

St John's Church Egham

Minutes of PCC meeting, 24 September 2018, in church

Attendees: Keith Malcouronne (Vice-Chair), Conrad Benefield (Secretary), Debbie Benefield, Heather Cooke, Steve Cresswell, Veronica Cresswell, Phil Darby, Emma Evans, Chris Gray, Phil Holloway, Joyce Johnson, Paul Kahn, Chris King, Victoria Mcharo, Carol Peters, Rev. Esther Prior (observer), Rev. Jenn Riddlestone, Michael Senanayake, Andrew Tebboth, Sally Thompson, Natalie Watson and Geoff Wickes.

Apologies: Rev. Simon Fraser, Sarah Gillies, Sara Holloway,

1. Opening prayer and welcome

Keith Malcouronne welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Rev. Esther Prior who was attending PCC as an observer, and opened in prayer. Apologies for absence were received as noted above.

2. Declaration of interests

The interests previously declared were noted. Conrad Benefield declared a general interest as Interim Chair of the Playbox Management Committee. Subsequent to the meeting, it was noted by the Hon Secretary that Emma Evans no longer had an interest as the wife of the ex-Chair Huw Evans, and so this interest would be removed from the record.

No other new interests were declared.

3. Devotional thought

Rev. Esther Prior thanked members for the warm welcome she had received at St John's, and reflected on how many people had said they were excited by her appointment and had great expectations. She reflected that while she is limited, God is not, and that she had been praying for sky-high expectations and for the joy of seeing God exceed them.

Esther went on to read Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"

She encouraged members to "dare to dream", remembering that we are not asking a very limited vicar but a God whose power – the same power that raised Jesus from the dead – is in us.

A short time of reflection and prayer followed where members recorded their hopes and dreams for St John's on cards, and these were offered up in prayer.

4. Eco Church

Keith Malcouronne welcomed Leah Robson to the meeting, noting paper PCC/18/46.

Leah went on to outline the principles of Eco Church, which helps churches to get started, or move forward, in demonstrating their commitment to caring for god's earth, in the areas of:

- Worship and teaching (including, for example, songs, sermons or teaching series on themes of stewardship, social justice, God's creation etc)
- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

Churches can then gain bronze, silver and gold awards, and dioceses can bid for Eco Diocese accreditation based on what their churches achieve. Keith added that Bishop's Council had agreed that the diocese should work towards this.

Leah noted that the Eco Church approach enables and encourages church members to ask questions, challenge each other gently and bring issues into the open.

Leah explained that a team (herself, Chris Gray, Teal Martin and Elaine Brindley) was in place to make plans and take forward actions (and to apply, initially, for a bronze award) but that PCC's support was needed.

Leah's view was that St John's was doing enough currently to gain a bronze award and that a first step should be to apply for this. The team would then develop an action plan – in consultation with the PCC – of things to focus on in working towards the silver award, which would probably be focused in the areas of worship, community and lifestyle.

Keith Malcouronne proposed, and PCC agreed, that:

- PCC endorse and support the Eco Church initiative
- Leah and the team develop the action plan going forward, referring back to or updating PCC as and when appropriate
- Leah submit an application for bronze accreditation in due course.

Keith thanked Leah and the team, on behalf of PCC, for her input and for taking the scheme forward.

5. Ministry to children and families

Keith welcomed Rachel Upcott to the meeting, who gave an update on various aspects of our ministry to children and families.

Holiday Club – Flood Zone

Rachel noted that this had been the first Holiday Club for four years, with Messy Family Fun Week taking place in the intervening years. Planning had started later than usual and there had been some challenges and obstacles in publicising the event, but at the same time Nevin & Wells had sponsored a new banner. Only 17 children were signed up by the beginning of the school holidays, but after prayer (for 50 children to attend) 52 attended on the Monday rising to 58 by the end of the week. Rachel added that serving tea and coffee for parents in the atrium (with a live feed) had been very well received.

Looking to next year, Rachel said she would look for more sponsorship from local businesses (but reported that donations this year were slightly ahead of costs). She added that she might extend Holiday Club to allow four-year-olds to attend some sessions.

Footprints

Rachel reported that Footprints was now well established in the Easter Centre Children's Zone, with an average of 30 children attending each week, and that she would like these numbers to grow through everyone in St John's helping to engage with parents.

Rachel explained that following a 10.45am start (to allow parents to get to the 11am service), there is a social at the start, with snacks, followed by

- 'Know What' – singing, prayer, a Bible verse, birthdays, a collection and a quiz, story or DVD
- 'So What' – discussion of the story, in age-related groups
- 'Now what' - how we can we respond and apply what we've learned?

Rachel explained that she is looking to encourage more parents to attend the 11am service, and the start and finish times are set with this in mind. Her hope is that families will become

curious and, if we involve children in services, including in the worship team, that they will attend those services and want to know more, as is the case with one family currently.

Playtime and Praise Tots

Rachel explained that Playtime is a parent and toddler group for pre-schoolers and their parents, grandparents, godparents and family friends, which runs mainly in term-time but with some sessions in summer in the Children's Zone. She added that she runs Playtime and Praise Tots with Sally Champion, supported by other team members and the pastoral care team. Some sessions take place at Manorcroft Park in the summer, which helps to promote the group to others, and the last session of the summer featured farm animals in pens, gazebos, water play and a picnic lunch for about 90 children plus parents. Around 48 children attend on Friday mornings, and slightly less in the afternoons, with over 70 families in total engaged.

Rachel added that Praise Tots is now part of Playtime and this is more structured with a stronger Christian focus through Christian songs, bible study, prayer, and craft activities related to this.

Other activities

Rachel highlighted other activities including:

- The monthly clothes bank – where parents bring clothes and others are invited to take anything they would find useful.
- Meals for parents with a new baby (managed by Sacha Sheppard) – which now extends to Playtime families. New mums also get a goody bag of pamper gifts for themselves.
- Sustain – a group for parents of children with additional needs, which runs fortnightly, and is a small group but very valuable.
- The Start course – some Playtime parents have attended and the material is used for children and parents exploring or preparing for baptism.

In closing, Rachel explained that the team publicise church events, have conversations about church life with parents, and invite them to services including baptisms, in the hope that they will see the welcome that God has for them through the team. She encouraged PCC members to visit Playbox/Praise Tots on a Friday to meet the team and parents.

Thanks were extended to Rachel and her team for all the work they do, and there followed a short time of prayer for Rachel and her ministry.

6. Approval of PCC minutes of 16 July and review of Standing Committee minutes of 10 September, and matters arising

The minutes of the 16 July PCC meeting were approved and the minutes of the 10 September Standing Committee meeting were noted.

In matters arising (item 13), Keith confirmed that the Easter Centre Management Committee had been consulted on the revised draft of the reply to Philippa Stuart and that the final version of the reply, which was circulated to PCC members the day before it issued, took account of this.

7. Easter Centre Sub-Committee

Conrad advised that Sara Holloway and Andrew Teboth had come forward to join the new Easter Centre Sub-Committee, along with existing members Veronica Cresswell and Carol Peters. He added that specific roles on the Sub-Committee would be determined by its members, and that Rev. Esther Prior would be consulted on her role.

8. Application to the Diocese of Guildford Growth Fund

Conrad advised that a proposal was before PCC to make an application to the Diocese of Guildford Growth Fund to support the establishment of the Easter Centre Development Leader role, to which efforts had been made previously to recruit one or more volunteers. The application would be prepared on PCC's behalf by Lesley Pocock.

Conrad Benefield proposed, seconded by Debbie Benefield, that PCC approve the making of such an application to the fund.

Members voted unanimously in favour by a show of hands.

9. Vacancy update

Veronica Cresswell confirmed that Rev. Esther Prior's Licensing service would take place on Wednesday 26th at 7.30pm. Thanks were expressed to the churchwardens, Vice-Chair, Hon Secretary and others who had supported St John's through the vacancy. It was agreed that PCC members would assist with serving canapes at the reception afterwards.

10. Pastoral Assistant training

Carol Peters proposed, seconded by Phil Darby, that the following resolution be passed:

"The PCC of St John's Egham supports Teal Martin and Guy Habberfield-Bateman in their applications to be pastoral assistants, and agrees to pay the full costs of the Foundation Course. It will ensure that Teal and Guy are relieved of parochial responsibilities during their year of training and will give continuing support in their ministry, and access to such further training as may be deemed appropriate."

Members voted unanimously in favour by a show of hands.

11. Finance

Keith referred members to the accounts and the second draft of the 2019 budget, noting that the forecast deficit for 2018 had fallen from £10,000 to £5,000, albeit with a very small margin for error at this stage.

He added that the draft 2019 budget included some assumptions (in shaded boxes), for example regarding potential Partnership income, the possibility of maintenance costs and/or rental income arising at 33 Grange Road following the future departure of Rev. Jenn Riddlestone and her family.

Keith also noted that the 2019 budget assumed no change in Parish Share, with a modest reduction expected in coming years through changes to the Parish Share scheme.

12. Buildings maintenance

Heather Cooke referred members to paper PCC/18/52 and there was some discussion of proposals to change the colour of the church doors from green to a lighter shade to minimise damage resulting from absorption of sunlight. After some discussion Keith Malcouronne proposed, seconded by Rev. Jenn Riddlestone, that the doors should be painted a light red, somewhere between the colour of the brick paving in front of church and the colour of the church chairs. Members voted in favour by a show of hands, with two abstentions.

Heather also expressed thanks to Graham Lyndsell and Steve Hodgkinson for their work re-grouting the paving at the entrance to the church, which was now almost complete.

13. Evening services

Rev. Esther Prior outlined plans for weekly evening services, called Revive, to support and encourage participation by students and facilitated by Grace Hopkins, with the first service on Sunday 7th October. She added that information packs were being prepared ready for Freshers' Day at Royal Holloway on Thursday 27th September.

14. Letter from Grace Hopkins

Members discussed the proposal from Grace Hopkins, in paper PCC/18/53, that PCC consider financially supporting her during her Discipleship Year with New Wine, which would include an internship at St John's. Members took account of Standing Committee's thoughts on this and Paul Kahn proposed that PCC should make a grant of £1,500 for the full course fee. In addition, it was proposed that Grace would be given the opportunity to speak about her plans at the morning services on a future Sunday, which might generate support from the congregations towards her living costs.

Members voted in favour by a show of hands, with one abstention.

15. Applications to join the electoral roll

Members voted unanimously in favour of the following being received onto the electoral roll:

Tal Lyth, James Martin, Karen Sadler and Hannah Johnson

16. Chairman's report

Keith advised members that an open Deanery Synod meeting was taking place on Tuesday 2nd October at 7.30pm at St Jude's Englefield Green, on the theme of 'mythbusters' – exploring what causes friction, misunderstandings and mistrust between Christian denominations and traditions, the things that are off-putting to those outside the church, and how we can have positive conversations about these things.

Conrad undertook to circulate the latest Deanery newsletter, and subsequent editions, to PCC members.

Keith also encouraged members to pray for St Jude's Englefield Green in their time of vacancy.

There was no other business and Keith Malcouronne closed the meeting in prayer at 10.10pm.