

**St Mary's and St James'
Parochial Church Council**

Date: 4 December 2023 (held by zoom link & in person)

Present at the Meeting:

Present

Fr Robert	Fr Ross	Nancy Jirira	Rah Carter
Patricia O'Sullivan	Carleen Larrington	Di Ashby	Maureen Smith
Tom Nielsen	Issabella Gyebi	Susan Slade	Funmi Akinbinu

Apologies

Laurel Hunte	Tom Rainbow	Nelissa Mendy
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Minutes of the last meeting (2 October)

Approved and signed off.

Sherriff Centre

All services are running well and Hullabaloo parties are booked until May 2024
Repairs have been necessary for toilet locks the glass doors. The hinge on the external wooden door needs to be repaired.

St James Hall: They hope to have weekend bookings by the second week in January.

The donation plate has now been moved to a more prominent position by the front doors.

Debt advice service also continues to be in high demand and is receiving excellent feedback from users.

Financials

Work for 42 Birchington Road to bring it up to HMO standard has cost c.£25k. This has impacted St Mary's finances considerably and it has, therefore, been necessary to advise the Diocese that we need to stop our Common Fund contributions . Arrears will be carried forward to next year, however at that time we can reduce our Common Fund pledge.

It has also transpired that an HMO is required for flats 1 and 2 at St James' House. Previously this was not considered necessary. Work will need to be done on the flats, particularly in relation to fire protection so additional costs will be incurred.

Finance & Fundraising Group (FFG)

St Mary's

There was concern regarding St Mary's finances as the money in the account is below what we should have as a buffer. This should improve now our Common Fund has stopped.

In the next few weeks, ideally before the year end, the Hall Committee will dissolve the company and the hall funds will be bequeathed to St Mary's PCC.

As an interim measure it was suggested that the designated funds which are reserved for building projects at St James' are undesignated to help with cash flow. This will be for a limited period of 12 months but would be reviewed at each PCC meeting. This was AGREED.

It was also AGREED that a formal agreement should be put in place which allows loans to be made to St Mary's from St James'.

A loan of £5,000 was made to St Mary's by St Mary's Community Hall to cover salaries. A retrospective agreement also needs to be put in place for this.

The FFG will produce a legally worded document covering the above.

Relationship with the Sherriff Centre

It was explained that the original agreement with the Sherriff Centre no longer describes the day-to-day usage by them and that there is a need for a new licence agreement.

Fr Ross and Jane have been discussing the usage of the building and the space currently used by them to help determine a rental fee. In addition to the church building, they also have two offices. The market cost for the offices was £12,500 and the Centre space was £75,000. To charge this amount would be detrimental to the centre so it may be that their rent is increased to an amount the centre can afford plus payment in kind which could include taking advantage of Jane's considerable fundraising skills. A small working group has been set up to work produce a final plan that can be presented to the PCC and the Sherriff Centre Trustees.

Fabric

St Mary's: No update.

St James': The hinge on the front wooden door is in need of repair. Fullers who are experienced with working on this type of door/hinge will be undertaking the work shortly.

Safeguarding

Nancy reported that we are doing well in respect of our equipment safety and DBS checks. Although it is not essential that all PCC members do the foundation training it would be preferable for everyone to do it. She suggested that this is done in a group session after a PCC meeting.

She also expressed concern regarding the safety of the vicarage following a recent incident. Fr Robert advised that the vicarage is the responsibility of the Diocese and that a grant application has been made for a large metal gate at the entrance to the area where leading to the hall and the parish room.

Youth Work

Youth work is going well. The numbers attending Sunday School have increased and they have now moved back to the upper hall. There have also been quite a few people coming to church that do to the drop-in sessions.

Music

Paul Carey, new Director of Music starts in January. There are plans to try and recruit a choir at St Mary's which will practice after church. An anonymous donation has been received for a music fund which can be used to pay for singers.

Vicar's Report

Fr Robert advised that Open Table will be reinstated. The leadership team will be Tom Rainbow, Rah Carter, Willow and Madeleine Barnett. It will be held on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Sacrament of healing will also be re-introduced on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

AOB

- a) The resolution re the installation of fitted screens for the post office was delegated to the Standing Committee as no pictures were available.
- b) Resolution was passed regarding the renewal of Rainbow Montessori lease at St James'. As part of the hall was built on church land, a faculty is required that names the LDF along with the PCC as the Lessors and the RMS as the Lessee.
- c) Blessing of same sex couples: Although same sex marriages are not allowed the church are proposing prayers to celebrate a civil marriage of a same sex couple within an existing service. An amendment has also been proposed which would mean that a separate standalone service could take place. Initially this would be within a trial period, but it was AGREED that when the experimental period is implemented the clergy of the parish can do such a service.

d) Alex Mace was APPROVED as PCC Representative as School Governor at St Mary's school. There are also two deanery school governor positions available which can be filled from within the parish. Nominations will be passed to Deanery Synod for agreement.

e) The EE upgrade request was APPROVED.

Signed

Chair

Actions from this meeting

Outstanding Actions from Previous meeting(s)

1.	Legally worded document to be produced in relation to loans between the churches/hall and undesignating funds from St James'	FFG
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