

**Minutes of The First Meeting of the 2024/25 Parochial Church Council of St Francis of Assisi held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 8pm in Parish Room**

**Present:** Revd Canon Jenny Fennell, Tony Boon ,Sarah Branwhite ,Carol Jager, Gavin Johnstone, Julie Lowes, Stuart Richardson, Rob Smith, Andrew Watkinson, Graham Bloye, Cathy Bloye, Jo Dunstan, Pui San Appling, Tony Porter, John Owen

**Present Part of the meeting:** Nigel Cox, Sally Ewers

**Present On-Line:** Rachel Basch, Nikki Clare

**Apologies:** John Butler

**Minutes taken by:** Sarah Branwhite

Rev Jenny opened the meeting with a prayer.

**1. Welcome and Apologies for absence:**

Rev Jenny started the meeting by welcoming everyone to this the first meeting of the new PCC year and reminded everyone that this is an open forum for discussion and wants everyone to come to these meetings with ideas. She also reminded everyone that discussions at PCC are confidential, but the decisions are public. Every other meeting the business agenda will be shorter to allow more time for discussion on the vision.

**2. Election of Treasurer, PCC Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer and Safeguarding Officers**

Rev Jenny started off by confirming that Graham had stood in as treasurer elect since the last meeting and that the election of the above posts would be done on block as no one apart from those named below had come forward to take on these posts:

Treasurer: Graham Bloye  
PCC Secretary: Sarah Branwhite  
Safeguarding Officer: Cathy Bloye  
Electoral Roll Officer: Barbara Pavyer

Rev Jenny proposed that above be duly elected, this was agreed by the PCC.

**3. Minutes from previous meeting held on 12 March 2024**

The minutes were signed as true record.

The minutes from meeting held on 15 February 2024, had been updated and recirculated to PCC members, these were also signed as a true record of the meeting.

**4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## 5. Chairman's Report

**PCC Bios:** Rev Jenny confirmed that pictures would be used in the church with the Bios being used on the website. Everyone to make sure they have sent a photo and short Bio by the next meeting, if not already done so. The newsletter would also contain a link to the bios page.

**Policies List:** we have a number of policies which need to be reviewed, updated if necessary and republished. As there are quite a few it was agreed to split them into batches, with each batch going out no later than one week in advance of the meeting to allow time for reading ahead of the meeting. Naming and numbering to be consistent on each policy.

**Director of Music:** Rev Jenny advised that a suitable candidate had been introduced to the choir a couple of weeks ago. They led part of the choir practice on that evening, this was without the younger members of the choir. The feedback was positive but would have liked to see him teach the younger members, due to timing this wasn't possible, and the candidate had received another offer but he was keen to come to St Francis. He is young, studying in London but realised that chemistry is not for him. He is currently assistant director of music at church in Chingford. He would give this up if offered the post of Director of Music with us. References have been received and he has been interviewed under the safer recruitment policy and has accepted our offer over the other one. Due to start at beginning of September. The appointment is confidential until the choir have been told.

The PCC expressed their thanks to Eric as he has done an amazing job.

**Choir Week:** not been able to secure alternative accommodation for choir week so looking to do something different over the weekend of 30/31 August and 1 September at the church as the social side is as important and looking at nearby cathedrals to see if we can do an evening song on the Saturday evening with a social on the Sunday which could be used as goodbye to Eric and welcome to Joel.

## 6. Treasurer's Report

Graham had prepared a PowerPoint presentation to show the current financial situation, a copy has been appended to the minutes. The financial situation does not look good, and we need to make some tough decisions. We can move designated funds around but the restricted funds, they can only be used for the purposes they were given to us.

The Redwood investment matures on 15 May, and this will go into a savings account. Looking at reinstating the CAF account as they charge a monthly fee of £8 but no additional charges for banking cash or cheques. HSBC charge £5pm for the account but also charge for each transaction.

We also need to push back on accepting cash and cheques where possible. Income is steady but this has been pretty flat for the last 10 years and the legacies have masked the situation we are in. We need to find ways to generate more income. We are not wasting money, but we need to make sure it is working effectively.

Graham thanked Sally for everything that she does. There have been some issues with HSBC which means the account has not been transferred over to Graham and the previous treasurer is still having to authorise payments until this is sorted out.

The immediate ask of the PCC were:

- a) To renegotiate the Parish Share with the Diocese
- b) Reopen the CAF Account

- c) Where possible we don't accept cash or cheques
- d) Move to an on-line accounting system

The PCC all voted in favour with no abstentions.

## 7. Safeguarding

Cathy updated on the current dashboard position; we are showing as red as there are:

- 7 (non-PCC) volunteers who have not completed their training
- 2 where their DBS has expired, with one due to expire in June

The previous Safeguarding Officer will be staying on the Safeguarding team as DBS officer, a new email address has been set up [DBS@stfranciswgc.org.uk](mailto:DBS@stfranciswgc.org.uk) and emails will be sent out separately to those that need to renew their DBS.

Cathy also needs a list of all volunteers from Group Leaders as all volunteers must undertake basic training, it protects us all. Monthly sessions will be set up for those who need to undertake their basic training, this will be inclusive training and will be done using the diocesan approved training. Cathy will advertise dates for these sessions and will look at whether some of these sessions can take place other than on a Sunday after church.

Safeguarding needs to be at the front of everything we do and if volunteers are unwilling to undertake the basic training, we will have to ask them to stand down from their roles.

Basic training is undertaken once, with no renewal. Foundation training needs to be renewed every 3 years and Domestic Abuse training has to be renewed every 2 years.

## 8. Wardens' Report

**Church Roof:** the quinquennial report pointed out some defects that needed to be rectified, quote received for £6240 (includes VAT and scaffolding). We have worked really hard with the roofer to keep the costs as low as possible. Quote also include repainting the Smartwater.

It was proposed that Scupla & Sons be appointed to undertake the work including adding a 10% contingency to the quoted costs. We have to do the work. PCC approved this.

**Clare Chapel:** drawings are with the architects for approval. Expenditure has already been approved by PCC and works will start once drawings approved. The faculty approval allows for works to be done in stages, and approval lasts for 30 months from February 2024. A grant has been applied for and waiting to hear if this has been successful. The Clare chapel is mainly used in the winter months as a smaller space.

**Memorial Pathway:** stones have been repainted and looking much better. There are a couple where the stone has repelled the paint and we will talk to Burgess' about these. A draft letter is with the Standing Committee for approval which will ask those who have existing stones for a fee to cover maintenance costs; all new stones will have this included in the forms when requesting a memorial stone

## 9. Health, Safety and Environment

Nothing to report.

## **10. Eco Church**

**Eco Policy:** The draft policy, subject to the headers, review date and numbering being sorted out, was presented. The PCC was happy with the policy. Policy to come back to the next meeting for formal approval and signing.

**Solar Panels:** current position from the Council is that these would not be approved due to the roof being visible on Parkway.

**Rubbish Bin:** Men in Sheds will be asked if they can build and install a bin in Frankie's Garden.

**Water Butt:** We will look into whether one can be installed.

Martin has stood down as Chairman of the Eco Church Committee and has been thanked for all that he has done. PCC asked to think about who could take over this role.

## **11. Inclusion**

The team has met. This meeting also included two members of the congregation to talk about what was important to them as they were new to St Francis and had chosen our church as it was a part of the inclusive church scheme.

The team are looking at the inclusive statement on our website and will bring this to the next PCC meeting for discussion and approval. Also looking at how this will be launched in church, launch will coincide with the finalisation of the statement.

## **12. Future Events**

**Summer Social, 6 July:** looking at doing something different to the Summer Fete, maybe a mad hatters tea party with a hat competition or Afternoon Cream Tea with Teddy Bears picnic for children. PCC members volunteered to take this on and to look at getting some of the younger congregation involved.

The quiz night was good, and PCC thanked Rob for organising this. PCC asked if a raffle could be considered for the next one.

## **13. Correspondence including Electoral Roll Update**

91 residents and 81 non-residents – 172 on the electoral roll, an increase of 1 since APCM.

SB advised there had been no other correspondence.

## **14. Any Other Business**

Jo had been approached about putting something in the newsletter about becoming a server. It was agreed that as this had been mentioned in the Servers Report as part of the APCM report about the lack of new volunteers coming forward to be a server this would be ok.

PCC leaflet, it was suggested this go on the screen instead of being printed. It can only be shown on the side screens, not always easy to read and it does point to the website.

It was suggested that maybe we change from Sides-people to Welcomers, as this should be more about welcoming people to church not just giving out leaflets and service sheets. We

need to get smarter at how we welcome new people. Agreed that Churchwardens would speak to the team leaders and get their input on this.

**Next meeting: Tuesday 18 June, 8pm in the Church Hall**