

St Mary Magdalen Ipswich - Finance Committee Minutes

Meeting held in the Guildroom on Friday 12th July 2019

1. Present

Fr. Mathew, Declan Moore, Andrew Ford and Chris Croker. Michael Long attended for items 7 & 8.

2. Apologies for absence

None required

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd March 2019 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

Church Floor

As previously reported, the church floor is in need of repair and renovation and Declan advised that since the last meeting he had been approached by a parishioner who was willing to make a generous financial contribution to the cost of the required work.

The tiling on and around the altar also requires some attention, including the removal of a substantial quantity of wax droppings. It was agreed that quotations for the work on the floor and sanctuary should be sought but that we should also explore the possibility of using resource from our colleagues at Hollesley Bay as well as our own resources e.g. for wax removal. Chris agreed to progress.

5. Financial Position

A summary of the outturn for the half year was circulated showing a break even position. This is after the first tranche of Diocesan levies and before the 2018/19 Gift Aid tax rebate.

The forecast for the year shows a small surplus after allowing for any feasibility costs associated with the ongoing church hall and car park project.

The cash balance at 30.06.19 totalled £22.1k. with £12.9k being held in our account with the Diocese and £9.2k with Barclays.

Chris reported that over the past year several fraudulent direct debits have been set up against our account with Barclays. Unfortunately as our account details are widely publicised it is difficult to prevent this from occurring and it is mainly a case of being vigilant and seeking indemnity from the bank. To date no losses have been incurred as a result of this activity.

6. Gift Aid

As discussed at the previous meeting it was agreed that we should make an appeal for more parishioners to sign up to Gift Aid. This needs to comprise of both an explanatory note and a short appeal from the lectern. Chris has agreed to produce a note for newsletter insert and Declan has agreed to make the appeal.

The appeal to also include a request for parishioners to review their offertory giving especially if the amount has not kept pace with inflation over the years.

7. Font and Lectern

The stone font and lectern were removed from the church a number of years ago and it was agreed that it would be preferable to have them both reinstated to form a matching set with the altar as previously. The current font (aka "the birdbath") is especially incongruous. Michael has been active in the pursuit of this and he briefed the meeting with his work so far which culminated in a quote of £2650 + Vat from the original suppliers Abbeygate Masonry Ltd. Of Bury St. Edmunds. This quote includes reducing the height of the lectern, making good any damage to either the font or lectern and installing both in the church. The quote was approved.

The lectern also needs to be checked to ensure it has an optimum reading angle, Michael to consult with Abbeygate for their advice.

The final position of the font also needs to be decided.

There is a protocol to follow in such matters as it comes under the heading of "Reorganising the Sanctuary". Fr. Mathew to ensure consultation as appropriate.

8. Church Sound System & Acoustics

Michael reported that a piece of equipment has recently been installed which switches off the lectern and altar microphones when not in use thereby reducing extraneous noise from being fed back into the system.

Sound quality problems were reported from the First Holy Communion mass but it was felt that these could have been solved by the provision of hand held microphones and was more of a school liaison than a sound system issue.

A solution to the reverberation problem is still being sought and Michael is arranging for another consultant to advise on how best this can be resolved.

Michael also to adjust the loop to improve the sound quality for those with hearing aids.

9. Social Outreach

The St. Edmunds and Alive in Faith funds for social outreach have now been merged and parishes can apply for funds to help carry out suitable outreach projects. At the moment we do not have any projects running in our parish and there was a proposal that we should apply for funds to help supplement the breakfast club programme at St. Pancras school. This is a key initiative to help children who do not get a proper breakfast before attending school; not only does it mean that they start the day without feeling hungry but studies have shown that eating a proper breakfast considerably improves their learning ability. Fr. Mathew to pursue.

10. Health & Safety Inspections and Quinquennial Review

Ellis Whittam who are the Catholic Insurance Service's strategic partner for Health & Safety have been contracted by the Diocese to visit all parishes over the next 2 years to carry out full Fire Risk Assessment and Health & Safety inspections. The cost of the initial inspection will be £468.00.

Their aim is to visit all parishes twice over 5 years to follow up on any agreed actions and to provide training as appropriate. We are currently awaiting a date for this inspection.

In addition to the above a quinquennial review of property is scheduled to take place later this year by Vaages Surveying; this will cover the condition of the church, presbytery and hall and will cost £1770.00.

Vaages will also contract separately for asbestos inspections (not necessary for SMM as we already have a report, asbestos management system and register) and legionella testing, which we will however require; this will cost approximately a further £300.00.

11. Church Hall & Car Park Project

Andrew updated the committee with the latest position. A design has been provided to a local company and we are currently awaiting a cost estimate.

The VAT status of the project is slightly complex and needs to be clarified as it will have a considerable bearing on the overall cost. It was agreed that we should contract with VAT specialists Ellis Chapman and Associates who have quoted £600.00 for the work. This is considerably less than the figure quoted by the Diocesan auditors to carry out the same task.

12. Other Property Matters

(a) Hall

Work carried out since the last meeting

Nothing to report apart from general ongoing maintenance.

Future work required

Part of the fencing at the rear of the hall has collapsed and either needs repairing or removing.

Considerable investment is 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

Work carried out since the last meeting

- Michael has completed the installation of replacement LED lights in the body of the church, the 2 overhead lights above the sanctuary and spotlights to highlight the statues and the Walsingham altar.
- The fabric cover on the Walsingham altar has been cleaned of wax and washed and a toughened glass cover installed to protect it.

Future work required:-

- The notice board near the entrance to the church drive to be refurbished.
- Gutters and downpipes to be checked and cleared where necessary.

(c) Presbytery

Work carried out since the last meeting:-

- Nothing to report

Future work required:-

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

(d) Grounds

Work carried out since the last meeting:-

- Nothing to report apart from general ongoing maintenance.

Future work required

- The front driveway to be cleared of vegetation.

13. Any Other Business

It was agreed that consideration should be given to restarting meetings of the Guild of Martha and Joseph to help bring together all of the parishioners who carry out

voluntary work for the church and to see how we could best encourage more people to assist with the many tasks associated with (a) financial and administrative management of the Parish (b) maintaining the estate and (c) supporting Fr. Mathew in his work.

14. Date of next meeting

Friday 15th November 2019 at 10.15a.m. in the Guildroom

Minutes approved at the Finance Committee Meeting 15th November 2019

Signed:

Chris Croker - Finance Committee Chairman