

 “Blessing our community in Jesus’ name for the transformation of us all.”

**Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Meeting**

**held at 6:00pm Wednesday 7th June 2023 at The Old Rectory and via Zoom**

The Five Marks of Mission

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The meeting opened in prayer at 6.05pm.

Prayers of thanksgiving were given for those present, for guidance, wisdom and support on the topics of discussion at the PCC a meeting, for those who were unable to attend the meeting, for those in the local community who attend church or who have drifted away from church, and for those who have turned their backs on God.

1. **Present**

Rev’d Paul Paterson (Chairman), Evelyn Izod (Vice-Chairman and Acting Secretary), Michael Sawyers (Treasurer), Sara Carter and Maureen Hunter.

1. **Apologies for absence**

 Jill Paterson, Chris Carr, Octavian Lazin and Hanneke Lazin

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting (held on 8th March 2023) and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (held on 14th April 2023) were unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record. (Proposed by Michael Sawyers and Seconded by Evelyn Izod).

1. **Matters Arising**

The grave markers which were purchased arrived in a pack of six and were duly placed in the appropriate places. One lady had enquired as to why a marker had not been placed on her reserved grave space, and was informed that as there were only six markers in a pack an order for a further pack was to be ordered.

Paul also thanked Sara for repairing the kneeler in church which had been chewed by mice.

Permission was granted for the Veterans’ bench to be placed in the churchyard, but had not been taken up, and the bench was placed in the grounds of the Community Centre instead. A short service of dedication was conducted by Reverend Edward Gorringe, who, prior to the service, had contacted Paul to ask if he was happy for him (Edward) to conduct the service. Paul had agreed and was very happy for Edward to do so. (Apparently rumours had circulated that the bench wasn’t put into the churchyard because “the vicar wouldn’t allow it”. Paul confirmed that this was not true and gave an account of the conversation he’d had with Ken and Barry relating to the placing of the bench).

1. **Mission**

Paul stated that it is important to keep this item on the PCC agenda even though it seems, at times, that we are not doing anything about it because we don’t currently have a mission committee, or a set of things specifically for mission. However, we are actually engaged in active mission by way of the coffee mornings, funerals and baptisms, which bring people into church who do not usually attend; an example of this being a baptism which was held on Sunday 28th May, where the church was packed. Paul also pointed out it is important that we, as individuals, are recognised as members of the church, and that if we give an account of our faith whenever possible, but speak gently, as St Peter urges us to do, and at least go about behaving in a proper manner encouraging people to engage with the work of the church.

With regards to mission Evelyn suggested we could have a Songs of Praise in church, where people could sponsor a hymn. The idea being that people choose a hymn they would like sung, give an account of why they have chosen the hymn, and pay a specified amount by way of sponsoring that hymn. It was thought we could possibly do this later in the year as a “Hymns & Pimms” service. Further discussion on this matter will take place at a later date.

1. **Safeguarding**
There have been no safeguarding issues to report.
Paul is updating his enhanced leadership safeguarding training during the next week. Although it was thought that safeguarding training is usually updated every three years, Evelyn and Chris last did the training on 12th May 2018, Mike completed his training in January this year, Jill and Maureen did their training in 2022, and Sara has not yet done the training as she was not available when the course was held. As nobody (other than Paul) had received notification of the need to update their training, Paul said that he would contact the diocese for advice.
2. **Continued service of Minister**
Paul has received an email from the Bishop’s Chaplain with regards to his continuing ministry. Clergy who are over the age of 70 can continue to hold a licence until the age of 75. Bishop Paul is very willing to allow Paul to continue to exercise his ministry under licence until he reaches the age of 75, rather than him move into the “Permission To Officiate” category.

This needed to be agreed by the PCC, which it was, unanimously, and a letter from Paul’s Doctor to testify his continued good health is also required. Once the Doctor’s letter and copies of the resolutions from the PCC have been received by the Bishop’s Chaplain, a direction for the Bishop to sign will be drawn up then sent to the Archdeacon, Area Dean and the Registrar, and placed in Paul’s personal file. Paul had previously asked the Bishop what exactly his office is and, whilst the Bishop had wanted Paul to be non-stipendiary Priest In Charge, however, once St Michael and all Angels became part of the benefice held in plurality with the two churches in Easington, technically the Reverend Lucy Moss became the Rector of Easington and Hawthorn, even though she has had no involvement with the church in Hawthorn. As the Bishop has not confirmed exactly what Paul’s office is, it was suggested we simply refer to Paul as Priest at St Michael and all Angels.

For regularity -

*‘In accordance with the Ecclesiastical Offices (Age Limits) Measure, this PCC agrees to the Bishop of Durham issuing a Direction permitting the Revd Paul Paterson to continue to hold office as Priest of St Michael and All Angels, Hawthorn until he reaches his 75th birthday.’*

Paul also reminded the PCC that Lucy is leaving Easington to move to another post, and her final service in Easington will be on 18th June.
St Mary’s church and the Church of the Ascension are having a joint service in St Mary’s on 18th June at 9.30am, and Paul suggested to the congregation at the Sunday service in St Michael’s that they also attended the service; this was agreed.

1. **Deanery Update**

There was nothing to report on this topic as the next Deanery Synod meeting does not take place until 10th July 2023. There has been a change of Deanery representatives for St Michael and All Angels since the APCM. Evelyn will continue as a representative, and Jill will replace Octavian. The Area Dean, Father Kyle McNeill, has been given the updated contact details of the Deanery representatives.

1. **Fabric and Finance**

Mike, prior to this meeting had emailed the PCC with a detailed financial update for the church. The incoming money has decreased quite a bit due to the reduced number of parishioners and regular giving. However, during May it was swelled by almost £300.00 due to two baptisms which were held in church.

 The church insurance premium has increased by £85.23 for the year 2023-2024 but covers the church for £3.3 million. Fees for two visiting clergy have been paid out, along with the money given by Ken and Pat Rowe for the East Durham Development Trust (Food Bank), and £20.00 continues to be paid out every three months towards providing ladies’ sanitary products for them.
Mike received a letter of apology from EonNext following his letter of complaint. All remedies specified by the Ombudsman have now been actioned by EonNext and they have applied a credit of £125.00 to the church’s account.

Mike has sent out emails with regards to finance and has also received a cheque for £74.00 from Easy Fundraising. The amount of interest on the money held on our behalf by the Diocese has started to rise again, and Paul suggested it might be worth looking at where we could put the money that we have in NS&I to get a better interest rate.

 With regard to the installation of solar panels, Mike has emailed Durham County Council planning Department to chase up his earlier pre-planning application but has not yet had a reply from them. There has been no further progress with regards to the new shed or path around the church. Ian Smith (local contractor) has roughly priced up the job, but has not come back to Mike with a commencement date to start the work. Mike will chase this up.
Payment for the use of the community centre for the coffee mornings stands at £10.00 per meeting. Initially people were invited to make a donation towards the coffee morning, which raised quite a lot of money but it was clear that they preferred to pay a fixed price instead. The income now is much less than it was previously, however, the opportunity to bring people together is beneficial to those who wouldn’t ordinarily have any company. Consequently, our coffee mornings are considered more as a community support project rather than a fundraising exercise.
 Mike is to get some updates on the price of solar panels before prices increase, as the church’s income is likely to decrease, and we need to utilise what capital we have to put us into a more efficient energy consumption position, as the solar panels will do, to cut our costs.
 A new fee structure for visiting clergy came into effect from 1st March 2023.  Mike wondered whether the money was supposed to come out of our funds, or whether we could reclaim the money from the Diocese. He will look into this.
 Mike attended a meeting, organised by Archdeacon Bob Cooper, at St Cuthbert’s Peterlee on 31st May 2023 with regards to graveyards. A cautionary tale was related whereby there have been issues in the past where the wrong bodies have been put into the wrong graves in certain graveyards (not at Hawthorn!) and so several churches are now using the app What 3 Words to prevent this from happening. They take photographs of the area with graves marked around about with headstones etc so they can get accurate records and catalogue reserved graves.
 Paul has received a renewal notice for the church copyright licence and the streaming licence which comes to a total of £91.00. Although the online services have stopped, we do occasionally play music in church, so that will be covered by the copyright licence. The payment for the licence is due by the end of June. The Deanery fees of £80.00 are also due, and Mike will prepare the two cheques to cover payment for both.

1. **Correspondence**

Hanneke continues to distribute any correspondence she receives.

1. **AOB**

The church is having a stall at the Community Centre craft event on 1st July 2023, and it was decided that we run a tombola stall. Paul has put a message on the church WhatsApp group asking for donations of prizes. Sara and Maureen are having a cake stall at the event, and Evelyn suggested selling some of Octavian’s coffee.
 The possibility of a garden party at The Old Rectory was mentioned at a previous meeting, whereby people bring their own food and drink. This may still go ahead, but a date has not yet been decided.

1. **Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th July 2023 at 6.00pm, either at The Old Rectory or via Zoom video conferencing or a hybrid of both.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm in love, harmony and prayer.