

RUSHMERE ST ANDREW PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th September 2024

Present: Revd Alan Comfort, Gill Ainslie, Bob Batchelor, Robin Brown, Claire Driver, Joan du Boulay, Chris Gibson, Margaret Mellor, Mary Odam, Hilary Platts, Revd Marion Walker, Chris Yule. Jim Ainslie was also invited to attend.

Apologies: Kevin Brazier, David Chaplin, Rachel Daniels, David Gill, Tim Oxbrow, Ruth Silburn.

Revd Alan opened the meeting with prayer.

24.40 The Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 25th July were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Matters Arising:

24.21 Power outage safety lighting: this has been installed but there are still some issues arising. *n.b.* the wording has been changed from Emergency lighting, as it does not constitute a 2024 H&S compliant Emergency Lighting system.

24.27 Standing Committee Terms of Reference: **the PCC approved** them, with the proviso that a financial clause would be added: Chris to work on this.

24.30 Standing Committee re. Louvres on church tower; the final cost was £224.

24.34 Meetings with the DAC: the report following the site visit in July offered opinion rather than advice – not keen on additional floor as multiple issues and could not see the cost-benefit. Same issue for pitched roof, practically only suitable for hatch access and is the extra cost for this re-structuring of the roof a good use of resources given the small benefit? These could be considered if a strong case could be made. To refurbish the existing vestry block roof 'as is' gives the best cost-benefit, comes under List B, and will be the least expensive if further development is considered in the future.

The PCC agreed

- A. To re-furbish the vestry block roofs to the existing design using upgraded materials and redesign the drainage from the tool shed roof, possibly replacing the plastic rainwater goods with iron, and replacing the two sky-lights.
- B. To instruct N. Jacob to specify types and grades of materials to be used for sub-roof wood structure and decking, between-joint insulation, roof covering material and its bonding and sky-lights. Also, for a design for the west side rainwater outflow, possibly like the east side one.
- C. To obtain quotes from roofing contractors based on the architect's specifications.
- D. To instruct N. Jacob to specify type of ceiling materials to replace the whole of the west lobby ceiling (much damaged by years of water ingress through it).
- E. To obtain quotes from a builder to replace the west lobby ceiling (they may need to work with our electrician to tidy up the multiple cables that run round it).

24.39 Vicarage flooring: stair carpet fixed and the Diocese will do the kitchen flooring.

Cycle racks: in hand

Minutes of the Standing Committee of 1st September re Mission & Giving notice boards. The noticeboards have become shabby, and Tim and Teresa proposed re-covering them with new fabric at a cost of £140.64. This was unanimously agreed and the work has been done. Thanks to Tim and Teresa.

24.41 Correspondence: letter of thanks from St Elizabeth Hospice for allowing Sharon Hatcher to have a plant stall at the Fun Day in July.

24.42 Ministry Team

- Prayer: training for those wishing to join praying teams will be offered shortly
- Daytime home group: Chris & Jean Yule will be hosting a daytime home group twice a month
- Sunday morning preaching series: will run from January to Lent 2025, possible theme 'Heroes of the faith'
- 5th Sundays: MT thinking about how to use these Sundays to integrate all types of worship styles and music
- Support for David Yaroslaw in Reader training: **the PCC agreed** to support him with financial expenses such as books and transport.
- The MT is still thinking about ways to encourage people attending activities at Dumbarton Road to come to church rather than remaining separate. There is some crossover between Toddler Group and Messy Church, and a few families are coming to services.

24.43 Treasurer's Report

a) Matters arising: few 'Green' gas contracts available, and not from our provider Scottish Power, so regrettably we are locked into our current contract until Nov. 2026.

b) Income July-August 2024

Donations: £400 from Lunch Club for use of facilities; £228 from contactless, £20 on-line; £170 from several funerals; £265 from various. Stunning £20K anonymous donation, with no particular usage stipulated - PCC need to decide how to be used. Events: £328 from Quiz; £845 from Fun Day plus contribution of £400 from Parish Council - expenses were £749, so event had surplus of £496 - very grateful thanks to Paul Hesketh and all the many helpers.

c) Payments schedule July-August 2024

Nothing exceptional; £30K Lloyds fixed-term deposit at good rate of 4.37%; £664 for New Day Festival as agreed at last PCC.

d) Income & Expenditure to 31/08/24

Excluding May Festival income & costs and Youth Worker costs (as funded by Designated Funds) Income up 5% and Expenditure up 4% compared to 2023; Surplus of £1,100 - increase since end June due to Fun Day; Giving incl. G/Aid up nearly £7k (17%); all other income lower than 2023 at this stage, apart from Donations and Interest; higher Mission costs are due to Messy Church; all other cost differences to 2023 are unexceptional.

e) Funds schedule @ 31/08/24 Overall Funds total up £26k

f) Other

Lloyds deposits: **the PCC agreed** £20K to be rolled over 30/09, at 3.01% for 6 months. Outlook: printer needs to change, Kevin has found one to produce still at £444 per issue, though set-up costs will be an extra £20 per issue: **the PCC agreed**. Louvres on the other 3 sides of the Tower: William Steward would need to spend another £600-800 for additional oak - **the PCC agreed**.

24.44 Charity Registration

The Treasurer explained the background to Excepted Charities and Registered Charities. Recent Charity Commission (CC) rule changes mean once a charity receives income over the £100K limit, regardless of whether it is a one-off or not, they must formally register. Our

total income was £114K last year as a result of a legacy and a one-off donation, and this year we have already benefited from 2 gifts, amounting to an extra £39K, taking us over the CC limit and requiring us to formally register.

Chris has already started to investigate what will be required, and to seek guidance from Deanery, Diocese, the Association of Church Treasurers, and the Charity Commission.

The PCC agreed that he should put together a working party so that all aspects are covered; for example, Church documentation, Trustees' (i.e. PCC members!) requirements, financial and reporting implications, etc. A report will be produced for the November meeting so the PCC can consider what will need to be done, and by when.

24.45 Updates

Health & Safety: Still trying to find an access ramp for the Chancel steps – may need to have one custom-made. Fire Emergency strategy – hold over to next PCC meeting.

Safeguarding: Lone worker policy handed out to all who need it; DBS checks and Safeguarding training in hand for 2 Youth Club volunteers; Mark Bee (Safeguarding Trainer) has now left the role and not yet been replaced, so further delay in face-to-face training

Eco Church: A new A Rocha scheme being introduced from 8th October, but we have until January 2025 to complete under present scheme. Priorities to enable us to achieve this:

- Fairtrade registration, which is in hand
- Praying for Creationtide as we approach Harvest and autumn
- Obtaining a 'green' tariff for gas (thanks to Chris for switching the Electricity)
- Water butt to be sourced for shed in churchyard
- Vegetable/herb box for church garden (wood may be available from Parish Council from recycled allotment boxes)
- Operating a shared Christmas card scheme
- Another toilet to be twinned

It was agreed that all of these were desirable, although a green gas tariff not possible until at least 2026, and many people liked to send individual Christmas cards. Thanks to Ruth for continuing to lead on this important aspect of church life.

24.46 Churchwardens' Report

- Power outage safety lighting has been installed
- Food Hygiene inspection carried out recently and Food Hygiene certificates now completed by Lunch Club volunteers. Thanks to them for their invaluable work.
- Portrait of King Charles has been received from the Government; to be placed in church hall near Fire Exit door.
- Annual churchyard survey: some dead trees near front of church grounds need to be removed and overhanging branches in the main car park to be cut back, all work mentioned in 2023 Quinquennial Report. A quote of £720 inc. VAT has been received from The Tree GP; another quote is in hand, and **the PCC approved** expenditure up to £720. The need to check for Tree Preservation Orders was pointed out, and also the fir tree near the oil tank and the tree near the Middleditch grave may need attention.
- Keyholders to be contacted to review records. It was noted that Barbara Barker, who now cooks for Lunch Club, does not have any keys.
- AV equipment update: The Parish Council has booked the Church Hall from January 2025 for meetings for which they need a means to display planning applications and other documents, a hearing loop, and voice reinforcement system. They have offered to fit a 98" monitor screen for their use and for church and community groups using the hall, and have secured funding of £7,660+VAT for the screen and its fitting. They will own, maintain, and insure it. They have also

suggested the same AV fitting company could upgrade our sound and loop system at a cost of £2,759+VAT so it is not only more effective but easier to use. Once fitted we would own this and be responsible for maintaining it.

An application has been made to the 'St Lawrence Parish Hall Trust for a grant to cover the £2,759+VAT of this £10,419+VAT project.

The PCC agreed the following proposals:

- that the parish council may fit a 98" monitor screen to the wall of the church hall on the understanding that other groups may also use it, though they will own it. The suggested position is on the south wall above the counter – this would require the repositioning of the 'red' notice boards.
- If grant application provides the additional funds for the sound system to proceed with the upgrade of this.

24.47 Panel reports

Minutes of the Mission & Giving and Youth Panels had been circulated. There were no questions or matters arising.

24.48 Events

Past: July: visit by Dick and Caroline Seed went well.

August: quiet month, apart from Wednesday Wonders and Joint Service at St Andrews

Sept 8th Informal worship moved to 2nd Sunday of month

14th Growing in Depth morning: good event and well attended

14th Ride & Stride: raised almost £1600, of which half comes to church

21st Coffee morning

Coming up

Sept 28th Prayer Breakfast, with speaker from CYM

29th Chris Yule's last service as Reader

Oct 6th Harvest service and lunch; Concerts start (x5); Joint service at ASK

18th MU service at St Andrew's

26th Prayer Breakfast - Ruth Silburn speaking on RTU; Quiz

Nov 3rd Service of Memories

10th Remembrance Sunday service; Parish Council light show

11th Armistice Day – Civic Remembrance service

16th Murder Mystery evening

22nd-23rd RTU sale

24.49 Any other Business

- Tricia Tyler's offer to purchase copies of the new Bethlehem Carol Sheet was gratefully accepted.
- Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith's memorial service is on September 27th; please ask Revd Alan for the link to watch online
- Fire Drill: to be checked with Tim if we are required to hold one
- Sunday Concerts: Graham Platts wishes to step down as organiser after 2025 series; if the PCC wishes for them to continue a replacement will need to be found, ideally from within the church community. Revd Alan to talk to Graham.
- FORO subscription: **the PCC agreed** this should not be increased. There are some surplus relays from when the organ was last serviced, and someone has shown interest in purchasing them. Mary to talk to Mike Osborne.

The meeting closed with prayers and The Grace at 9.15pm.

The date of the next PCC Meeting is Thursday 28th November.