

All Saints Parish Church, Writtle – Parochial Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on 8th September 2015

Present:

Rev'd Jo Jones	Sally Cansdale	Tony Ripton	Pam Butt
Chris Pendrill	Allan Ellis	Andrew Merchant	Pauline Montague
Nanette Wright			

In attendance: Wendy Beech

The meeting began with opening devotions

1. **Apologies:** Diana Day, Geoffrey Clarke, Margaret Bruce, Bernard Smart and Andrew Brewster

2. **Safeguarding:**

Wendy Beech, Safeguarding Officer, advised that:

- All DBS checks are up to date
- Two new posters will be put up in the church this week
- Health and safety risk assessments for the Christian Centre and the church, and as such any groups or organisations using the premises need only consider whether there are any new hazards, or their activities present any additional hazards. Using HSE advice, Wendy will therefore issue the necessary instructions to all hirers, which will concentrate on slipping and tripping especially in wet weather.

3. **Serving with Accountability – Diocesan paper:**

Following earlier circulation of this paper and PCC members' preliminary comments, and discussion at this meeting, it was unanimously agreed that:

- All Saints is currently working in some way on all aspects in the paper
- With a new incumbent not yet in post for 12 months, it feels premature to prioritise, but the PCC considered the three areas it would focus on would be:
 - Worship - particularly with 3 churches coming together, the existing worship pattern being currently under review, and experimentation with new service for young people beginning later this month
 - Nurture and spirituality – after a successful Lent course, Jo aims to begin a new course after Christmas to run through more of the year in order to deepen spirituality of our Christian community, and nurture those on the fringes of it
 - Mission and Evangelism – builds on discussions in the church in recent months about members of the congregation exploring new ministries, and will be a progression from the point above. It was noted that discussing faith during the course will increase people's confidence to discuss their faith with others.

Action: Sally to draft formal response from All Saints and circulate it to PCC members prior to its submission to the Archdeacon by the 30.11.2015 deadline.

4. **Fees for Blessings, Renewal of Vows etc:**

There are no statutory diocesan fees for these types of services, and the PCC agreed that All Saints would:

- Charge a flat fee of £100 where blessings/renewal of vows were held outside normal services, subject to the Vicar's discretion
- Not make charges where blessings/renewal of vows were part of a regular church service

5. Request from Writtle Heritage:

The PCC discussed Writtle Heritage's request to seek to identify the location of the 12th or 13th century chapel in the grounds of the church by dowsing, an activity that has happened in the church grounds in the past, and which they view as a science yet to be explained rather than having any spiritual dimension.

Allan offered to send Jo guidance on other types of activities in church grounds. After careful consideration, subject to Jo's continuing agreement after reading Allan's paper, the PCC agreed to give permission for the activity to proceed on the grounds that Writtle Heritage undertake it with discretion, respect and sensitivity. **Action: Allan** to send Jo guidance paper he referred to. **Action: Jo** then to confirm the continuing agreement. **Action: Nanette** then to advise Writtle Heritage of the PCC's final decision.

6. Votive Stand:

The PCC was in favour of new arrangements for lighting candles, and considered that the stability of a free-standing votive stand would not be insurmountable. It preferred the tree style, and it was agreed that its funding would be from legacy monies. **Action: Tony** to ask the supplier whether we can see one in the church prior to purchase. **Action: Tony and Jo** to ensure that its potential location was explored in October when we will experiment with potential furniture moves within the church.

Sally proposed that a request for a temporary re-ordering is made to allow us to experiment, after which either a faculty application would be made or furniture restored to its present position. This was seconded by Chris and unanimously agreed. **Action: Nanette** to make formal request to Archdeacon for a temporary re-ordering of the church.

7. Vicar's Report:

Jo advised she is managing an increasing amount of pastoral workload, continues to visit more of the congregation, more people, places and schools around the village, and is currently planning services and cover to Christmas. Particular events upcoming she is planning, and which the PCC agreed, are as follows:

- Writtle schools' harvest festival in October,
- All Souls Day on 1st November, with 8.30 Parish breakfast and 10.00 Parish Eucharist
- Remembrance Sunday on 8th November, with 9.15 shorter Parish Eucharist followed by the service at the war memorial, and an invitation to the village to join us in refreshments in the church afterwards
- Advent services to run largely as last year, but for discussion at the next PCC meeting
- Jo advised that, in addition to the usual third Sunday morning services, a Eucharist will be held at 3pm and, fitting with the feast day of St Luke, the collection will go to The Js Hospice.

With growing participation in family services, the PCC agreed to the purchase of a new head microphone to better facilitate family worship.

8. Churchwardens' Report:

Nothing to report over the summer months.

9. Treasurer's Report:

This month's budget report showed a small surplus at the end of August (£1606), and a projected year end surplus of £5,892. Pauline is now displaying the information at the back of the church. Once new noticeboard arrangements are in place, Jo will draw the congregation's attention to it.

The PCC discussed the current Diocesan review of the Parish Share Scheme. Pauline will summarise the discussion in a draft response from Jo, and circulate to the PCC for any comments prior to its submission.

10. Reports from Committees and other Teams:

10a. Fabric Committee found the recent DAC advisory visit very helpful. Matters in hand are:

- QUINQUENNIAL WORKS – No response from Bakers of Danbury despite chases from Tony and Simon Marks. Also no progress yet on developing the Faculty application. **Action: Tony** to continue to pursue both as matters of increasing urgency
- GLAZING NICHOLAS CHAPEL – After discussion, Allan proposed that the PCC agree in principle to glazing the Nicholas Chapel and installing independent electric heating. This was seconded by Sally and unanimously agreed.
- CREATING MORE SPACE IN THE NAVE – The Fabric Committee plans a morning in October to trial moving furniture around the church to determine what might work well. PCC agreement to a request for a temporary re-ordering agreed in paragraph 6 above
- TANK REPLACEMENT – The PCC noted that this work has been commissioned and completed, and Roger and Chris were thanked for their efforts in achieving this
- USING PROBATION SERVICE FOR ONE-OFF WORKS – After discussion it was agreed that, as a default position, All Saints should consider placing a request to the Probation Service for Community Service Volunteers to undertake one-off works. **Action: Allan** to contact Essex Probation Service for more information and report back to the next meeting. **Tony** to note with Fabric Committee
- GATE TO LOVES LANE – Has been vandalised, and Tony reported replacement work is in hand.

10b. Worship Development Committee had met and the PCC considered a Worship Overview paper (see appendix). The PCC gave its full support to the ideas and suggestions following its proposal by Allan and seconding by Pauline. Jo also noted the need to advise bell ringers when service times are to differ from the norm.

10c. Christian Centre Committee: The centre has stable bookings and the financial position is satisfactory. It has received Grade 5 rating for food hygiene, and the main hall floor has just been polished. External woodwork will be painted and guttering replaced in 2016. Health and Safety checks have been carried out.

10d. Social and Fundraising team: The team is looking forward to the forthcoming concert by the Police Band, and hopes to sell at least 150 tickets to raise funds for our church. They then plan a table top sale on 17.10.2015 after which it will begin to plan social and fundraising activities for 2016, aiming to involve people who are new to the church or who haven't previously been asked.

10e. Worship team: The work of this team was incorporated into the Overview of Worship paper (see 10b. above).

10f. Healing Ministry team: Progress continues with the next healing fellowship meeting on 22.9.2015. Work on the leaflet is still in progress, and it will now be shorter than originally thought. Plans are afoot to mark St Luke's day (Sunday 18.10.2015). Also Synod advocate for Health and Healing (Christine MacLeod) will speak at Christians Together on 11.10.2015.

10g. Christmas Tree Festival team: Early preparations are underway.

10h. Churchyard Conservation team: The autumn cut will be completed soon, and further work will take place in the spring with the Junior School.

10i. Friends of Writtle Church update: Nothing to report.

11. Minutes of the last meeting:

Agreed as a correct record.

12. Matters arising not already covered:

- ORGAN REFURBISHMENT – Sally noted that Michael Little is now preparing a grant application
- ORGAN BUDGET LINES – Pauline confirmed that the general organ fund and organ restoration funds are now two separate lines within the budget
- PCC TRAINING DAY – Event in Ware on 12.11.2015 will be attended by Jo, Allan, Pauline and Nanette. **Action: Nanette** to book places
- ST LUKE'S DAY 18.10.2015 – Jo advised that this will be held at 3pm and, fitting with St Luke, the collection will go to The Js Hospice
- GARDEN OF REST – After further queries about laying flowers, it was agreed that Jo would draft a detailed note so that people can understand the context and reasons behind our decisions about flowers in the Garden of Rest. **Action: Jo, Sally and Tony** to draft the note.
- WRITTLE COLLEGE FE PRESENTATIONS DAY – have requested the use of the church on 24.6.2016, following the success of the first such day this year. The PCC was delighted to agree
- OPENING DEVOTIONS AT NEXT PCC MEETING – **Action: Pam** to prepare short devotions for the meeting
- TOWER WORKS – The Faculty for works within the Tower was submitted on 23.8.2015 for discussion at the DAC meeting on 8.9.2015.
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13. Date of next meeting: Monday 9th November at 7.30pm in the Christian Centre.

APPENDIX – WORSHIP OVERVIEW SEPTEMBER 2015

Several meetings have taken place recently and so I thought it would be good to summarise where we are at the moment and to seek PCC approval for any changes that will arise from doing things differently as outlined below. (This overview assumes that Writtle Highwood and Roxwell parishes will continue to offer weekly worship services at all 3 churches *for the time being*, whilst mindful that such provision is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term.)

First Sundays

10.45am Celebrating Together was intended to be a shorter, more flexible Holy Communion service. The liturgy for this service needs to be revised and made more flexible. This service should not be over-wordy but make greater use of the Common Worship provisions for simpler language and liturgy. Usually music is led by Diana & the band and Nan & the Voices choir. We could make greater use of the screen in this service – new words for hymns and seasonal additions to the liturgy for instance. Many of our feast days fall on a first Sunday so baptisms will not normally take place on those feast days.

Bells are rung before this and every main Sunday service. Readers and intercessors are on a rota. The preacher usually reads the gospel.

Second Sundays

10.45am Parish Eucharist following CW Holy Communion Order One. Music is usually led by Michael/Robert with the organ and robed choir. New booklets appropriate to the Christian seasons can be gradually introduced.

9.30am Second Sunday Family Worship This is an alternative for families to take place in the Christian Centre once a month initially. There is a deliberate policy to keep families together rather than separating parents and children, at least in the beginning. Keith Jones will have overall responsibility for this, but it is hoped that the families who attend will *themselves* be involved in developing this service, and that eventually we'll find ways of linking people who attend this to the first Sunday celebrating together and the third Sunday 9.30 worship for all ages. Possibly to include the welcome of baptism families at this service too. Starting in September (on third Sunday because of annual leave). All very provisional and experimental at this stage!

Third Sundays

It's important that both lay and ordained Christians share together the ministry of offering worship and praise to God, and services of the word are particularly suited to being led by lay members of our congregation (as well as readers/ licensed lay ministers/authorised local preachers).

9.30am all age service

At a recent meeting of the worship team we looked at how to develop this service and build on the good foundations established in recent years. It was agreed that we needn't use the CW lectionary readings every month, but can take themes from the season, and also make more use of the wealth of story based scripture from the Gospels and Old Testament. This service could include baptisms on occasion and also the welcome of families from baptisms happening outside the main Sunday worship.

10.45am Matins as a general rule this will continue to be led by Andrew Merchant and Richard Oscroft. At the moment it has a regular faithful congregation, and it is certainly valued by the choir as an opportunity to use their skills in singing anthems, psalms and hymns. There may be a need to move this to 11am in order to allow more time for the 9.30am service if we are having baptisms or baptism welcomes. Also to ensure that the opportunities to make relationships afforded by refreshments afterwards are not compromised, a later start time for matins may be needed. It would be good to encourage those coming for matins to come early enough to share conversation with the 9.30 congregation. It is not necessary always to have a sermon at matins – especially on those occasions when there is a 12.30pm baptism. A 'thought for the day' reflection can be offered instead.

6pm – Christians in Writtle – monthly service at the URC.

Fourth Sundays

Music is usually led by Michael/Robert with the organ and robed choir. The Eucharist includes healing prayer ministry. It would be good to provide some additional prayers and explanatory information in the booklet for 4th Sundays and to encourage this ministry to flourish beyond 4th Sundays.

Fifth Sundays

At present this Sunday follows the second Sunday Eucharist in style and content. There may be scope to develop an alternative for 5th Sundays – perhaps Bible Study with hymns and prayers? There is usually a joint service in the afternoon/evening with other churches in Writtle Highwood Roxwell and Cooksmill Green.

8am Sunday BCP Holy Communion

At the moment this service happens every Sunday and usually has a congregation of between 7 and 15. There is a short homily or short period of silent reflection after the gospel. Readings are the Epistle and gospel from the Prayer Book Holy Communion on Sundays. In future we may have to move to Common Worship lectionary readings in order to assist with sermon preparation across 8am (Writtle) 9.30am (Highwood) and 10.45am (Writtle). On major festivals such as Easter Sunday we may have ONE mid-morning Eucharist only so that all the congregation worship together and services in Highwood and Roxwell can also be covered.

10am Wednesday BCP Holy Communion

This service is attended by a regular congregation of up to 5 people, with additional ad hoc members attending when time allows or if Sunday hasn't been possible. It is a repeat of the Sunday service, with a short homily and bidding prayers/silence for intercessions rather than the Prayer for the Church Militant.

From September we are to trial sharing in refreshments afterwards alternating between the church and going into Writtle Bowls Club.

Taizé Prayer Saturday 8am

This service happens on the Saturday *before* the first Sunday of the month (as well as weekly in Advent and Lent) and is followed by sharing home-made bread and tea/coffee. Diana organises this and plays the keyboard and books different people to read and to lead intercessions each month. This service is often attended by 12-20 people from various parishes and denominations. There might be some confusion for any newcomers about dates – perhaps a first Saturday in the month is easier to remember than the Saturday *before* the first Sunday of the month?

Thursday Link Club

Jo is providing a monthly Holy Communion service in the Quiet Room with dates notified in advance so that the volunteers can plan for those who like to be present to arrive in good time. A Harvest celebration service is also planned which won't be a communion so that it can include more of the LC members. Similarly, at Christmas the worship will be carols/prayers so that more people feel able to join in.

Baptisms

I'd like us to experiment in 2016 in order to make the most of the mission opportunities of baptism (especially for resident families) without compromising our pastoral care or perpetuating an unsustainable workload. Each baptism to have a maximum of two families. No baptism date to be confirmed unless a baptism preparation session has been attended. It would be ideal if we could welcome families into the wider congregation at the 9.30am service in the month following the baptism. I understand that this was policy already, but fell out of use because families did not return.

I would like to try this again – or, if we have a large enough attendance for new families not to feel ‘awkward’ – to welcome them at the Second Sundays Worship. The following provisions for baptism are suggested:

First Sundays at 10.45am - *by arrangement* – particularly appropriate for baptism of adults or children of families who regularly attend

Second Sundays at 3pm

Third Sundays at 9.30am on **January 17th July 17th October 16th.**

Third Sundays at 12.30pm

The Church of England has recently approved new liturgies for baptism (and for the Eucharist when children are present in larger numbers). There is a pastoral and theological need to make the language we use at these services accessible. I would like us to use these provisions where appropriate so that the worship we offer is more meaningful and can be engaged in by people of *all* ages and educational backgrounds.

Proposal: *That the PCC endorse the ideas and suggestions for change in this document, and that the worship development team continues to review and develop our worship provision, reporting to the PCC as necessary when there are other changes to approve.*

Rev'd Jo Jones

August 2015