



January 27th 2021 PCC Meeting

Once again the PCC was convened entirely over Zoom on Wednesday 27th January. This is a summary of the matters considered by your Parochial Church Council once again ably chaired by the Rev'd Dr David Munchin.

The minutes of November's meeting were unanimously approved without question. There were no matters arising therefrom.

Under Financial Reports – almost before it began a question was raised noting that there was no mention of a contingency fund for St Michael's Church, Woolmer Green to cover unforeseen expenses although it was understood that one exists. The treasurer advised that while it is not specifically mentioned in the accounts there is indeed a reserve for emergencies at St Michael's included within the general unrestricted fund.

You may recall that in the summary of last November's PCC meeting (in the Dec 2020 / Jan 2021 edition of the Welwyn Magazine) reference was made to Mr Don Bell investigating suppliers of 'green' energy. We can now report that a contract has been entered into with E.ON Clean Energy for both gas and electricity for St Mary's, Church House and for gas only at St Michael's.

Peter McKay of Nicholsons Accountants, who has been examining (auditing) the church's accounts for about 15 years on a pro bono basis for which the PCC is very grateful, has merged with another firm of accountants and will not be able to provide his services free of charge in future. Therefore our new treasurer and the PCC will need to find someone to act as an independent examiner of the accounts this year. If you or anyone you know with suitable qualifications would be willing to undertake this role on a voluntary basis please contact the Team Rector or the Treasurer – contact details on the inside front cover of this magazine.

At the meeting the Treasurer reported that there are no significant changes to the church accounts since the last meeting in November.

With respect to the ongoing saga of updating the heating system at St Mary's (installing a new boiler, renovating the ground source heat pumps and all the associated work that goes along with those jobs) three tender responses were received by Stuart Jenkin (Church fabric officer) on the day of the meeting. Unfortunately these have come in at about double the original estimate and will be carefully scrutinised by a specialist consultant with the aim of reducing costs where possible, to ensure that nothing is being proposed over and above that essentially needed and that the most cost effective methods of work will be employed.

St. Michael's House – A contractor has been engaged to give the house a much needed makeover including a new kitchen and external doors. It is hoped that this will be completed by the end of March to allow for a clear twelve months let prior to the house being required for a new tenant* at the beginning of June 2022.

Back at St Mary's, their neighbours the Rose & Crown PH, have requested the agreement of the church to erect scaffolding in the churchyard to facilitate the conversion of their barn to a wedding venue. Whether that is for wedding ceremonies or wedding receptions wasn't made clear at the meeting! The PCC gave their agreement.

St Mary's Giving Action Group – The group raises funds throughout the year through various activities which they then distribute to several charities. Raising funds through group activities is thought to be a better way of involving members of the congregation than simply asking for donations and then disbursing cash. The church would like the congregation to feel involved.

However, last year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic of course, many of the usual fund raising activities could not take place. As a result the total funds collected by the end of the year fell well short of target. The PCC agreed to top up the group's 2020 shortfall and agreed that they should allocate the funds to the charities they were already supporting so that they were not disadvantaged by the inability of the GAG to raise their usual level of charitable donations.

The Rector informed the meeting that, following the departure of Dominic Holroyd-Thomas, the Diocese has offered a curate to the Welwyn team from June 2022. *Accordingly St Michael's House must be vacant and available by then.

With regard to improvements to St Mary's livestreaming it is pleasing to report that some excellent pledges of financial support have been received enabling the project to go ahead. A company has been identified to supply equipment, set it up and integrate it with and improve the existing audio system. It is envisaged that the new system will be able to be used for live-streaming weddings, funerals, baptisms and other events in church. This should provide some income.

Lent groups – By the time you read this the **Connect!** courses will be taking place across the Welwyn Team on-line. Details on the website at <https://www.welwyn.org.uk/lent>

Sheila Edmondson, a long-time supporter of St Mary's, has generously left a bequest to the church and, in addition, her family have offered a bench to go in the churchyard in memory of Sheila.

Under the heading of any other business a question was raised as to what activities are in place to counter the stresses being experienced by children resulting from schools being closed. The reply was that after a day spent being home schooled over Zoom the last thing children are interested in are further screen based activities and so there is almost no merit in making any such activities available during term time. Something will, however, be provided during half term week.

Joan Shelley informed the meeting of her achievement in walking 1,200 laps, a distance of 114 miles, of St Giles' churchyard, Codicote to raise money to buy PPE, masks and hand sanitisers for St Mary's. Joan completed her target of 1,200 laps during December and raised a total of £522.25 – an excellent achievement. Well done Joan.

If you haven't donated but would like to do so please either put a donation in a yellow envelope and leave it in the treasurer's pigeon hole at St Mary's or, preferably, online to 'Welwyn St Mary's Parochial Church Council' at Barclays a/c 60940194 sort code 20-92-54. In the latter case you are kindly requested to email treasurer@welwyn.org.uk enabling the treasurer to look out for your payment and ensure that it is received. Thank you.

David Hughes