

# St Mary Magdalen Ipswich - Finance Committee Minutes

*Meeting held in the Guild Room on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018*

## 1. Present

Declan Moore, Teresa Rose, Andrew Ford, John Anderson-Hurst and Chris Croker.

## 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Fr. Mathew

## 3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were approved and signed.

## 4. Matters Arising

### General Data Protection Regulations

The Guild Room cupboard is now kept locked and spare keys have been provided to those who need them. Andrew has compiled a list of all records stored in the presbytery loft and their location. Chris has removed some of the boxes and is compiling files of correspondence relating to church and hall construction and plans. Other records need to be checked for retention or disposal.

It was agreed that we should ask Fr. Mathew to consider scanning records of baptisms, weddings etc. from the beginning of 2019 as well as retaining paper copies.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

### (a) Outturn to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

John presented the figures for the third quarter which showed a surplus for the year to date of £6286.21 and a cash at bank balance of £28896.07 offset by an overdraft with the Diocese of £9357.91 to give a nett £19538.16.

At this stage the year end surplus is forecast to be in the order of £4-£5k.

John reported that due to continuing ill health he would like to step down as treasurer at the end of the financial year and it was agreed to commence the search for a replacement. In the meantime Chris has assumed responsibility for weekly banking of the collection and other cash income.

## 6. Offertory Collection

It was noted that the main offertory collection has reduced gradually over the last couple of years and it was agreed that we need to make an appeal to parishioners to

(a) review whether they are in a position to increase their offering, especially if it has remained at the same level for some time, and (b) if they are a UK taxpayer to consider signing up to the Gift Aid scheme which effectively increases their contribution by 25% at no extra cost to themselves.

Declan volunteered to liaise with Teresa and make an appeal once the final figures for 2018 were known. A graph illustrating the decline in the collection will be posted in the Narthex at the same time.

It was also agreed that subject to Fr. Mathew's consent second collections for church maintenance should be reinstated in 2019 and that if any second collection was eligible for Gift Aid then it should be announced in the newsletter a week in advance of the collection so that those parishioners with Gift Aid envelopes are made aware and can come suitably prepared.

Finally it was noted that the second collection for Home Missions at the beginning of September was unfortunately combined with the main collection and so it was agreed to make a donation of £100 from parish funds to cover the appeal.

## **7. Alive In Faith/Organ**

A summary was presented showing AIF receipts to date from the Diocese of £11,422 which after payments for the organ of £18,114 leaves a balance of £6692 still owing. This debt will be serviced by future AIF receipts.

It was agreed that whilst in retrospect the purchase of the organ using AIF funds had turned out to be a wise decision we do need to review how best to control the volume as at times it can be far too loud.

The organ is only currently used at 10.00am mass on Sundays and there was discussion about the possibility of having it played at, say, the beginning and the end of the 8.00am and 6.00pm masses. This possibility to be explored along with the reintroduction of hymn books.

## **8. Insurance**

An annual schedule of insurance was circulated showing the existing cover for Parish buildings and contents. It was noted that there was currently no insurance cover for loss of rental income from the hall should it become unusable for any reason.

We also need to check (a) what the safe limits are and (b) whether there is insurance cover for cash in transit

Chris to contact the Diocese and also compile an inventory of church contents to ensure the current insurance cover of £112,000 is still representative.

## **9. Church Hall & Car Park**

Since the last meeting a valuation of £400,000 - £425,000 has been obtained from David Brown & Co for the hall and car park site. This figure was based on what could be achieved if we pursued a joint approach with the owner of 2a Highfield Approach which is currently up for sale for residential development.

With our agreement the architect owner of 2a Highfield Approach has produced a plan showing how a joint development of the two sites could look involving the construction of 9 No. 2 bedroomed terraced houses and a 1 bedroom flat along the frontage of the combined sites with sufficient car parking at the rear to satisfy Suffolk County Council parking requirements. This was as opposed to the currently approved construction of 4 No. 2 bedroomed terraced houses with minimal car parking provision on the site of 2a.

It was however felt that the balance of benefits from this proposal were not sufficiently enough weighed in our favour and therefore this proposal has for the time being left on the drawing board whilst our efforts are concentrated on putting together a suitable design for replacement facilities in the grounds of the presbytery and church.

Andrew has done a considerable amount of work since the last meeting towards this goal and presented the committee with a draft plan with of how we could redevelop the site that the church and presbytery currently stand on to accommodate an adjoining hall with sufficient car parking. The plan incorporates relocation of the Sacristy and confessional to the altar end of the church and opening up the Narthex to enable seamless flow through to the new hall with access to a redeveloped Guild room toilet/kitchenette block with facilities for the disabled.

At the moment all of the above work is part of our feasibility studies to determine whether selling the existing hall & car park site and using the funds to construct replacement facilities in the church and presbytery grounds is definitely worth pursuing.

Once this has been established to the satisfaction of the committee a draft proposal will be submitted to the Diocesan Finance Committee for their opinion.

If we are given the green light to explore further then parish consultation will follow. In the meantime the committee agreed to allocate an initial budget of £5,000 for professional fees to assist with continuation of the feasibility work.

## **12. Other Property Matters**

### **(a) Hall**

#### Management

Since the last meeting Laura Krolik has unfortunately had to step down as Hall Manager and we are currently seeking a replacement.

Patricia Tallent has kindly volunteered to assist until a permanent solution for managing the hall can be found. We also need to make an appeal for volunteers to join a rota for cleaning the hall.

#### Work carried out since the last meeting

New high capacity toilet roll dispensers have been installed in both the ladies and gents toilets to reduce the need for weekly replenishment.

#### Future work required

- The entrance hall and toilet block to be redecorated.

There is considerable investment required to bring the hall up to modern day standards but until its long term future has been decided it was agreed that only minimum maintenance should be carried out to satisfy operational and health & safety requirements.

### **(b) Church**

#### Acoustics

A report has been received from acoustic consultants Ecosorba, the report was commissioned by Michael Long following complaints about the poor sound quality in the church. The consultants recommended that acoustic absorption panels be fitted to the ceiling in order to control excessive sound reverberation at a total cost of £7727.

The report was discussed but it was agreed that no further action should be taken at this stage until we can be completely satisfied that this approach would solve the acoustics problem which seems to vary according to whoever is speaking. Further discussion centred around the sound system and that we need to check the efficiency of the lectern microphone and also whether the speakers were powerful enough. It was agreed to ask Michael to arrange a test with some members of the committee and a few parishioners.

#### Lighting

The main church lighting improvement project has yet to be launched but in the interim Michael has investigated a replacement for the 14 existing halogen floodlights with slimline LED equivalents. This will reduce both running costs and the health & safety risks associated with lamp replacement.

It was agreed that we should initially install 2 units at a cost of just over £100 to

assess them for effectiveness and appearance before deciding whether or not to replace the remainder.

Work carried out since the last meeting

- A drop down seat has been installed in the confessional.
- 2 cracked window panes have been replaced. (Both tasks with assistance from our colleagues at Hollesley Bay)

Future work required:-

- The church floor to be industrially cleaned, polished and sealed.
- The notice board near the entrance to the church drive to be refurbished.
- Gutters and downpipes to be checked and cleared where necessary.
- A sub committee to be set up to produce a proposal for improving the current church lighting arrangements.

**(c) Presbytery**

Work carried out since the last meeting:-

- 3 quotations have been received for replacing the study French doors and side windows and the kitchenette window with laminated and double glazed uPVC units to improve security. The windows have all been broken in the past to gain access, most recently in January and the French doors are also vulnerable as well as not being draught proof.  
A quotation of £2513 has been accepted from Falcon Windows Ltd of Ipswich and the units are due to be fitted before Christmas.

Future work required:-

- Broken leaded light panel in the hall doorway to be replaced.
- Main garage to be repainted and guttering repaired
- Door mechanism to be repaired on the small garage
- Gutters and downpipes to be checked and cleared where necessary.

**(d) Grounds**

Work carried out since the last meeting:-

- Using resource from Hollesley Bay the driveway entrance has been finished off and part of the wall rebuilt following damage by unknown person(s).
- An estate hedge cutting and ground clearance exercise was recently organised. Thanks go to all who volunteered.

### **13. Any Other Business**

- Barclays Bank “Know Your Customer” return to be completed.
- Our main contact at Hollesley Bay open prison has been in touch to say that he is moving back to the North-East in February. Hollesley Bay have assisted us enormously over the past few years with providing skilled resource for various building and decorating projects and we need to ensure continuity of our relationship with whoever is taking over as Governor. Declan has agreed to assist if required.

### **14. Date of next meeting**

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 10.15a.m. in the Guildroom

***Minutes approved at the Finance Committee Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019***

Signed:

Chris Croker - Finance Committee Chairman