

Holy Innocents Church

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council on 26th November 2024

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Those Present : Rev'd Benjamin Edwards (Chair), Kathy Drakes, Tim Frost, Betty Holdgate, Claire Mackichan, Angela Pearce, Peter Robinson, Linda Scoles, Jane Dalton Graham Mothersole was invited to attend for the discussion on the Church Institute.

There were no apologies for absence – all members were present

Fr. Ben opened the Meeting with prayer.

1. *Improvements to the Church Institute*

Graham Mothersole came to talk, very helpfully, about the Church Institute – its history, and possible future plans.

It was built in 1901 on land owned by the Bunbury Estate, and the building was paid for by the village people. (The village people don't own it). In 2004 the Church signed a lease for 125 years going forward, on the same terms. The Church doesn't own the site or the building, and pays a peppercorn rent. It provides outreach opportunities.

Plans for the building, and what is proposed. Most people arrive at the back of the building rather than the front, and the main entrance should be at the back for safety reasons (avoiding the main road). There is a piece of land at the back and the hedge can come out – after consultation with the neighbour – and a lobby could be created at the rear. Graham passed round draft plans for the building. In the lobby there would be two toilets and basins and a disabled toilet leading off it, and a recess could be created to give a store area for the kitchen. The main doorway would be created where the back window is now and there could be a serving hatch into the kitchen. The existing front door could be closed off and a lobby made for hanging coats. The existing heating is very basic, and the electrical supply could be greatly improved by the installation of solar panels (with batteries to store electricity) for which grants are available. This would be very good for new heating and lighting, and it would demonstrate that the Church is environmentally concerned. There would be wheelchair access through the main door, with a wheelchair path through the garden

There is a lot of noise from the road, the A 143, and a suggestion was made to sound-insulate the front wall and triple glaze the windows.

The total cost of all the improvements would be around £70,000.

Graham had a phone call with Sarah Broughton a local Councillor who is keen to support this. There could be “106 funded” grants available, and we should consult her. And there are lots of businesses in and around Great Barton (many directors/managers as well as actual businesses) and they and others may see this as an exciting village project, if we focus on the use by the village of the Institute, as well as the Church. We use it for outreach now, in any case. And we could call it “The Institute” rather than the “Church Institute” for this purpose.

We should take some good photos and have an artist’s impression to send out to people. And we would need to get an architect to draw up plans.

There is a lot of homework and fine tuning to be done. If Graham sees that the PCC are fully in favour of this, he will give it his full support. The PCC felt that they did want to go ahead, and the next stage would be for the Sub-Committee to formulate a plan and get something formally drawn up, if we start applying for grants. Further details could be discussed by the Sub-Committee. We considered whether to do the work in stages, or all at once, and it was agreed that we should do it in stages.

2. *Consideration of the Minutes* was deferred until later in the meeting.

Matters Arising – Fundraising

We raised £460 at the Christmas Fayre. Tiz might help with fundraising – she is good. Claire will mention it to her. Betty suggested four fundraising events on Quarter Days – something after Christmas and just before Easter (perhaps involving Meeting Point). We could have a Spring Lunch, and a Barbecue.

House Groups -

Fr. Ben and Kathy are going to talk about this, and plan something in time for Lent.

Merging of Holy Innocents and St. Peter’s PCCs

Fr. Ben will talk to James Hall, the Diocesan Registrar (he has spoken with the Archdeacon). St. Peter’s feel the need to be supported, and we could consider ourselves as a single Benefice rather than two separate Churches. We could keep financial matters separate, with two Treasurers (hopefully St. Peter’s will find someone – this is one question to be considered).

3. *Financial Matters*

Kathy’s helpful report had been circulated.

2022 Accounts - Kathy has confirmed with Daniel Royal from Gascoyne’s that we have accepted their quote, and she is awaiting details of how and when they would like the accounts information. Once she has heard from them, she will update the PCC.

Barclays Account - The signatories to this account have finally been updated, and following Kathy's complaint to them, she now has duplicate cheque books and paying-in books. So Betty will now hold a cheque book and will now take over any payments, and Sarah will take over banking monies. Barclays have also started charging us for bankings and cheques. Having asked around, Kathy has found that all banks seem to be doing this. Fortunately we now have access to internet banking, which is cheaper.

When applying for grants we need up-to-date accounts. We should receive the 2024 accounts by the middle of March. Kathy wondered if we wanted Neha to do them, but felt (and this was agreed) that Daniel Royal from Gascoynes would be better, and on an official footing should we need an audit.

CCLA - It has taken numerous phone calls and another complaint to update our information. Having contacted them to open the new accounts we want, Kathy received 3 8 page application forms to complete. Once our new accounts are finally opened we can transfer Freda Ridgewell's legacy.

4. *Safeguarding*

Kathy gave a thought-provoking report, saying it was essential that all members of the PCC did the required training. Following the latest news about safeguarding, we need to be seen to be doing what is necessary.

Diocesan Safeguarding Training Strategy

All the PCC agreed to adopt this as our strategy. We need to have a copy where people can see it in the Church, with a note that the Holy Innocents PCC adopted it as our strategy on this date.

Kathy has one potential safeguarding issue at this time. It doesn't concern children, and she is taking advice on what she needs to do, if anything.

5. *Church Buildings*

Tim gave a clear and helpful report.

Toilet There has been little progress. The Church Architect has done a brief draft on how the toilet can be done. There isn't much argument about where everything is situated. For instance, we have got to have the water, the drainage flowing in one direction, and the plan is as good as we can get it. Environmental Health are involved, and they have two months leeway, and it could be six months down the line before we can get on with the installation. Tim went to the DAC and they were sympathetic to the plans. However we need to go through various stages – Environmental Health, the Architect, drainage personnel – the Diocese has only two inspecting architects, and everything takes a long time.

We could perhaps get quotes for other projects – the *downpipes* and the *pathways in the churchyard*. Anything we do has to wait for the Architect.

Grave Reservation Tim has had an application from Annie Wallace for the reservation of a grave space for herself. All the PCC members were happy for this to go ahead.

We need to do an *electrical test* for the Church and the Institute. Tim will arrange this with the people who did the Church test before.

6. *The Friends of Holy Innocents*

Fr. Ben read out the letter from Colin Tiffin, Chairman of the Friends, which had been circulated to the PCC. The Trustees are requesting the PCC's help in finding new Trustees as they only have four and these are in their eighties, and they want younger people to take over. If no-one can be found, it is likely that the charity will be dissolved on 31.3.25.

Fr. Ben has had a conversation with Colin, in which he said he would speak to the Congregation – and we ought to put a plea in The Messenger. And we could ask Amanda Jackson to put a plea in the Village Newsletter – the Trustees need not be Church members. Fr. Ben will write a letter (email) to Colin with all this, and he will ask people and send out emails, asking Colin if he can give Colin's email address.

10. *Electoral Roll*

Four people have died, so the Electoral Roll is down from 84 to 80.

11. *Minutes of the Last Meeting*

These were approved (proposed by Linda, seconded by Peter, all in favour)

12. *Date of Next Meeting*

This was arranged for Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 7 pm.

Fr. Ben closed the Meeting with prayer.