

Holy Innocents Church

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council
25th February 2025

*Those Present : Rev'd Benjamin Edwards (Chair) Kathy Drakes, Betty Holdgate,
Claire Mackichan, Angela Pearce, Peter Robinson, Linda Scoles, Jane Dalton
Graham Mothersole attended for the discussion on the Church Institute*

Apologies for Absence Tim Frost

Fr. Ben opened the Meeting with prayer

1. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26/11/24 had not been circulated, so they will be sent round after this meeting for any comments or amendments and for final approval.

2. Church Institute

Betty described the present situation.

There may be a problem in using the back entrance as the main door, with the planning department and building control. At the moment it is a fire door.

Graham has gone to Thurlow Architects who have produced good plans (copies of which were circulated) which he will mark with specifications and details. We need to get building/planning control consent and planning permission, and Graham will helpfully make the application.

The kitchen will be extended, and we cannot make the disabled toilet any smaller.

Peter Marsh (who is on the Parish Council in Thurston) may help with funding, with getting grants – he is very good – and we will drop “Church” from the building’s name as this better for getting grants and donations. We will write to various organisations in the village to see if they will help us. And people may fund individual items.

Graham has been very helpful – we wouldn’t have got this far without him, and we are very grateful.

3. Finance

2022 Accounts

The examination of the 2022 Accounts has now been completed and a certificate issued saying that there were no areas of concern. The final accounts and the certificate have been circulated to the PCC. The figures have changed from the original accounts produced as further adjustments had to be made in the change to an accruals basis for the accounts as required by the Charities Commission.

2023 Accounts

Daniel has agreed to continue with the examination of our accounts. It is hoped that the 2023 examination will be completed next week.

2024 Accounts

The draft Profit and Loss account for the 2024 accounts was circulated. These are draft awaiting finalization of the Gift Aid claim and the examination of the 2023 accounts. They will then be finalized and sent to Daniel for Examination. Kathy noted that since Covid we have had a loss every year, but this year most of our income is up on last year, so we are going in the right direction.

Parish share

We paid all of our parish share for 2024, an amount of £39735
Our benefice parish share for 2025 is £80937 an increase of £1467 over last year
Our share of this is £40469, and increase of £734 over last year. At a deanery meeting on 15th January Kathy offered to pay the full amount subject to PCC agreement. and Kathy said they would need the PCC's agreement to paying the full amount. Linda proposed this, Peter seconded, all in favour that this amount should be paid.

Barclays Account

With 4 signatories to the account we have now been able to start on-line banking which makes payments much quicker and easier.

CCLA

The new accounts for the investment of Freda Ridgewell's legacy have now been opened and the money is in the process of being transferred into it.

Donation of £12,000

At the last PCC meeting we discussed the £12,000 donation, and it was suggested that we spend some of it on CCTV for the Church or putting it towards the refurbishment of the Church Institute. After some discussion it was agreed that this should be allocated to the Institute refurbishment. Linda proposed, Claire seconded this, all were in favour.

It was agreed that the CCTV could come out of the Fabric Funds and that Tim should be asked to find out the cost.

Kathy has also transferred the £12000 donation that the PCC allocated for the refurbishment of the Church Institute into the CCLA Church Institute account so that it can earn interest until it is needed

Accounts Package for Betty and Peter

It is very helpful to have Betty and Peter working on the accounts.

There has been difficulty in making it possible for other people to use the accounts package. In 2027 they will be able to spread the package and people would have their own password and log out. If we bring Thurston in, it will only cost an extra £4 per month. Kathy has shared her one-drive with accounts information with Betty and Peter. The new system is just £500 for three years. Peter and Betty will need to use something they are comfortable with. Kathy pointed out that it's necessary to be able to back up the information. Peter suggested we should begin using the new system now from 2025. Peter has spent a lot of time working on it. It was proposed that we buy the new system – proposed by Kathy, seconded by Claire, all in favour.

The PCC had agreed previously to the purchase of a Windows computer for Peter but the new system will work on the Apple-Mac. It was suggested that it be handed over to Betty.

We have had a £12,000 donation, and it was suggested that we spend some of it on CCTV for the Church, Kathy will ask Tim to ask the donor if this is OK, and whether the remainder could be allocated to the Institute. Linda proposed, Claire seconded this, all were in favour.

4. Legacies

Ben said that he wanted us to be very clear about how we dealt with Legacies. He had recently received notice of another legacy which was sent with a copy of the will and that we should ask for the will to be clear about how the monies should be accounted for. Kathy explained the different ways that funds should be dealt with.

Restricted Funds - If money is left for a specific purpose only it is restricted and can only be spent for that purpose. If the PCC wishes to change this they can only do this by applying to the Charities Commission for permission.

Designated Funds – When money is left for general purposes, or with the wish rather than explicit instructions, that it is used for a specific purpose, the PCC can decide how to allocate the money. This then becomes a Designated Fund. The PCC can decide at any time in the future to change this designation. When this money is invested the PCC needs to decide both the designation of the capital, and any interest accruing. They need not necessarily be used for the same purpose.

Endowment Fund – Where the Capital has been left to be invested and the income used by the PCC. This income can be either restricted (specified by the will) or designated (for general purposes and decided by the PCC). Again the Charities Commission would have to decide if the PCC wished to use the Capital in the future. Kathy went on to explain that she had taken advice from the diocesan solicitor on this following our legacy from the Late Freda Ridgewell. The PCC need to have their decisions on these matters clearly documented and a copy of PCC decisions recorded and the minutes kept in the safe, with all the other documentation.

There are currently four decisions that need to be recorded at this time.

Freda Ridgewell's Legacy – As already notified to the PCC we have now received the final monies due to us from this legacy, along with the estate accounts. I will now place these along with the copy of her will and the signed PCC minutes allocating these funds in the safe. The total legacy received was £323845.90 . Kathy asked the solicitors for a copy of Freda's will as it was not clear exactly how this had been left. The wording was 'my trustees shall hold my estate upon trust absolute for the vicar and churchwardens of Holy Innocents Church, Great Barton for its general purpose but I specifically express the wish that they use the funds towards maintaining the fabric of the church and the church yard'. The Diocesan Solicitor agreed that this was for the PCC to designate, both the capital and any interest accruing. The PCC had previously agreed that the capital should be put into the Fabric Fund but we need to record this properly and also to make a decision on the interest/dividends accruing. It was confirmed, as previously agreed, that the capital should be used for the Fabric Fund and for the Curtilage of the church. It was also agreed that the interest/dividends from the investment accounts should be for general funds. However, the interest on the share of the monies allocated to the deposit account should accrue to fabric. Proposed by Claire, seconded by Peter, all in favour.

Hilary Aaron's Legacy

Hilary left us £1000 with the wish that it be used for Fabric. The PCC previously agreed this but we need to record it properly. Peter proposed this, Betty seconded it, and everyone agreed.

Jill Rood's Legacy

Jill Rood has bequeathed £300. Kathy proposed that we do something specific with it that Jill would have liked; we could buy ropes for the bells (Jill was a bellringer for many years) or towards the refurbishment of the box used for the handbells. Kathy will contact Doug Rood.

Smith Legacy

We have two CCLA accounts that are from the Smith legacy but at the moment no record of this investment can be found. Kathy will continue to try and track this down so that we can be clear on how this money can be used. It is thought that she owned a cottage, and left the money to the Church - £10,000. It was thought that the PCC decided that the interest could be used for the Institute but this doesn't seem to have been done for many years.

4. *Safeguarding*

Kathy reported that there have been no safeguarding issues arising since the last PCC meeting. The possible issue mentioned at the last meeting is not a problem at the moment.

Following the last PCC meeting Kathy contacted all of the PCC about safeguarding training. She is pleased to report that the majority of the PCC are now up to date on their training. Thank you for doing this. As mentioned before, this training is not optional, and we will be asked at some stage to confirm that we have all training in place. Everyone was emailed yesterday with the latest information held.

Kathy has now received diocesan advice on who needs to do DBS checks, and all of the PCC should have a DBS check in place. Once Kathy is authorised to initiate these, she will be contacting members of the PCC to get this in place.

Following a call to say that as a benefice we were not compliant with our Safeguarding, this has now been checked. We were compliant with our signage, but additional information has now been added. Peter has done a really good job of updating our website and supplying booklets for the church. If you can think of anything else we should be doing, can you please let Ben or Kathy know.

5. *Lent Course*

Fr. Ben and Kathy are preparing a four-week course – four sessions – which people could use in small groups. We hope people will form their own groups.

(Later - Fr. Ben and Kathy will be leading four meetings at 27 Diomed Drive on Wednesday evenings, and they are preparing material for individuals or group meetings)

Nothing is happening at the moment. When Tim is well again we can have a catch-up.

6. *Fundraising*

Linda has arranged for the Male Voice Choir to come and give a concert in March, and people are buying or ordering tickets now. The Choir charges £450, and Linda has been asking people if they would like to contribute to this cost – she has raised £300 so far.

7. *Any Other Business*

GDPR Peter has sent out an email saying it is important to make sure that people are happy for their names and contact details to be made public. The importance of safeguarding should be reiterated, and churches at parish level are suffering because of the news of safeguarding issues in the Church

8. *Date of Next Meeting*

This will be held on May 6th, the date of our APCM.

Linda said she had attended an APCM in Norfolk where everyone was given booklets with reports, and a Communion Service was built into the meeting. This aroused interest, although there was some doubt about combining the meeting with a service – but it would be good to have everything on the same day. Linda will try and get a copy of the booklet.