

# ST MARY THE VIRGIN, RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN

## MINUTES

Extraordinary Meeting of the Parochial Church Council

Tuesday 27 July 2021

8.00pm on Zoom

### **PRESENT:**

Rev Andy Finn in the chair

Rev Mark Bridgen, Daphne Harrison (LLM),

Alison Bull, Rachel Wigley, Stuart Wigley, Ronnie Todd, Susan Allender,

Simon Bull, Michele Cooke, Richard Gibson, Yvonne Holliday, Jane Ibbotson, Margaret Nicholas,

Barry Sharp, Bennet Smith, Sarah Stott

### **1 Opening Prayers**

The Vicar (Andy) opened the meeting with prayer.

### **2 Apologies**

Rev Anne Bourne, Karen Forster-Pearce

### **3 To Discuss the way forward with Sunday Worship**

Andy began by telling those present that he had received positive comments about singing in church and also how lovely it was to hear the choir singing at the recent wedding. He said that the meeting had been arranged to give members the opportunity to talk some more about the way forward with our Sunday worship.

Each PCC member was asked for their thoughts on each heading in turn.

#### **i) Roles in Worship**

Servers

Crucifers

Choir

Coffee

Overall, everyone was keen to have the return of servers, crucifer, choir and coffee. However, servers and crucifer may be difficult to recruit post Covid due to the smaller numbers coming in to church at present. It was suggested we should definitely have a crucifer and a choir. With regard to coffee, we need to be mindful of those who are still hesitant in mixing with others. Congregating at

the back of the church is probably not a good idea at present as it is such a small space. As we are still in the summer months, perhaps we could start by serving coffee outside the church hall from trestle tables, if the weather allows.

**ii) Movement in Worship**

Processing the Gospel  
Processing the elements  
Preaching from the pulpit  
Offertory

Everyone was keen for all the above to start when we are able and everyone was comfortable with it. Moving around may cause uneasiness with some members of the congregation, although it was mentioned, we do move around amongst people in shops, those of us who go into shops that is. One suggestion was to stop using Zoom if Andy starts preaching from the pulpit because of the transmission difficulties. One thought was that there is a benefit in preaching from the Chancel. We do need to encourage people back into church but also we need to be careful of phasing out Zoom too soon. It is a blessing to many who are housebound. The Churchwardens pointed out that it is intended to continue with Zoom until the autumn. Also, the situation re Covid may well have changed again by then. Regarding the Gospel procession, perhaps we could stand for the reading of the Gospel if not processing. With regard to the offertory, some people may feel uncomfortable as those collecting may be too close.

**iii) The Candles on the altar and behind the altar**

The report on the mosaics noted that we need to conserve them once the cleaning/maintenance work has been carried out. The burning of the candles in front of them may have contributed to the current damage/dirt. We need to get some clarification on whether the current oil is causing a problem and, if so, which oil we should use.

There were variable views on having lit candles behind the altar. Some of those present were very keen to have them lit. Everyone agreed we should keep the two lit on the altar. One suggestion was to move the ones in front of the mosaics further forward. It certainly helps in brightening up that particular area. There is the possibility of improving the lighting in the chancel at the same time as work is being done on the mosaics. The legacy is restricted solely to cleaning of the mosaics and couldn't be used to improve the chancel lighting. The possibility of a drop down screen was mentioned. It was agreed there are lots of questions re priorities to be taken into consideration re the cost of cleaning and maintaining the mosaics and improving the chancel lighting.

It was proposed we keep with just the two on the altar for the time being, in case the ones in front of the mosaics are causing damage.

**iv) Wearing of robes and chasuble**

The PCC were split on the wearing of robes. Some were unhappy that Andy chooses not to wear the Chasuble and others felt it wasn't particularly important to them. We should be focusing on our worship rather than whether robes are worn. Also, if Andy finds them uncomfortable to wear we should take that into consideration. Most people would like the chasuble to be worn on important feast days, communion services only, although it was pointed out that there are hardly any, or no, feast days during all the Sundays of Trinity. Mark suggested that feast days occurring during the week could be moved to Sundays during Trinity. Another suggestion was for Andy to wear the chasuble once a month for Holy Communion as well as certain feast days.

Andy responded by saying he will be happy to wear the chasuble on important feast days and will reflect on all the thoughts and comments which had been expressed at the meeting.

#### **v) The ringing of bells**

Andy began the discussion by emphasising that he is happy for the bell to be rung before the start of the service but has a theological difficulty with restarting use of the Sanctus bell. He believes it to be a distraction from the solemn part of the service and sees its significance as symbolic. He suggested ringing the bell before the service as a focus for people to pray; there could be a group who gather in the Lady Chapel to pray for our community. He stressed that he is not looking to replace the tradition of the Sanctus bell but to refocus it to a different part of the service. Ringing the bell before the service will hopefully encourage people to pray.

There were two points of view: Those who were very keen to restart use of the Sanctus bell as it was important to them to hear it rung at that particular point in the service. Others were ambivalent. It was pointed out that many in St Mary's congregation would not want to lose the Sanctus bell. Everyone agreed we should have the bell rung before the start of the service to let the Parish know we are in church and starting our prayer and worship.

The question of asking others how they feel about losing the Sanctus bell was suggested. It was also asked why we are discussing stopping use of the Sanctus bell when it is very important to lots of people who are long standing members of St Mary's.

Andy reiterated this was a theological difficulty and proposed we leave out the Sanctus bell and ring the bell before the start of the service as a focus for prayer. Our main focus should be on looking to Jesus and our worship.

Andy ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and sharing their thoughts. He understood and appreciated how painful and upsetting it had been for some. He ended the meeting with prayer.