

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

Present: Lorraine Brabin, Andrew Chell (Chairperson) Roland Quinney (from 8.50pm), Audrey Curnock (secretary in lieu of Roland)), Mary Hughes , Steve Barlow, Father Claro, Mary Elizabeth Shewry.

Apologies: Emmanuel Boakye, Sue Cole

Opening Prayer: Father Claro led with an opening prayer

FINANCE SECTION

1. Treasurers report

Matters Arising

Collections, counting and safe keeping:

Action from previous meeting: Father Claro stated that we currently have 3 volunteers who are responsible to do the counting, however a couple more people will be required. **Action: Completed.**

Diocese /Insurance:

- **Action from previous meeting** - Andrew has contacted the diocese with the information for complete insurance cover. **The Additional IT equipment should be included in our Parish Inventory .e.g., new Parish Computer. Action: Completed.**

Gift Aid Organiser

- The new Parish Computer has been set up. Discussion ensued as to whom and how the information would be entered and reconciled for the Gift Aid records – will it be Rita or Nerissa. Andrew has asked the Diocese if home computers can be used to make it easier for volunteers who work. The Diocese are fully acceptant that we work on our home computers for any parish work, we are volunteers and have limited time to work on parish finances etc. We two spare computers in the Parish and can offer one to Rita if needed. To date for this tax year, no Gift Aid Claims have been made so we urgently need to do this to reclaim tax. Andrew has very kindly agreed to take this on temporarily just to ensure we can claim the tax refund form HMRC. Andrew will meet with Nerissa after his holiday and will also talk to Rita. A big thank you to Andrew for taking this on in the immediate short term.

Action: Andrew - 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.**

Feedback from the meeting at Basingstoke on Pastoral Finance Matters

Andrew stated that a new Accounting system called Xero is likely to be adopted by the Diocesan Finance Team and he will find out more information for how this is used. He is receiving on-going training, two sessions so far and he is very impressed with it. Reports are generated by the bank statements.. It is commonly used by small businesses.

Lorraine, Andrew & Fr Claro attended the meeting on 27th July 2023.

Main points of note were:

- The Diocese project a 26% decline in mass attendance by 2060;
- The Diocese has 135 churches, 113 Halls, 102 Presbyteries;
- Each Priest serves 2.3 churches;
- Approximately 437 parishioners per parish priest;
- Approximately 1500 Baptisms and 1500 First Communions, but 670 Conformations;
- Approximately 33% of Diocesan funds are spent directly on buildings;
- Diocesan assets are £635million;
- Approximately 20 parishes are wealthy and in the black, 87 are in a more precarious position.
- There has been as high a deficit of £15million in the Diocesan (Curial) accounts, but by 2022/23 this was down to a deficit of £15K and happily for 2023/24 a small surplus of £12K is expected. The Diocese itself has a whole has approximately £10.8 million in its accounts as of 31/8/2023.
- Information on how Audit worked in the Parish was discussed. Diocesan Auditors are Hays Macintyre, and usually 7 parishes are selected randomly each year for audit, often after a big project has happened in a parish.
- Parish Bank Accounts are now protected by Dual Signatory, currently the Diocese countersign expenditure.

All in all, it was a good meeting, informative and professionally delivered.

Action Completed.

Closer to Christ Fund : Action Completed.

Treasurers report as at 4/92/2023

- current account has £24,590
- charity account has £3,259
- building account has £587

There is an ongoing glitch with accessing the bank account with Lloyds, the Diocese are trying to sort this out. It was particularly difficult during August when we had our new Year End.

2. MAINTENANCE SECTION

Matters Arising

Internal Church Cracks:

- The Monitoring equipment and tags have been installed on the South and East walls. Discussion ensued. Monitoring has happened **on Friday 28th July. and 20th September. Action - ongoing**
- Discussion ensued regarding the window cracks and it was stated that glass on the left window was leaking with condensation running off down the plasterwork. In part this may be exacerbated by the poor fit of the windows with the cracks, but we will bring this to Oliver Wilson's (our Architect) attention. **Action: ongoing as still being investigated.**

Routine Maintenance

- Leaking roof in passageway/Sacristy –Andrew and Audrey have met with Billy Reed from Oxford Roofing & Maintenance Ltd and an initial estimate of £925+VAT has been received. This is to replace broken tiles, and repairs concrete ridges. However, a slightly variation in the approach has been suggested so we are awaiting another estimate. We hope to get this repaired before winter. **Action: Andrew & Audrey - ongoing.**
- Plaster will be removed around the cracks by Peter Hawkin, Contactor on Wednesday 20th September. £680 +VAT, as advised by our Architect.
Discussion ensued about moving everything from the altar area, piano and TV etc and getting help from strong parishioners. It was decided that as a lot of things would be temporarily placed near the front entrance of church, and so for safety, **the church itself would be closed after Mass on 17th September until Saturday 23rd September when everything would be moved back. We will need extra cleaning hours that week. Action: Andrew & Audrey - ongoing.**
- Please see attachment – Church Maintenance report – August/September provided by Audrey.
- In summary, the painting of the corridor leading to the church has now been completed and Tim has started to sand and varnish the Oak doors leading into the Courtyard. Some woodworm has been treated.
- Some work has been done at the Presbytery – The Back door has been painted and repaired, the manhole cover in the garden has been replaced as it had rusted through. **Action: All completed.**
- We have purchased an annual Parish Contract for Zoom, £119.90 +VAT from 3/9/2023.
- The Oxfordshire 10 year plan is inaccurate for our church and worrying for its future. It states that the condition of our church is “poor” whilst the 2022 Quinquennial reports states that it is “good following a major refurbishment in 2007”. Furthermore, it states that our Quinquennial repairs will be £200,000, which includes £120,000 for a new church roof. Our Architect tells us **we do not** need a new roof (we have an asbestos roof but it is in good repair and ideally should be left in situ). As we have already spent £10,000 over the last 18 months in repairs, our repairs are at most £70,000 and probably a lot less. Discussions with the Diocesan Estates Office, Fr Dominic and the Curia have been ongoing to correct these errors. **Action: Audrey - ongoing.**

- Space—Mary reported that we need more space for cleaning supplies and flower arranging. The current cupboard is overflowing. Sue Cole mentioned prior to the meeting that the Bridge/U3A currently use the large cupboard off the Kitchen. It was suggested to ask them if it's still needed and if so we will make a small charge as we need space. **Action: Audrey - ongoing.**
- Andrew reported that he had cleaned the gutters at the Presbytery – one is difficult o access so not yet completed. Also he has pruned the trees in Fr's garden as residents in Coxwell Gardens were asking for this to be done. We are very grateful to Fr's neighbours' for pruning the hedges on both sides at the front of the house. **Action: Completed.**
- Budgens Site redevelopment Planning Consent has now been approved. **Action: Completed.**

Fire Risk Assessment

- Emergency Lighting – Steve & Tim have checked the exit signs and lights and despite new bulbs they are not all working. A (Commercial) Electrician will be required to identify the problem. Steve mentioned that the lights work on a temporary basis but the system requires to be checked out properly. Bristol Fire the company who do our alarm servicing came on 4th August, all the lighting was tested and they have a better understanding of how the lighting works. A report will follow and repairs and replacement as necessary.
- Request That Tony provides all of the documents relating to the electrical lighting and for other items are handed back. **Action: Fr Claro, ongoing**

AOB

Church tidy up – Saturday 5th August 10 am – 12 noon

Thank you to Sjoerd and Karen Vogt for clearing the choir loft. **Action Completed.**

Security of Church Discussion ensued as to whether or not that the Church should remain open Tuesday mornings. It was decided that the PCC needs to decide upon this matter. Lorraine will check with the Diocese. No response as yet from the Diocese. **Action: ongoing**

Meeting finished at 9:50 pm with a prayer by Father Claro

Date of meeting	Chairperson	Secretary
9 th October	Audrey	Roly
4 th December	Steve	Roly

No meeting in November as Fr is away.