



## St Mary's, Welwyn and St Michael's, Woolmer Green PCC Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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Once again, to the chairman's irritation, this meeting had to take place via Zoom only. Nevertheless the Rev'd Dr David Munchin hosted the meeting efficiently and with humour.

The meeting opened with a welcome and prayer as is customary. Apologies and absences were quickly dealt with. The chairman expressed his hope that this would be the last PCC meeting that had to be conducted exclusively via Zoom with meetings to resume in person with effect from the Standing Committee scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> July (Independence Day – is that just a coincidence?) followed by the next PCC meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Maggie Varco (Treasurer), Louise Hughes (PCC Secretary) and Susan Keach (Vice Chairman/Chairwoman/Chairperson/Chair – which do you prefer Sue?) were all appointed to office en bloc. The Standing Committee was reappointed unchanged and consists of The Rector, the churchwardens – Stuart Westley, Diane Jenkin and Sue Keach – Maggie Varco, Stuart Jenkin, Louise and David Hughes.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved without dissent and signed by David Munchin as an accurate record. (Another one to chalk up! Talk about patting yourself on the back.).

Under matters arising The Rector advised that the new and improved live-streaming equipment was already installed and in use thanks to the providers having had a cancellation (it wasn't due to have been installed until the end of May). There have been a few technical glitches along the way but these have been or are being resolved and the performance is much improved.

The bench that the late Sheila Edmondson's family kindly offered to donate in Sheila's memory has been delivered and installed. However it does not carry a plaque. David has undertaken to endeavour to contact Sheila's family to find out what they would like done about that but noted that this will not be easy as they do not live locally and are quite elderly. Failing a satisfactory outcome the PCC will be called upon to think of a suitable form of words and arrange for a plaque to be engraved and affixed.

David informed the meeting that the peregrine falcon nesting trays that were requested to be placed on St Mary's flag tower have been installed but probably too late for this year's breeding season.

Maggie Varco had circulated a summary of the financial position January-April 2021 prior to the meeting and gave a résumé of it. The position is sound so far this year.

Maggie went on to talk about claiming Gift Aid (which as you are no doubt aware is a tax incentive scheme in which Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs will pay 25 pence for every one Pound donated to charitable causes providing the giver has previously paid basic rate tax on the funds they donate.) But someone has to prepare and manage the claims for Gift Aid from HMRC on behalf of the organisation collecting charitable donations. At present this is managed on behalf of St Mary's church by Don Bell for which he uses dedicated software. We understand that he is the only person at St Mary's familiar with this software but wishes to relinquish the role. Maggie Varco wants it to be kept separate from her role as treasurer as it is an entirely different function, uses completely different, dedicated software, as well as to share the work and so that the knowledge of the software does not rest entirely in the hands (or head) of one person only. Applications to Maggie please ☺. Contact details on the inside front cover of this magazine.

In addition to the claiming of Gift Aid Maggie would very much welcome the assistance of someone or some people to help with the counting of cash received in Church collections from time to time. Plenty to do – please offer your support.

Turning to the fabric reports, St Michael's had nothing to report other than that they lead uninteresting lives in Woolmer Green. At least that's what they want us to think!

St Mary's new boiler is installed, commissioned and working well. Two out of the three ground source heat pumps have been reconditioned and are working but the third was found to be leaking coolant into the ground which is not good. Stuart Jenkin will request a quotation for tracing the leak and assessing whether it is possible to repair it but he strongly suspects that the leak will be inaccessible (deep underground or beneath the floor of Church House) and as such an uneconomic repair. In which case the quotation will be for the cost of extracting any remaining coolant and decommission this pump, which probably simply means turning off the electricity that powers it.

Stuart's next project will be getting the fire safety measures up-to-date which means fixing those emergency lights that are not working and replacing all the out-of-date smoke detectors.

Another matter that needs attending to is a further repair to the flag tower roof which is leaking again. Just as well the peregrines haven't taken up residence in the recently provided nesting trays this year as they would have been seriously disturbed while roof repairs are carried out. It was noted that had falcons been nesting it would have been interesting to see who came off worse, the falcons or the roofer!

David Munchin advised that promising discussions are taking place with a possible new recruit as curate although whoever it may be is not expected to take up the post until June next year.

Under the heading of Covid-19 David informed the meeting that following the relaxation of Government guidelines on May 17<sup>th</sup> meetings are now permitted indoors and refreshments may once again be served in Church House. Coffee is being offered after Sunday services. Masks, sanitising and social distancing remain in place.

On behalf of several people who have commented that they cannot hear the choir singing in the chancel Diane Jenkin asked when the choir might be allowed back in the choir stalls. The Rector said that he would discuss with the choir mistress when would be the appropriate time for their return to the choir stalls from the social distancing point of view. To comply with social distancing measures a few members of the congregation have been sitting in the choir stalls. They will have to relocate. As I write this I understand that this move has already taken place, albeit with only six members of the choir able to sit in their stalls – you don't need to be told why.

Appointments and resignations – sadly Jane Carr has said that she wishes to step down from writing the twice weekly email bulletins and keeping the church website up-to-date. This is a pity because a lot of people have relied on those bulletins to keep in touch with St Mary's during the past year-and-a-bit and Jane did a first class job of it. So, a person or persons is/are sought to take over this role. A fair degree of computer literacy is needed although help will be available to a willing member.

If anyone reading this would be interested in keeping up this important work please contact the Rector. Contact details on the inside front cover of this magazine.

There is also a need to think about Church communications more generally as they now include social media as well as the website and emails. Social media is such that even if you don't use it much it is fairly straightforward and would suit someone who, in a small team, would like to learn on the job.

If you think that you have read that last elsewhere you are quite right – plagiarism is alive and well! Just trying to spread the message farther and wider.

And finally – Housekeeping: It was noted that Church House cutlery was in a very regrettable state of (un)cleanliness. Thanks are due to Diane Jenkin for taking it home and dealing with the problem. It is thought that this situation may have arisen because some people think that the kitchen sterilizer also washes the cutlery. It doesn't! It simply sterilizes any food residue stuck to the cutlery. If you use cutlery in Church House, or tidy up after those who have, please be sure to wash it before putting it in the sterilizer.

*David Hughes*  
*May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021*