

Minutes of the Church Meeting at Goring URC  
Saturday 30th September 2023 at 10.30 in the Church.

Welcome: Val G

Devotions: Val G: Visions for the future of our Church.

Those present: 21 Apologies 5

Minutes of meeting amended, agreed and signed by Val G

Matters arising:

Safeguarding Training:

Safeguarding report for Church Meeting 30/09/2023 from Mary Redman

- Rosemary Terry has stepped down as Safeguarding Lead. I am still working as Deputy, filling in where I can, but the post for Lead is vacant and I will not be applying for the job. Application details will be out soon, but the role description is available from Val G today if anyone would like to find out more.
- Rosemary and I have finished filing all the legal and confidential files and organizing the new filing cabinet.
- Safer Recruitment has begun in earnest. Mini Fishes have recruited Lesley Wake as Leader, and myself as a volunteer. Tuesday Fellowship have recruited Wilf Rhodes and Christina Shearer as Leaders. The paperwork is mostly complete and filed now. I am focusing on safely recruiting to all new positions, as they occur. If you need volunteers for any role, please check with me before placing a note in Welcome.
- Thank you to the 16 people who have signed up for one of the two Safeguarding Training sessions being held later this year. If you have not been contacted, it's either because you are up to date, or you are not required to take part for the role you hold. However, all are welcome, so if you would like to come and join us, please let me know. The dates are Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November in the evening, or Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December in the morning.
- Mini Fishes desperately need more volunteers. It is not safe to run with less than 3, preferably 4 people on site. Although I have volunteered my time for this term, I am having to turn down paid work to do this, and so can only do it as a stop gap. We need one full-time helper and a core group of people who don't mind being called on to step in for an occasional week to cover absence. There are 40 families on the register who we serve, with 25ish coming each week, making this our most vital and valuable outreach project. So please prayerfully consider if you are able to help.

Church Family News:

- Hilary updated the meeting with the news of the fellowship and the meeting stood for prayer following the death of our friend and long term member Daphne Eames.

Elders time:

- Ryan showed slides of a possible new Mission Statement following the Elders meeting with Rev Andy Twilley
- The meeting was regarding taking our church into the future after Andrews retirement.
- The meeting was based on following what he called the 3 C's - Christ - Church - and Community. The Elders separated into 2's and discussed the words and what each group thought about how we see our church going forward using the 3 C's and how to bring the church closer, sharing our love and the love of God.
- This unexpectedly came up with a new Mission Statement to take to the Church Meeting. It was felt it was brief but to the point.
- It was reported that we are still waiting for our Visionary Companion to help through this time in our Churches Life.
- Val G asked for any questions and thoughts: One thought was Jesus was not mentioned only God. Then much discussion took place and became heated. It was felt that there is a large gap between the Elders and the fellowship.
- VG said that the Mission Statement was for us as a church to build on, the beginning of our journey not a fait accompli.
- One suggestion was to discuss the possible new Mission Statement with the congregation, it was mentioned that half the congregation was at the meeting therefore things can be agreed. It was also mentioned that the whole congregation never comes to the Church Meetings.
- For information," it was the Elders with the Minister who wrote the last Mission Statement" was the response when Val G asked the question. She stated she has great confidence in Rev Andy Twilley and feels there is a lack of confidence in the appointed Eldership.
- It was suggested that the Church Meeting goes back to once a month to ensure better communication. This was voted on and Agreed.
- Matthew Smith added that things have been very difficult for the Serving Elders as they are temporary leaders in the service of the church and in light of no Minister or Visionary Companion and it's going to be a long process to move forward and if infighting starts we will not be able to move forward.
- It was stated that the Elders were not being criticised and it was felt that the new monthly meetings will help. Also it was stated that the Elders should be supported in prayer. Which could be done on Sunday mornings.

#### Notices and Correspondence:

- The job of the greetings cards needs a volunteer in the light of the sad death of Daphne, Rosina has volunteered on a temporary basis.
- A volunteer is needed to sort the flowers ready to give out after the Sunday service Hilary will still give out the list of who should have them.
- Heartfelt thanks were given to Graham Redman for all the work he has done in editing and writing the Chronicle Magazine over many years.

#### Surrey and Sussex Synod Meeting:

- See Appendix 2.

#### Outreach:

- Barn Dance on 16th September was successful, it made a small loss of £14.

- The afternoon Service and Tea was also successful.
- Mini Fishes is in need of support.
- Next Coffee morning 9th November in aid of 'Safe in Sussex'.
- The last coffee morning made £84 for MacMillan Nurses.
- Next meeting Tuesday 3rd October.

Property:

- Paul Redman spoke first and reported that the broken window in the East transept will be repaired in the coming week
- The Health and Safety rules and details is out of date and the Property Group will update it.
- The Kitchen hatch is in need of repair and the property Group are dealing with it; deciding what to do, and to get done as soon as possible.

Property, Hall Lettings and Finance: See Appenix 3.

- Roger Wylde made a point of thanking Matthew for all the hard work he has done for the church with the Manse and everything else he does as treasurer.

Meeting Ended at approximate 11.45am in prayer and Val G repeated her prayer from our devotions at the beginning of the meeting.

Next Meeting Saturday 4th November 2023 at 10.30 the first monthly meeting.

.....signed by Val

Gill,

Church Secretary 04.11.2023

## APPENDIX 1

### Church Meeting Report 30 September 2023 - Admin/Finance & Hall Letting

The next Finance meeting is scheduled for November. Unfortunately for the team, along with Elders and Property, I'm afraid they haven't been idle, having been bombarded with emails, partly to fulfil the undertaking to pass decision making on the manse letting front through the Elders but on other fronts as well.

#### **Manse update**

Firstly, can I apologise for a typo in my report to the July meeting. The fully managed letting service was offered at 7% +VAT (not 6% + VAT) + an initial £250 set up fee. I do hope and believe that I reported the correct figures in my verbal report. 7% was in fact previously approved by Elders.

All the necessary works have been completed and the new Tenants are moving in today.

A rental figure of £2.3K per month was achieved, with upfront costs totalling £7,418, meaning it will take 4 months to recoup the initial expenditure.

After provision for other expenditure during the year, which will come out of monthly rental income, I estimate approximately £2.1K net income for the remainder of the tenancy, with the first payment due to arrive next week.

Turning to the Church Buildings

#### **Choir Vestry Roof & Cornwall Room parapet wall**

The necessary works have been completed by Premier Building Consultants as approved at the July meeting as have the pointing works by Ace Wall Ties.

### **Vestibule Roof and Front Window**

We are still waiting for meaningful feedback on the option to replace the existing Sanctuary window frames with Aluminium. However, it has become clear that further expert advice is necessary to determine our best option. There is no prospect of taking matters to the Synod Grants and Loans Committee when they next meet in October. The committee meets quarterly and we will aim to progress things as quickly as is feasible.

### **Printer**

The new printer is now in place.

### **Investments**

After doing my "math" I was able to transfer £30K to the Synods cash deposit account. I will of course be monitoring our bank balances closely over the coming months.

I have yet to consider an investment strategy for the future but aim to do this in time for the November Finance Meeting/November CM.

### **M&M**

I have received the annual M&M letter from Synod, in which we are asked to agree a 6.35% increase for 2024. I'm afraid I decided to challenge this increase – the first time in all my years as treasurer.

#### **Read email response**

Unfortunately, I have not yet received a reply – I suspect the Synod Area treasurer is on holiday.

I am not necessarily advocating rejection of the increase. However, we need a clearer understanding. My email to Synod was issued solely on the principles involved as I currently see them.

We need to bear in mind the very significant covid correction, which greatly benefitted the Church (sorry I cannot quite lay my hands on the details at this time). Also we will be benefitting to a great extent from the rental of the Manse in 2024. In short it is not at present a question of affordability on our part.

Rather than issue a flat refusal I suggest this needs more informed/detailed consideration once we have all the facts. To this end I would seek CM approval either for

- delegation of the decision to Elders with feedback at the November CM, or
- deferment until November CM

In the meantime, it is only right and proper to gauge "feelings" on the matter.

### **Questions**

In light of the earlier decision to revert to monthly church meetings it was agreed to defer to the next meeting on 4 November

### **Hall Lettings**

The new Licences to occupy for 23/24 are out for signature and the process will hopefully be completed soon.

Wilma has a hall letting enquiry which has prompted a revisit to our current hall letting rates policy.

As you are aware we currently stick rigidly to the set rates for each hall, while operating a reduced rate for part bookings where both halls are booked – the discount is £5 per hour – this was a pragmatic policy decision based on the fact that we would rarely, if ever, book 2 parties in adjacent halls at the same time.

The new hall hire enquiry is from a musical theatre “academy”.

They have confirmed that they wish to book Monday evenings 6.30 to 7.15 term time from 30 October = approx. £420 pa

They would also like to book Wednesday evenings 4.00 to 5.30 term time - both halls (splitting dance and singing groups – and rotating them between the halls). The sticking point here is affordability. If we insist on charging full rate £13 + £14 per hour we risk losing a potentially valuable addition to our booking portfolio.

We therefore propose applying the same £5 discount as for party bookings where both halls are booked by the same hirer.

If accepted by this hirer new this could generate a further £1,320 approx p.a. – overall £1,740 p.a. This would be a take it or leave it offer – as a matter of principle we would resist negotiations beyond this concession.

We would of course extend the same terms to other hirers where appropriate. At present only Worthing Musical Theatre would be affected and then only occasionally – minimal consequential loss of income from that source.

**Approved** - I will arrange for the rates to be updated on the Website

App2

**Note of meeting of Sussex and Surrey Synod Area meeting  
Crawley URC  
Saturday 23 September 2023**

Unfortunately as a result of a train cancellation I missed the opening of this meeting arriving part way through the opening devotions.

During this time the Chair in talking about church plans recommended the Methodist book, "Our Church's Future", for those churches planning ahead, or in a time of vacancy. She ended the devotions by saying "Keep eyes on Jesus. He will give us focus".

The rest of the meeting was slightly hampered by the failure of documentation, including the Agenda, to reach many of the attendees.

John Bunker, Pastoral Committee Covenor, dealt swiftly with pastoral matters. John made the suggestion that churches should come together to discuss future plans, as was happening in the Reigate Park and Horsham areas. We should concentrate on the things we do well. Churches should use the training resources available through Synod. SaSSA was an under-ministered Area. There had been 30 ministers 4 years ago. Now there were only 4½ with 12 vacancies in the Area. Visionary Companions for churches with a Vacancy are initially available for 12 months.

*Brain  
matters*

John then delivered the Finance Report. The letters to churches giving details of details of the proposed M&M contribution for the year 2024 had been sent out. Any church finding it difficult to raise the proposed figure should contact Synod. Once again he made a plea for churches to send any outstanding annual accounts to Catherine Kingdom as soon as possible.

Next the newly appointed Synod Clerk, Martin Hayward, took the stand. He emphasised that Synod is willing to take sensible risks, preferring to call them opportunities. He said that one way of providing outreach was to identify and concentrate on specific communities in certain areas, such as the Koreans in and around New Malden or the 26,000 strong LGBTQ community in Brighton. This latter topic was the subject of the discussion papers which had not reached all the attendees. Martin also stressed the importance of encouraging people to become lay preachers. He concluded by recommending attending a free talk at Reigate Park Church, one of the North Downs Cluster of Churches, on 31 October at 2.30pm. Those interested should contact Wendy Hopkins on wendy\_hopkins@ntlworld.com or 07855 233770.

The only items under any other business were a plea for people to step forward as Property Manager for SsSSA and Minute taker and the proposals for future meetings. Having agreed that face to face meetings gave people the chance to put faces to names and discuss matters of mutual interest the dates for meetings in 2024 were provisionally fixed for 17 February, 15 June and 21 September at Crawley URC.

The meeting closed with a prayer and a shared grace just before midday.

Giles  
G N Wilson Synod Together Representative  
24:09:2023