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

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2021**

**FOLLOWING THE APCM**

PRESENT: David Balcombe; Jean Bowring; Adam Calvert *(Churchwarden)*; the Rev’d. Wendy Carr; Dianne Dartnell; David Farquharson, Jeremy King; Patricia King; Susan Knight; Helen Longley; Alison Minton; Sally Musson; David Robins; Ray Tanner;Paul White *(Churchwarden)*.

Adam Calvert in the chair.

1. Apologies for absence: Brian Buck, Steve Higgs, Robert Kidson, Felicity Layton

2. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN

Until such time as a Vicar was appointed, the chairmanship would continue to rotate between the churchwardens and the associate Vicar.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMEN

Until such time as a Vicar was appointed, the same arrangement as above would apply to the vice chairmen.

4. ELECTIONS.

The following were nominated for posts in the PCC:

(i) TREASURER: Ray Tanner, proposed by Alison Minton, seconded by David Balcombe.

(ii) HONORARY PCC SECRETARY: David Robins, proposed by Paul White, seconded by Adam Calvert.

(iii) ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER: Diane Thorpe, proposed by Alison Minton, seconded by Jeremy King.

(iv) MISSION ACTION GROUP CHAIRMAN: Paul White, proposed by Patricia King, seconded by Dianne Dartnell.

These nominees were elected unanimously.

5. There were no additional co-options.

6. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH DISCLOSURE OFFICER.

This was deferred until the next PCC meeting on Monday 12 July 2021.

7. COMPOPSITION OF THE STANDIING COMMITTEE.

It was agreed that this would remain the same as at present for the duration of the vacancy: associate Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary, David Balcombe, Patricia King and Sally Musson.

8. PCC COMMISSIONING SERVICE.

It was proposed and agreed that this would take place during the 10 am service on Sunday 13 June 2021.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

The Vicarage: the text of a letter from the churchwardens, David Balcombe and Ray Tanner had been agreed in advance by email and would be signed and despatched. (Annexe)

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on Monday 12 July 2021 at 8.00 pm.

Adam Calvert closed the meeting at 9.21 pm.

**ANNEXE: LETTER TO PROPERTY DIRECT, ROCHESTER DIOCESE:**

Mr S Hoad

Property Director

Diocese of Rochester

St Nicholas Church

Boley Hill

Rochester

ME1 1SL

27 May 2021

Dear Stephen

St Peter & St Paul Tonbridge – Vicarage

Thank you for your email of 19th May 2021, responding to Ray Tanner’s request for further information on the arrangements for the vicarage.

**Marker pegs for the driveway to the proposed new house**

These pegs have been set out in the correct locations to show the route of the driveway as indicated on the drawing submitted to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) in 2009 for planning approval of the proposed new house. The drawing in question is Ibbett Mosely 0910-SK07 dated Dec 08.

Therefore, we do not agree with the locations of the pegs that you have proposed which represent a change to the original plans discussed with the parish 14 years ago and to the approvals already granted by TMBC. More significantly, such a change would cause a further reduction in the size of the residual vicarage garden and the car park. Our thoughts on the implications of such a change and the proposals in general are set out below.

**Alterations to the vicarage**

The original proposals discussed with the parish in 2008 included alterations to the vicarage building itself comprising an extension and garage. We note that it is the Diocese’s intention to re-draw proposals for these alterations as shown on Molyneux Architects’ drawing No. 258/P/003 & 004 and that the rationale behind those changes is to reduce the costs of carrying out this work.

We also note that these amended proposals would require renewed planning approval from TMBC.

More importantly, however, the revised alterations vary materially from the proposals discussed 14 years ago and as such, we feel very strongly that the whole concept should be reviewed to identify an alternative way forward.

**Potential alternative proposals**

The parish has proposed a number of alternative suggestions that have yet to be properly evaluated. For completeness, the alternative suggestions are as follows:

1. That the Diocese considers a private sale of the land set aside for the building of the new house to a neighbouring landowner who is keen to prevent building on the land.
2. That the existing Coach House office building is improved in preference to extending the vicarage.
3. That rather than the transfer of the car park and Coach House to glebe, long term arrangements are made for the parish to use them.

**Implications for the parish**

Parking

Outside its main role as a place of worship, the parish church is a civic hub which in pre-covid times served as a venue for events and meetings of up to 20 groups on a regular basis. A number of attendees to such events have mobility issues and the availability of car parking in close proximity to the church has been a valuable amenity. Such parking has also been an amenity to those family members with mobility issues who are attending church services linked to life events – baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We understand that the original plans from 2008 resulted in a reduction to the size of the car park. The revised layout for the driveway and the possibility of the residual car park being transferred to glebe may reduce further or remove this amenity entirely.

The Coach House

This office building already provides a suitable study for the vicar away from any family in the Vicarage and a workspace for the vicar’s PA and the parish bookkeeper. A new study in the Vicarage would have limited utility in comparison to current arrangements.

As an employer, the parish has an obligation to provide appropriate workspaces for its employees. There is no compliant accommodation within St Peter & St Paul which could be used by the PA and the bookkeeper. Consequently, we feel it is essential that there should be a high degree of certainty over the parish’s continuing ability to use this building.

**Conclusion**

We understand that the Diocese is obliged to address its operating budget and that there are fiduciary responsibilities relating to the sale of assets. However, while we accept that disposal of part of the vicarage garden is inevitable, we feel that the proposals that you have currently formulated will achieve a limited financial benefit for the Diocese at the cost of impairing the effectiveness of the parish in its mission.

These issues have been discussed with the PCC, and we are agreed in recommending that a full re-evaluation is needed to identify the best way forward.

Yours sincerely

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| Adam Calvert | Paul White |
| Church Warden | Church Warden |
|  |  |
| David Balcombe | Ray Tanner |
| Deputy Warden | Treasurer |

CC The Bishop of Rochester

The Bishop of Tonbridge

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge

The Area Dean of Tonbridge

CPAS

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