

St Mary Magdalen Ipswich - Finance Committee Minutes

Meeting held in the Guildroom on Thursday 12th July 2018

1. Present

Fr. Mathew George, Teresa Rose, Andrew Ford, John Anderson-Hurst and Chris Croker.

2. Welcome and apologies for absence

John Anderson-Hurst was welcomed to his first meeting as treasurer and apologies for absence were received from Declan Moore.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd February 2018 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

Treasurer & Hall Management Positions

Since the last meeting we are fortunate to have filled both positions, with John Anderson-Hurst volunteering to take on the role of Treasurer and Laura Krolik as hall manager. We need to ensure they are both properly supported in these important roles.

Teresa was thanked by the committee for all of her valuable work as Treasurer over the last few years. Teresa will continue to act as our Gift Aid officer.

5. Treasurer's Report

(a) Outturn to 31st March 2018

John presented the figures for the first quarter which showed a break-even position. The half year figures will be made available once all the bank statements have been received.

(b) Forecast

Andrew volunteered to produce a quarterly forecast for the year which will also act as our annual budget.

(c) Accounts Format

The pros and cons of the current accounting software were discussed and it was agreed that in future it would be simpler to maintain income and expenditure records on an Excel spreadsheet, which John agreed to devise.

6. Gift Aid

Teresa reported that the 2017/18 Gift Aid claim had been submitted to the Diocese and £4654.50 had been received. This is £450 less than the previous year, which was higher largely due to an increase in donations on which tax was claimable.

The number of parishioners giving through Gift Aid has reduced over the years and as a result we no longer require as many envelopes. The envelope numbers have now become quite spaced out and to save future costs it was agreed to reduce our 2019/20 stationery order and reissue more consecutive numbers. Teresa to provide all those contributing through Gift Aid with their new numbers nearer the time.

7. Council Tax

Following a successful claim to reduce the presbytery council tax banding from D to E a refund of Council Tax totalling £5,384, backdated to 1 April 1993, has now been received from Ipswich Borough Council. This is roughly in line with what we were expecting but we are unable to check the basis of calculation until further details are received. A breakdown has been requested.

Chris was thanked for his work with obtaining the refund but noted that if it had not been for Fr. Mathew first questioning the presbytery banding it is doubtful that we would have thought to action this.

8. Energy Contracts

New 3 year fixed price contracts for gas and electricity have recently been agreed With Opus Energy, our current supplier. The competitive rates they offered should ensure our energy costs remain virtually the same for the next 3 years as they were for the last 3 years.

Inter Diocesan Fuel Management Ltd. (IFM), the consortium for energy management for Catholic Dioceses in England & Wales, was included in our exercise to obtain quotes but in the event was only able to offer 1 year fixed contracts at less competitive rates than Opus Energy.

9. Insurance Claims

The claim for loss of property in the presbytery as a result of a break-in whilst Fr. Mathew was in India during January has now been settled. There was an excess of £300 to pay.

Unfortunately the hall was also broken into during the evening of 20th/morning of 21st March. One of the rear fire exit doors was forced to gain access and virtually all locked cupboards (including those used by the You and Me Playgroup) and doors were broken into. However on inspection it appeared that nothing had been taken, unsurprising in view of the fact that little of value is kept in the hall.

Chris Croker and Jim Poll attended to make the hall safe and temporarily repair the doors to enable the hall to remain in use.

Kevin Risby Builders were contracted to carry out repairs which included replacement of a fire exit door, replacement of 3 internal doors all with new door furniture and replacement of 2 kitchen units.

A representative from Suffolk Constabulary Community Safety attended to advise on additional security and recommended that the most cost effective option would be to fit additional bolts to the rear fire exit doors and this work has since been carried out. A claim for £3500 was settled by the insurance company apart from an excess of £300.

10. Alive In Faith

A summary was presented showing AIF receipts to date of £11,422. The organ and ancillaries cost £18,114 which leaves us with a current debt to the Diocese of £6,692 to be serviced by future AIF receipts.

At current rates of AIF contribution there should be a surplus of circa £4,500 available for other Parish projects when the scheme finishes in October 2020.

11. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The recent communication from the Diocese about data privacy has highlighted the need to ensure the security of personal records held in the Parish in whatever form, including those relating to Baptisms, Weddings, Gift Aid etc. etc.

Actions to be taken before the next meeting include checking the presbytery loft for stored records (Andrew), compiling a list of everything that needs to be kept in a secure place (Fr.Mathew) and ensuring that the Guild Room cupboard is kept locked at all times (Chris to obtain spare keys for those who need them).

12. Other Property Matters

(a) Hall

Arising since the last meeting:-

It was noted that planning permission for the redevelopment of 2 Highfield Approach adjacent to the hall car park has been granted since our last meeting. Separately, agents acting for the owner of 456 Norwich Road have recently asked if the Parish would consider giving access over the hall car park to the rear garden of the property. As granting access would affect the value of the land the Parish has responded with a polite “no”.

Usage

We have been informed that The You and Me Playgroup will be closing at the end

of July as reduced numbers unfortunately mean it is no longer sustainable. Annual rental income from the Playgroup is currently £5,270 and as a result of the closure the loss of rental income this financial year will be approximately £2,000.

If this income is not replaced future rental income at current rates of hiring will drop to approx. £9.5k per annum.

The closure of the Playgroup and (a) the proposed development of 2 Highfield Approach (b) the request from 456 Norwich Road above (c) the fact that the hall is seldom used by the Parish for any activities where large numbers need to be accommodated and (d) the need for investment in the hall facilities if it is to be retained has caused the Committee to consider whether a case could be made for selling the land that the hall and car park currently stand on and building a smaller hall with car park in the church grounds on the opposite side of the road (particularly if this meant that a capital sum could be released for investment to provide the parish with a future income stream).

Andrew presented a summary of the options that were first reviewed in 2010 together with a paper detailing how things have changed since and options that might now be worth considering.

Following discussion the Committee agreed to (a) seek generation of additional hall rental income by advertising the facility in other C of E parishes and schools. Fr. Mathew to organise in conjunction with Laura Krolik and (b) obtain a current valuation for the land that the hall and car park occupy. Andrew and Chris to progress.

Future work required

- The entrance hall and toilet block to be redecorated.
- The kitchen to be refurbished pending a decision on the future of the hall and subject to the availability of grant funding.

(b) Church

Progress since the last meeting:-

- Michael Long has approached an acoustic engineer to provide advice on how the sound levels and acoustics in the church can be improved.

Future work required:-

- A drop down seat to be installed in the confessional.
- The church floor to be industrially cleaned, polished and sealed.
- 2 cracked window panes to be replaced
- 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.
- The availability of grant funding for improving both the sound and lighting arrangements to be explored once estimates of costs are available.

(c) Presbytery

Progress since the last meeting:-

- The Guildroom men's urinal has been fitted with a push actuated flush valve.
- New TV cabling has been installed in the upstairs lounge.
- The Guildroom kitchenette walls have been repainted.

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 downpipe drainage to be checked and cleared where necessary.

(d) Grounds

Progress since the last meeting:-

- The brick pillars at the entrance to the church driveway have been demolished to improve vehicular access, the beech hedge cut back, posts installed and the handrail extended.

Future work required:-

- The driveway entrance to be finished off and part of the wall rebuilt following damage by unknown person(s).
- A hedge cutting and ground clearance exercise to be organised in early autumn.

13. Any Other Business

None reported

14. Date of next meeting

Friday 16th November at 10.15a.m. in the Guildroom

Minutes approved at the Finance Committee Meeting 16th November 2018

Signed:

Chris Croker - Finance Committee Chairman