**PARISH OF ST PETER & ST PAUL TONBRIDGE**

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 7th JANUARY 2021**

**ON ZOOM AT 7.30 pm.**

**The pre-vacancy meeting.**

PRESENT: The Rev’d John Dunnett (CPAS); the Ven. Julie Conalty (Archdeacon of Tonbridge); the Rev’d. Miriam Barker (Area Dean); the Rev’d. Wendy Carr;David Balcombe; Jean Bowring; Brian Buck; Adam Calvert *(Churchwarden)*; Dianne Dartnell; Minnie Fraser-Allen; Steve Higgs; Robert Kidson; Jeremy King; Patricia King; Felicity Layton; Helen Longley; Sally Musson; Les Naylor *(Treasurer)*; David Robins *(PCC Secretary);* Mike Seaman; Maxine Smith;Paul White *(Churchwarden)*.

1. WELCOME

Adam Calvert welcomed John Dunnett, Julie Conalty and Miriam Barker and members of the PCC and opened in prayer.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ray Tanner

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS.

John Dunnett (General Director of the Church Pastoral Aid Society) introduced himself to the meeting. Julie Conalty, as Archdeacon of Tonbridge, said she represented the Bishop of Rochester in the appointment process, and Miriam Barker, as Area Dean of Tonbridge, would become Priest-in-charge of the Parish during the interregnum.

John introduced the process of filling a vacancy in a parish. He used the CPAS brochure ‘Choosing a new Vicar’, which had been emailed to PCC members before Christmas, to outline the steps in the process and explain what the responsibilities of the Parish were.

4. DIOCESAN PERSPECTIVE.

Julie Conalty said that the Diocese considered a Parish’s key indicators when deciding whether to fill a vacancy. The only one of ours about which she expressed a little concern was the financial position, on the basis that we were not budgeting to give the full amount of the Diocesan Pledge in 2021. She also said that, during a vacancy, a parish may retain fees which would normally go to the Diocese. These should be kept in a sequestration account and used to pay visiting clergy expenses and work on the Vicarage.

She noted that the parish presented an exciting and significant prospect to candidates, with possibilities for collaborative ministry in the town. She had already received 2 preliminary enquiries from potential applicants.

5. DEANERY PERSPECTIVE.

Miriam Barker echoed Julie’s comments about collaborative ministry in the town and across the Deanery. She promised that she would pray with us, and was looking forward to being kept informed and offering help when needed.

6. DISCUSSION.

John Dunnett invited questions from the PCC for discussion. The following matters were covered:

(i) Parish representatives. Several points emerged in discussion. The Representatives would normally be restricted to 2 in number, particularly as we are one parish. We were encouraged to aim for diversity in terms of gender and congregations represented. A non-PCC member could be co-opted as a PCC member if chosen as a Representative. Once appointed, authority was delegated to the Representatives and they would have a duty of confidentiality as regards names of applicants and shortlisted names.

(ii) Parish Profile. The Archdeacon advised that we should bear the Diocesan Vision in mind as the profile is created. The CPAS brochure has full advice on the composition and style of the profile. She encouraged the parish to consult her and Miriam during the profile creation process for advice.

(iii) Advertising. CPAS recommends the use of the Church Times as the best vehicle. Although it is initially expensive, re-advertising following a failure to appoint is free of charge. Significant thought should be given to the wording of the advert as it can draw potential applicants in to search further. John Dunnett expressed reservations about the use of the Church of England’s ‘Pathways’ recruitment website as it had been found to be difficult in practice.

(iv) Familiarisation and Interviews. In the current lockdown much work can be done using zoom, but it is hoped that face-to-face interviews will be easier after Easter when our process is likely to have reached that stage.

(v) The Vicarage. David Balcombe and Ray Tanner are in touch with the Diocesan Surveyor to arrange an inspection of the Vicarage. The incoming Vicar will receive some expenses for redecoration from the Diocese, but any improvements will be at the PCC’s expense. Paul White has contacted the Diocese for its views on future development of some of the land on the site.

(v) Timetable. John Dunnett offered three alternative timetables for the process. The first required the Profile to be written by the end of January; the third ended late in the year, but the second (Goldilocks) option suggested interviews in June. This timetable would potentially enable a candidate with school-age children to be in post by the new school year.

7. John Dunnett closed the meeting by reading James Ch 1 v 5 and prayer: *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given you*.