

**The Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Mere**  
**Meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on**  
**Thursday 17 June at 2pm in the Grove Buildings**

**1. Opening: Jean Knapp**

Jean opened the meeting with a prayer.

**2. Present:**

Jean Knapp (Chair), Hamish Bell, Judy Bickerstaff, Barry Clarke, Derek Fisher, Jane Hurd, Pat Isom, Christine Marsh, Isabel Page, John Page, Julia Rankin, Nicky Ravenhill (notes), Kit Stallard.

**Apologies:** Sherry Dixon, Lesley Traves, Richard Wilson.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting 6 June 2021:**

Last meeting minutes from 6 June 2021 were read as a true copy.

No matters arising.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes if not covered in agenda:**

None.

**5. Grove Building**

Derek updated the group that there is now a temporary website for the Grove Building which incorporates a calendar at [www.grovebuildingmere.org.uk](http://www.grovebuildingmere.org.uk) This site will be further enhanced over the next 2-3 weeks. Regular users have been contacted about re-booking, most of whom are returning. A thorough clean has now taken place, thanks to a small dedicated team. The United Reform Church is in the final stages of its' refurbishment and will be open very soon. Derek will continue to run the booking/finances for 2-3 months to set up systems and procedures, before looking for a more permanent individual. Derek proposed to continue with the current charging policy and revise charges on 1 January.

Derek will submit information to Mere Matters about the new website and the slow re-opening arrangements in line with government guidelines. Numbers are expected to be limited to 30 people with social distancing and wearing masks.

Judy advised the Grove Building has £1,692.23 in the bank.

Hamish proposed a vote of thanks for those who cleaned the Grove Buildings.

Seconded by all.

#### **4. Profile**

Barry advised that a small group of himself, Jean, Kit and Sherry had met and had divided the task into two – Kit to do Person Profile and Sherry to write the Parish Profile. Agreed date for next meeting of 1 July.

#### **5. Risk assessment**

Jean advised that the Risk Assessment written for the Church during Covid is in place for anyone who requires it.

#### **6. Proposed visit of Archdeacon Jeans**

Derek and Christine will unfortunately not be available on 6 July.

It was agreed that the PCC needed to agree a structure for the meeting with the Archdeacon. Derek has already proposed to set out the background to where we are now prior to the meeting so that precious time need not be wasted at the meeting. The three issues which the Archdeacon had raised on the Zoom meeting were around the Grove Building, The Friends Committee and Finances.

Discussion arose around the way forward, and a diversity of approaches and views were voiced:

- Jean recalled that during the Zoom meeting the Archdeacon had advised what we should be doing in the interim period ie the Parish Profile, but also that the parish didn't have enough money for a Priest – could we have clarification as to Diocesan backup?
- We need to present with a plan before the visit and before that we need true & accurate figure for deficit & accounts and to seek his agreement with these figures. Then agree a realistic 5 year recovery plan with a potential pause of one year, then 3 years to pay deficit. We need someone who will form relationships, become part of peripheral organisations, provide contact and leadership.
- We first need to see the Archdeacon to talk about what's wrong, then we will have far better picture. The PCC have been unable to address the issues and how is our chance. We need to show what we are capable of.
- Although a dire situation had been painted the Grove Building situation was making great progress, a member of PCC had stepped back to work with the Friends, leaving only the financial situation. It was not known whether if fees could be repaid the number of clergy could not be reduced. We are expecting the income from the Parish Giving Scheme (including gift aid) and have £27,000 in the bank. The Balance Sheet still needs to be seen.

- The congregation has been halved, this is where we find ourselves but we are willing and able to help and we want leadership, a pastoral leader in Mere – ask for Help.
- We need support and encouragement, not criticism.
- Although Mere's problems with poverty, the elderly, etc we have the best surgery, the potential Fives Court rescue, successful foodbank, successful work with families and schools, largest Mother's Union in the area to be proud of.
- We are a positive, keen, eager new PCC, will you show us right way to go to become vibrant again?

It was agreed that due to the diversity of opinions members should email Derek and Jean to express your view to enable them to compile with an impartial view. Responses to be submitted as soon as possible.

**Action:** Members to submit their views to Churchwardens as soon as possible, who will be in touch with you all next week.

Isabel proposed to offer the PCC's congratulations to the Archdeacon on his award of an MBE.

Seconded by Derek.

## 7. Diary dates/Events

Looking forward for dates in the diary: Harvest, Remembrance, Patronal Festival, Christmas, Platinum Jubilee (2022) potentially a flower festival, celebratory service, lots of music, investigate possibility of planting a large Royal tree in the churchyard. Jane offered to cover the Christmas Day service in Mere if needed. Christine is already booked for the Crib Service.

**Action:** Jean and Derek to draw up rota for September onwards

## 8. Music Department

Jane outlined the problem of securing organists for services with few available and many churches are relying on recorded music. We have list of those to play organ and Pat has agreed a list of services and names of organists but we need to accept there will be some services without. There is a need to have people who have knowledge of how to use the sound system in the church other than relying on Toby each time, although it was noted that Ben at Upper Stour would be able to help if necessary.

**Action:** Hamish to speak to Toby to get instructions on the use of the system.

Jane raised that the choir found it difficult to hear the recorded music from the sound system and suggested that when recorded music is played the choir sit in front pew by the organ or behind the font to be closer.

**Action:** Jane to attend choir practice to discuss.

Jane raised that she is keen to restart Songs of Praise four times a year and that Peter Mason had offered to play the organ for no fee.

**Agreed:** Jane to make arrangements when the congregation are able to join in again.

Jane advised that Tim Heaton had written versions of hymns which are difficult to sing to more widely known music which is easier for all to join in. Julia sang examples of Gloria to “Tell Out My Soul”, Sanctus to “Onwards Christian Soldiers” and Agnus Dei to “The Day Though Gavest” music.

**Agreed:** Jane to go ahead with this, Nicky to photocopy music.

Julia suggested that the original music could be preserved for festivals and special occasions.

## 9. **AOB**

Jane to check in Mere vestry for Maiden Bradley keys.

The Vicarage is to be let and is the responsibility of the Diocese.

Hamish advised that he was helping Nicky in setting up a Google group which will enable all to contact the PCC all together and email trails to be followed by all.

Kit advised that he was now a member of the Fabric committee.

Kit has located an individual who would be willing to act as Accountant for £500 per year.

Michael the rook has left the tower.

Kit asked if anyone can translate hymn tunes for 8 bells.

**Action:** Discuss with Jane.

Derek to let Kit have his safe key for use for 8am services.

Post-Covid rules on taking of communion are expected to be issued via Grapevine.

## 10. **Closing Prayer**

John ended the meeting with grace.

**11. Date of next PCC meeting:**

- 1 July Profile Group meeting - same time and place
- 6 July at 3pm in the Grove Building (with Arch Deacon)
- 22 July at 2pm in the Grove Building

Signature

Date