

Minutes of Blessed Hugh Faringdon- Finance & Maintenance Committee Meeting 4th December 2023 at 8.30pm

Present: Audrey Curnock (Chairperson for 10 minutes) then Steve Barlow, Roland Quinney (Secretary), Andrew Chell, Mary Hughes, Mary Elizabeth Shewry, Father Claro, Lorraine Brabin

Apologies: Emmanuel Boakye, Sue Cole

Opening Prayer: Audrey led with an opening prayer

FINANCE SECTION

1. Treasurers report

Matters Arising

Church Accounts and Gift Aid

Andrew stated that he has met with Nerissa and she is doing a great job dealing with the banking and recording gift aid information for the service collections for the church. Mary Elizabeth asked how the money was counted. Discussion ensued of the current procedures. Collections are counted by Nerissa with assistance from Maria De Costa or Paul Padley or John Bailey and Father Claro. **The Finance committee would like to thank these people for doing the counting of the collection money and recording the information.** Andrew also checks the amounts.

Andrew has checked with Rita to ascertain if she is able to do the gift aid collections. She has no access to a computer so this is not going to work. Andrew stated that hopefully these can be collated in a different format in the near future using Xero. To be determined. Andrew has completed the forms for Standing Orders, and for claiming tax on any gift aid payments back from HMRC. These are available from either him or Nerissa.

ACTION: Andrew – to remind Congregation on a regular basis that these forms are available - ongoing,

Contactless payment

We now have a Contactless Payment machine, Fr Claro has very kindly procured this on loan from the Ethnic Chaplaincy. It has been placed at the front on the church, close to the font. Money currently goes into the Ethnic bank account and then Fr Claro will transfer the funds into the main parish account. Approximately £71 comes through this channel each month. Fr Claro has now transferred recent funds from May 2023 to the Parish Bank Account. This will now be reported each month.

Andrew reported that our Parish contactless machine has been updated with the new parish bank account details. We should be able to use this shortly. **Action: Andrew ongoing.**

Auditors visit

Andrew stated that the auditors Hays McIntyre appointed by the Portsmouth Diocese visited the Parish last week and checked the documentation relating to the end of year report and all of our financial

reports (including the Gift Aid reports) as well as our other financial documents both from excel spreadsheets and from the new Xero system.

The auditor mentioned the following two items:

1. Father Claro's monthly stipend needs adjusting— as he was not given a pay award from April 2023 – This has now been resolved. **Action: completed**
2. Payments to Father Claro for his house keeping has to change. We can pay him up to £100 per week if supported by receipts. **Action: Andrew and Father Claro - ongoing.**

Andrew is waiting for the Auditors report. We thanked Andrew and Nerissa for all their work.

Levy

Steve asked questions regarding to the Levy – he stated that in the diocese documentation that we have to make payments to Buckland school. Discussion ensued as to whether or not we have to pay this.

Action: Andrew will discuss this with the diocese – ongoing.

Gas /Electric bills

These still needs to be checked - as to why the Gas / Electric bill for this year was so high as it was double as what it was in the previous year. We were due to receive a refund for overpayment of gas in 2022 due to estimated bills. **Action: Audrey and Andrew will look into this – ongoing.**

Church running costs

From the total for 2022 to 2023, the running costs of the church are approximately equivalent to the amount of income for this time period. However, the deficit which is £20,000 is from the repairs that have either been completed or are ongoing. Audrey stated that we are ahead on the Quinquennial repairs, other than the cracks in the walls. Hopefully we should be OK as the church but may need to raise funds at some point.**Action: – ongoing.**

Xero system

Andrew stated that he is still learning how to use the Xero system. However it will do the VAT returns and other information to be able to submit to HMRC and make it easier for him to have the documentation for our annual return. **Action- Andrew will check with Charles Blashin from the Diocese Finance Department as to which items we can claim the VAT back.**

Terms of Reference for Parish Finance Committee

We have received a document from the diocese which states that the rules for membership of this committee. **Action – Audrey to prepare letters on behalf of Father Claro. On-going.**

Action: Members are required to receive a document in writing that they are on this committee from Father Claro and to sign a statement of good standing meeting the eligibility criteria for this committee.

Treasurers report as at 4/12/2023

- current account has £26,419
- charity account has £3,067
- building account has £587

2. MAINTENANCE SECTION

Matters Arising

Internal Church Cracks:

- The Monitoring equipment and tags have been installed on the South and East walls.
Action – ongoing
- The window cracks and the glass on the left window was leaking with condensation running off down the plasterwork have been looked at. In part this may be exacerbated by the poor fit of the windows. **Action: ongoing.**
- Audrey will contact our Architect in the New Year to ascertain how long they now need to be monitored for and if the repair process can be brought forward. **Action: Audrey - ongoing.**
- Discussion ensued as to whether or not we will be able to apply for a grant to assist with the repair costs from for example the historic churches fund or directly from the Diocese.
Action: Audrey -ongoing

Routine Maintenance

- **Leaking roof in passageway / Sacristy** – Billy Reed from Oxford Roofing & Maintenance Ltd., has replaced broken tiles, and repairs concrete ridges and a new junction of where the roof meets the church. **Action: completed.**
- **Quinquennial** Audrey went through the quinquennial report showing the committee the items that have been completed and costs. A total of approximately £13,500 has been spent so far on remedial repairs.. **Action: completed.**
- **T-loop** Neill has sorted out the system so that the system is now working correctly. The T-loops system is a legal requirement so that anyone who has hearing problems can hear what is said.
Therefore, we would like to thank Neill for doing this on behalf of the church.
Action: completed.
- **Handyman** – Tim Hebborn who completes tasks that are required to be repaired has done an excellent job on completing items that he has been requested to do. He was invited to a meal

the other week and was presented with a small gift to say thank you and how much we appreciate his work. He will be contacted when we require his assistance to perform other tasks in the future. **Action: completed.**

Fire Risk Assessment

- **Emergency Lighting** – Steve mentioned that the contractors have repaired the emergency lighting in the church, organ area and corridors which are the emergency exit signs. However, we are still having an issue with the ones in the church hall and these will be replaced as soon as possible by 2 emergency spot lights. **Action: Steve will contact the contractor to get a quote and a date to replace these lights in the church hall.**
- **Old documentation** - Request That Tony provides all of the documents relating to the electrical lighting and for other items are handed back. **Action: Audrey & Fr Claro will talk to Tony to receive the documentation from him – ongoing.**
Roly has offered to check through the documentation and prepare a list / filing system.
Action: ongoing.
- **Master keys** - Tony has given all of the master keys to Audrey and these are now with Father Claro. **Action: completed**
- **Fire drill** – It is a year in November since our last fire drill, therefore we need to do a new one to ensure that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency. Steve / Roly will sort out an actual date for this to happen in November. **Action: Roly will inform members of the congregation on the next couple of Sundays that this is going to happen.**

AOB

Security of Church Lorraine has received the following message from Heather Hauschild Chief Operating Officer for the Diocese of Portsmouth with regard to the security of the church:

The only concern property insurers would have is in respect of unattended candles, an open church will almost inevitably mean that there are unattended candles. Care should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient space on any candle stands to prevent overcrowding of the candle stands which can cause fires. More generally, the manufacturers use and maintenance instructions for candle stands should be followed, particularly where St Killian systems are used.

Finally, risk assessments and fire risk assessments should be reviewed and updated to take into account people visiting the unattended church, particularly where they might be attending alone.

The Bishop's keen that churches are open for prayer as much as possible, so your Parish initiative will be most welcome.

Action: Risk Assessments will be done by Steve and Roly including entrance into the church, lighted candles and possibly placing a lock on the doorway up to the organ area - ongoing.

Charity money – Mary Elizabeth asked about the charity money that was from the Justice and Peace group and whether it could be used to fund some other local projects. Discussion ensued. **Action :**
Andrew will consult Sjoerd – ongoing

Annual General Meeting it was decided that we should have an AGM for all of the committees and groups within the parish to be held on a week night in the Church Hall, to enable parishioners to attend, listen to what was said and to ask any questions.

Action: Audrey etc. to ask for suitable date and time in January 2024 from other groups / committees.

Book hall with Sue Cole

Action: Roly is willing to sort out the agenda and do the minuting for this meeting.

Action: Lorraine will ask which date at end of January is suitable and the times for the meeting.

Possibly Monday 29th January.

Meeting finished at 9:55 pm with a prayer by Father Claro

Date of meeting	Chairperson	Secretary
4 th December	Steve	Roly
January 2024 - AGM	To be decided	Roly
5 th February	Andrew	Roly
11 th March	Steve	Roly