Emma expressed concern about using that space unless the crockery were to be moved elsewhere. This matter is ongoing.

Action: Emma and Sarah

d) Time and Talents – Resources for Junior Church

Emma reported that they would like to purchase two Kindle Fire tablets for use in Junior Church sessions. These cost £150, including a case and screen protector. Total cost: £300. All were in agreement that the money could be spent from T&T funds.

Proposed: Jonathan, Seconded: Jane

e) Safeguarding Pathway

New signs are up on all the noticeboards. It was agreed that the following people would be asked to be responsible for each noticeboard:

Safeguarding:	Virginia Knight	Charities:	Jonathan Stead
Health and Safety:	David Rawlings	Events:	Judith Bishop
Eco Church:	Sarah Jones	Church Notices:	Wardens

“Who’s Who” - It was suggested that new pictures could be taken for this board. Sarah agreed to ask Matthew Jones if he might be prepared to take photos. This would be done after church and a list of people would need to be provided.

Action: Sarah to ask Matthew Judith to provide a list of names

The Junior Church noticeboard will be made more official, with a sign to match the others and welcome information.

4. Worship

a) Windrush Sunday

This takes place on Sunday 23rd June. Simon Tatton-Brown has been liaising with Pauline. Bishop Trevor Willmott, (former Bishop of Basingstoke) will preside and preach. The Mayor of Bath and Wera Hobhouse will both be in attendance. There will be coffee and snacks after the service. Pauline is working with Mark Elliott on the service sheet.

b) LGBTQ+ Eucharist

This is a new initiative. It will take place on 29th June at 3 pm. It will be a said Eucharist service.

5. Finance Report

Thanks were expressed to Zoe for the latest report (Appendix 1). Not a great deal has changed since the previous report. A discussion took place on stewardship. The Worship group have been asked to give consideration to holding a Stewardship Sunday. They have requested that council provide a bit more detail on what form that might take. For example, whether this would be something to make part of the service in the form of a sermon, or whether a more business-like approach was required. It was agreed that the former was the most appropriate approach. The C of E

have declared a “Generosity week” to tie in with the Harvest season. Resources are available online. Sarah agreed to take this back to the worship group. **Action: Sarah**

6. Electoral Roll – Working Document

Matthew Jones and Emma have studied the church representation rules. These remain the policy document for administering the electoral roll for the church. There are 4 terms that need interpreting or defining for our circumstances. These have been set out in a working document, which was shared at the meeting. The working document was approved at the meeting, and all were in favour. It was agreed that, as administration of the electoral roll is a responsibility delegated to council, no further approval needs to be sought, but as a courtesy, the information would be shared with Trustees. Matthew and Emma were thanked. **Proposed: Judith, seconded Maggie**

7. Publicity Cards

The use of publicity cards as a means of communication with our neighbours was reviewed. Sarah gave some context. We started the publicity cards around 2012, as a means of communication with our neighbours at Christmas and Easter. The reasons were twofold: to give specific information about services at these two major festivals, and to provide a broader outreach, advertising ourselves as a Christian community in the vicinity. Since then, a lot has changed in terms of how we communicate. A discussion took place. Key points raised:

- Presenting the information in the form of a postcard was agreed as a nice format.
- There was a general feeling that having the information about services in an easy format to take away from church is a good thing for both the regular congregation and for visitors.
- It also allows us to share information easily with, for example, the Queensbury Hotel.
- There are a lot of HMOs and houses divided into flats in the vicinity of the church. Postcards through the door may not be an effective means of communication in these cases.
- There are some people who welcome the receipt of a card through their door, particularly at Christmas.
- We’ve had a lot of postcards undelivered on one occasion. Our capacity to deliver to all the houses in the geographical area we choose to cover needs to be considered.
- If we were to continue with the cards, but reduce the number printed, this may not be a big cost saving, as discounts are usually given for bulk ordering (however, this alone wouldn’t be a reason not to reduce the number we print).

Following the discussion, it was agreed that we would continue to get postcards printed but that we would reduce our delivery area to key places such as the hotel. Sarah Jones agreed to obtain information on costings from MBE.

Action: Sarah

8. Cleaning of the church and Mews

Judith raised the issue of cleaning in the church and Mews. Currently our cleaner is contracted to 4 hours a week at a rate of roughly £15 per-hour. This was discussed at length. Key points raised:

- We need a cleaner. Other options (for example, a rota of volunteers) are not viable.
- There are areas of the church that are always spotlessly clean, notably the toilets.
- In recent weeks, the church has had a clean smell on Friday nights (arriving for choir).
- Our cleaner does not need to spend time in The Mews. The Mews should be left clean after it is used.
- Our cleaner sometimes sub-contracts the work. It was agreed in-principle that we have no issue with this.
- The Sanctuary is never cleaned by our cleaner and is not part of her remit. The general understanding is that cleaning of the Sanctuary falls to the Verger. (to be confirmed).
- There are certain ‘Spring cleaning’ jobs that should be done periodically, and at present these are not being done.

Following the discussion, Jane and Judith agreed to draw up a list of these periodic cleaning tasks, and to ask Nick, Chair of Trustees, to give our cleaner more direction on our requirements for cleaning the church.

Action: Jane and Judith

9. AOB

9.1 Deanery Synod Report

Brenda gave a very positive report from the latest Deanery Synod meeting. Christ Church had received a mention at the start of the meeting. Good wishes were sent from the Deanery. There was much admiration for everything going on in the absence of a Priest in Charge and prayers were offered.

There are lots of really positive ecumenical things happening across the Deanery. The focus is on ‘*looking up and out in faith*’. There are over 28K students in Bath during term time now, at both The University of Bath and Bath Spa. The ecumenical chaplaincy teams are becoming increasingly important in ministering to a larger number of students. A call for any willing volunteers, to be a presence on campus was made. The focus is on helping students to feel loved, wanted and needed in our community. Many students are struggling to find a Christian home where they feel safe. ‘Acts2’ is an organisation for outreach to Youth workers.

There are lots of innovations happening for young people, including city-wide games nights and bible study groups. New styles of worship are being explored by some churches. Grace church on the Upper Bristol Road has started a 4pm service for families (aimed at attracting those who perhaps have children playing sports on Sunday mornings). Still Waters is a regular contemplative prayer service at St Michaels Without. Bath Abbey attracts over 350K visitors per-year. They urgently need more volunteers.

Brenda was thanked for her update. She agreed to put together an article for The Link. A question was asked about our 'visibility' at the University of Bath. Sarah and Matthew speak regularly with the Chaplain and make sure that Christ Church is represented. Sarah agreed to speak to the University Chaplain Nigel about the date for our Student Sunday, which will be an opportunity to welcome new students to Bath. **Action: Sarah**

9.2 Appreciation to our clergy team

Jonathan voiced his appreciation to our clergy team during the inter-regnum. All were in agreement that they are doing a superb job and we are grateful to them for all they do.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The date set for the next meeting is Tuesday 10th September 2024.

The meeting closed with The Grace at 9.01pm.

Glossary	
HMO	House in Multiple Occupancy
MBE	'Mailboxes Etc' – our current provider for printing.

Appendix I

Income and Expenditure - Council Funds Held in Connection with Christ Church in Bath For the 5 months ended 31 May 2024

Account	Actual (YTD)	Budget (YTD)	Variance	Budget (Full year)	N
Income					
Regular Donations	17,403	17,575	(172)	42,180	
One Off Donations	2,882	3,400	(518)	8,160	
Fundraising Donations	0	500	(500)	1,200	
Gift Aid	2,421	2,711	(290)	10,844	
Service Fees	1,071	500	571	1,500	
Events & Hires	985	1,600	(615)	3,840	
Cedar Tree Sales	564	725	(161)	1,740	
Total Income	25,326	27,011	(1,685)	69,464	
Expenditure					
Charitable Activities					
Diocesan Contributions	6,875	6,875	0	16,500	
Pastoral Activities	36	250	(214)	600	
Choir, Organ & Music	769	940	(171)	3,000	
Junior Church	46	125	(79)	300	
Church Consumables	40	700	(660)	1,680	
Catering	785	900	(115)	2,160	
Flowers	159	850	(691)	2,040	
Merchant Fees	9	25	(16)	60	
Total Charitable Activities	8,720	10,665	(1,945)	26,340	
Support Costs					
Wages	8,770	8,380	390	20,024	
Gifts & Entertainment	200	0	200	0	
Printing, Post & Stationery	1,520	2,250	(730)	6,550	
Licences & Subscriptions	0	0	0	554	
Telephone & Internet	421	520	(99)	1,040	
Cleaning	231	425	(194)	1,020	
Equipment	57	925	(869)	2,220	
Repairs & Maintenance	583	375	208	900	
Electricity	966	1,100	(134)	2,640	
Gas	2,106	2,470	(364)	4,400	
Total Support Costs	14,854	16,445	(1,591)	39,348	
Total Expenditure	23,573	27,110	(3,537)	65,688	
Surplus / (Deficit)	1,753	(99)	1,852	3,776	
Funds					
Funds brought forward	13,511	13,511	0	13,511	
Current year surplus / (deficit)	1,753	(99)	1,852	3,776	
Total Funds	15,264	13,412	1,852	17,287	

Notes

1. Flowers expenditure is low as one of the regular flower arrangers has not submitted any expense claims yet this year but expect they have been making purchases.
2. Salary overspend relates to payments to Director of Music, Organist & Choir for a funeral service. These were funded by fees charged to the family (in Service Fees income), so this is cost neutral.
3. Gifts & Entertainment relates to purchase of an ordination gift for Jane Hoe.

Income is currently below budget by £1,700, but at this stage in the year this is more than offset by expenditure being below budget by £3,500. As communicated to the congregation in the recent weekly bulletin, Trustees have agreed on a revised salary / accommodation package to offer when the Priest in Charge role is readvertised. This will cost us around £12k per year (£1k per month) more than we were spending on the Priest's salary previously. Christ Church has been very lucky to find a series of Priests who already had accommodation in Bath or other means of supporting themselves so that they were able to take the role without accommodation being offered and with relatively low salaries. Hoping to find someone in a similar situation again this time severely restricts the pool of candidates, so we believe it is vital to offer a competitive market rate to enable a suitable, interested candidate to take the role without the salary / accommodation being a barrier. While Trustees can look for options to increase income and/or decrease expenditure in their areas of responsibility to help fund this, we will probably also need Council to contribute to the Priest's salary out of their budget, which has not previously been the case. Therefore it is important to look for ways to increase income and/or control costs in the area of Council's responsibility too in order to keep the books balanced for the charity as a whole.