

PARISH OF SANDERSTEAD
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
MIINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2019
AT ST EDMUND'S CHURCH

Present: Ven Christopher Skilton, Archdeacon of Croydon (guest and Chair for items 19/31-2), Canon Martin Greenfield, Rosemary Kempself (chair for items 19/23-30), Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones, Rev Jeremy Groombridge, Fr Grant Cohen (guest), Indrani Balachandran, Lynne Davison, Sarah Deacon, Jeremy Dearden, Veronica de Grasse-Grant, Linda Etheridge, Mike Fixter, Robin Gordon, Helen Howe, Gill Pates, Judith Robinson, Marc Smith, Susan Thomas, Michael Turner (guest), Barbara Webster-Dudley, Richard Wragg, Sue Wragg, Kevin Wright, Chris Babbs (Secretary), Rosanne Morris (Rector's Admin Assistant, minute taker for items 19/31-2)

Apologies: Piers Hubbard

19/23 Opening Bible Reading and Prayer

Canon Martin Greenfield read from Revelation 15 and led us in prayer.

19/24 Greetings, Welcome to New Members and Guests

The Secretary reported that Penny Bird, formerly a Reader in the parish, had asked him to convey her very best wishes to PCC.

A very warm welcome was extended to our new members, Judith Robinson and Robin Gordon, and to our guests, Ven Christopher Skilton, Fr Grant Cohen and Michael Turner.

19/25 Notification of Any Other Business

No such notifications had been received.

19/26 Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2019 and of the formal portion of the meeting held on 23rd September 2019 were agreed to be a true record and duly signed. There were no Matters Arising.

19/27 Team Rector's Notices

On behalf of everyone, Canon Martin Greenfield congratulated Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones on her new appointment and wished her all the best in her new ministry. Her licensing at Green Street Green would be on 12th December.

19/28 Devolution of Detailed Items

The background having been explained in each case, PCC approved the devolution of:

- Determination of locally set wedding/funeral fees for 2020 to All Saints' DCC;
- 1/1/20 pay review for PCC managed employees to PCC Standing Committee.

19/29 Buildings/Property Issues Requiring PCC Authority

There were no such issues requiring immediate PCC authority.

19/30 DCC and Synod Minutes

PCC noted, with approval as appropriate, the minutes of the following DCC meetings which had been circulated:

- All Saints' 25/6/19, 22/7/19, 16/10/19
- St Antony's 24/6/19, 17/10/19
- St Edmund's 25/6/19, 2/9/19, 2/10/19

PCC also noted the minutes of the meeting of Croydon South Deanery Synod on 18/6/19, which had also been circulated.

19/31 Pastoral Organisation

Introduction by the Archdeacon, Chris Skilton (CS)

CS encouraged the PCC to be careful to listen to one another.

He said that he would like the PCC to consider the issues under two headings (though No. 2 would be looked at first).

- 1) The question of the dissolution of Sanderstead Team Ministry.
- 2) In light of this, what happen to the resources in terms of buildings? We would hear two proposals:
 - One by Grant Cohen representing St. James' Church (St. J)
 - One by Judith Robinson representing All Saints' Church (AS)

CS wanted the meeting to hear these 2 proposals before returning to No. 1.

FIRST PROPOSAL - St. James's, by Fr Grant Cohen (GC)

The paper read by Fr Grant Cohen is below:

In order to best understand why the offer was made, I think it would be helpful to give you some background into St James' situation.

I was asked by the Bishop of Croydon to become Priest-in-charge at St James 3 years ago in November taking over from Christine Spurway when she retired.

St James has for a number of years been a small congregation of mainly retired people but also with a number of young families which make up the nine or so children who attend for the family service.

Having sold their dilapidated church hall before I arrived, St James had plans to build a new one in the church grounds in order to better service the needs of the church and local community especially their thriving toddler group and several uniformed organisations which still meet in the church.

The church also had to consider its annual deficit which eats into its reserves and which threatens future mission and ministry should nothing change.

Due to the high cost of the intended new hall which was more than anticipated it was decided too ambitious leading the PCC to rethink how best to use its resources which would secure both its mission mandate and its long-term financial stability.

With the old hall selling for £360,000 and this money restricted for use on and within a building, the PCC began a dialogue with the archdeacon and the DAC to reorganise the inside of St James' which while not being ideal due to there being no parking in the vicinity was seen as the only alternative to building a new hall in the grounds of the church.

Throughout the last two years the PCC have agreed community engagement as a priority this being reflected in our Mission action plan. Eighteen months ago, St James began a Messy Church which currently has 55 children registered. Likewise, at St Mary's we began a youth club nine months ago with 29 children registered aged between 11 and 16, fifteen of which are weekly worshippers at St Mary's and so neither being 'aspirational' as some have thought.

While I was not involved in, or privy to anything connected with the review of the Sanderstead team, it was natural that Susan and I talked as both colleagues and friends.

With the knowledge that St Edmunds would at some point no longer be a worshipping community in its current form; the fact that Susan needed to find a new job, and that Martin was near to retirement, I considered the potential benefits of St Edmunds in light of its location being between the parishes of St. James' and St. Mary's, our small mission and ministry success with 2 new congregations and the fact that we had significant financial resources with which to invest.

Following a discussion with Susan, and with her churchwardens knowledge, I approached both bishop Jonathan and archdeacon Chris with the question, of whether there was possibility (if the building wasn't needed) that St James and St Mary's make use of it in order to further help our mission and ministry in the area.

And that was the basis for the offer which was made in consultation with St Edmunds DCC, Martin, the Team Rector, Bishop Jonathan and Archdeacon Chris Skilton.

- That upon the dissolution of the team of Sanderstead, that St James take on St Edmunds along with its geographical area for use as a mission and ministry resource within the future United Benefice.
- That in light of the two newly established groups which would almost certainly use the building, and our intention to engage further with our Mission action plans, we would invest whatever was needed financially in order to better facilitate St Edmunds building for all in the community including its current hirers.

- That we would begin a weekly Eucharist alongside those that already occur at St Mary's and St James' so that St Edmunds would remain a 'focus' for worship in the whole district of Riddlesdown.
- That in order to maintain the administration of the building and look after its hirers St Mary's and St James would appoint an administrator with no financial reliance upon the diocese to assist me (Fr Grant) in the administration of the three churches and their buildings (something I do not currently have)

In conclusion then,

The offer made by St James was not submitted with the intent of asset stripping the Sanderstead team and certainly wasn't done to hurt anyone. As God's people, we were simply and genuinely questioning and looking to find ways to resource what God is clearly doing in and with us in the hope that it will continue and grow.

Clarification following Proposal 1

- Could GC clarify numbers attending services at St. James?

When GC is at St. James he has never seen numbers below eight; mostly they are between 20-35. At half term, lots of people are away; it's the same at St. Mary's where the congregation is reduced by a third.

- *Rev Jeremy Groombridge – Would like to know more about the offer of taking on the Parish of St. Edmunds.*

CS – For further discussion.

GC – It makes sense that 3 churches are connected as St. Edmund's is bang in the middle of it.

SECOND PROPOSAL - All Saints', by Judith Robinson (JR)

Background... All Saints' offer this proposal in the best interest of the whole of the Sanderstead Parish. We are passionate about mission, indeed we started working on our Mission Action Plan (MAP) in 2018, however the Bishop's review has seriously delayed this going forward.

We have prayed regularly for the people of St Edmund's and St Antony's at our prayer meetings, knowing that this has been a difficult and anxious time for all concerned.

Discussions started in May when we met with Ann Deering, but no conclusions were reached.

At our meeting in July, All Saints' DCC decided to invite St Edmund's and St Antony's to join us in looking at a Parish-wide MAP, and a letter was sent to you all via Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones and Chris Babbs, to that effect. We assume that you received that letter. This was with the expectation that you would have time to consider our invite and respond before the meeting on 23rd September when we could further discuss the future of the 3 churches.

PROPOSAL 2

- o St Edmund's remains within the Parish of Sanderstead so there is no need to alter the Parish boundaries, but we would collaborate with St James's to develop ministry.
- o A single PCC be appointed from within existing DCCs to oversee the activities at St Edmund's, St Antony's and All Saints and to develop mission across the whole of Sanderstead Parish. Existing separate DCCs would disappear.
- o Sunday worship would be maintained at St Edmund's for an appropriate period. This is likely to be until Easter but there may be a more suitable date, albeit mindful of the need to avoid appointing new Churchwardens at St Antony's and St Edmund's.
- o Mid-week communion could be introduced at St Edmund's.
- o Existing Community work at St Edmund's would be further developed, for example closer liaison between the St Edmund's Caring Group (already supported by All Saints) and Sanderstead Neighbourhood Care could be encouraged.
- o Building management / Hall bookings would be handled centrally for the whole Parish.
- o Thus, the option to re-instate regular worshipping communities based at St Edmund's and St Antony's would remain available when the need arises.
- o The brief for the new Children & Families Pastor could be extended to support the development of children's work based at St Edmund's and St Antony's, and we would expect to use St Edmund's as the relationship with Riddlesdown Academy develops.
- o Details would be worked up as part of the joint development of a Mission Action Plan for the whole Parish. The support of the Diocese would be sought at the appropriate time to understand the opportunities to develop new ministry at St Antony's and St Edmund's to serve the Parish of Sanderstead better in future.
- o Since there had been no opportunity to discuss this with either St Antony's or St Edmund's, some detail remains for discussion, but this proposal is considered neither more nor less "aspirational" than the proposal from St James's.

Members unanimously wished to extend a warm welcome to those at St Antony's and St Edmund's to worship with All Saints during these difficult times.

Clarification following Proposal 2

- Rev Jeremy Groombridge (JG) explained his connection with Chief Exec of the Collegiate who asked if AS can come and do some work at Riddlesdown School. They have had an active involvement with the Hindu and Buddhist faiths but no representative from Christian faith. At the moment JG is working on Christmas presentations in all 5 colleges.

JG has been Invited to talk on politics at debating societies.

Katheryn Hewitt is developing a Listening service.

The children at Riddlesdown School have been welcomed to All Saints for music practice and to find out about local history.

- *How would Riddlesdown School use the St E building as it is limited, nothing attractive here, and they at Riddlesdown already have great facilities? Sue Wragg*

JR – something to be discussed in the future. MAP has been delayed.

- The proposal from All Saints does not exclude St. James. AS wants to work with them.
 - The SECG and SNC have differences and are set up differently, e.g. SNC is a standalone charity, whilst SECG is part of the church. It is vital to secure the legacy of SECG.
 - It was commented that Parish boundaries ought to be regarded as flexible.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

CS thanked GC and JR for outlining these 2 proposals.

CS and the Bishop had heard about the 1st proposal but not the 2nd one. The Bishop warmed to this 1st proposal but he hasn't yet heard the 2nd one.

Sue Wragg – It did appear that AS could not support St. Ed at that time. The offer came from GC and the Bishop liked it.

JR – We said we didn't have the resources for running Sunday morning services. Later on we realised that you were anxious that's why in July we sent letter to offer you to come and join us to discuss. Offered hand of friendship.

GC – Both Martin Greenfield (MG) and Kevin Wright (KW) agreed the St. J Proposal when they came to the Deanery Leadership Team meeting – it is clearly minuted.

MG – didn't know then that AS would propose anything.

CS – Reconciliation work will be needed to get to a common mind about this. If the whole of the PCC work together, it could take several years. He recommends a smaller representative group with someone external - this will help us get somewhere.

Richard Wragg – happy to go ahead, look at it afresh, in good spirit. Adopt a process and put time scale on it.

CS – By Easter 2020, be able to say, "This is the way forward."

JR – If team is dissolved, one PCC, Members of all 3 churches,

CS – Structure won't be place until Easter.

Mike Fixter – When joined PCC, read many booklets etc, and it's worth reading them again. Primary duties – act in best interest of the PCC. We have a responsibility to manage our resources. We must give enough time and energy to make correct decisions. Make good governance. Everything should be open and transparent – this hasn't always been the case. Communicate effectively – we all acknowledge we haven't always. Be able to explain to others outside this group what is happening. To act with integrity at all times.

Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones made the point that she did respond to the invitation to meet with the AS MAP Committee, and she has a copy of her reply. Communication was the problem.

KW – all members of the same PCC. Let the DCCs subside into the background. Let's act as a PCC for working together.

THE PROCESS

CS said that the Diocese love processes!

- Firstly the Croydon Arch-Deaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee (AMPC) meets. The next AMPC meeting is on 6 November. Proposals are considered.
- Secondly, if the AMPC agrees, it goes to the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) who have to scrutinise it. The next DMPC meeting is on 6 December, then 27 February 2020. There is a 28-day informal consultation period. Then a 28-day formal consultation period, of there are any disagreements. It's like getting Planning Permission. People can object.
- And thirdly, after going to the above two committees, it goes to the Church Commissioners, with possibly a further 28 day consultation period.

This process would easily take until Easter.

St. Antony and St. Edmund don't want to hold an extra AGM with new wardens etc. 30 April is the absolute deadline for an AGM. So there is a timeframe.

Draft proposals are produced by the PCC – very simple. Existing arrangements are dissolved. That's the trigger for putting the detail in place to make it a reality.

People on the Electoral Roll could object. Doesn't seem at the moment to be contentious but objections all have to be heard.

We would not be dissolving the current structure until at least Easter, new PCC from then. You are the body until that time.

That's the structure, that's how it is!

Robin Gordon – Did the 1st proposal go to any of these committees?

CS – No, it went to no other place.

KW – If we operate until then, we can meet together, not separate DCCs.

CS – The DCC still have an entity.

Richard Wragg – For going forward, it would be helpful to have a smaller group of PCC members.

CS – I can introduce somebody to you in November and suggest he works with a smaller body, as this group is too large to work well.

GC – what part do I play in this?

CS – They would consult with you, GC, they would need to. I'd hope that they would.

Sue Wragg – Sanderstead Parish needs to be looked at in wider sense. Will the AMPC be part of this?

CS – The Deanery Leadership Team, who hold the reins on the Deanery, are looking at The mission of the church. Always a wider perspective than just ourselves.

Sue Wragg – we can't expect them to wait and put all on hold.

CS – Make decision by Easter 2020

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Richard Wragg – what if PCC fail to make decision by Easter?

CS – It would just sit there. Not sure what happens after that.

MG suggested that as a smaller group starts meeting, if they are struggling, they can ask the Bishop for help?

CS made the comment that the Bishop doesn't like to tell you what to do.

CS – St. James PCC as a charity cannot spend money on this building. Legally they cannot.

JR – Can Will Cookson come and look at the whole of the Parish during this period?

CS – Yes. The Bishop's thinking is that Hamsey Green has very few community buildings in that part of the Parish. He would be reluctant to see that building disappear - you will never get it back.

Mission needs to happen in a different way. Is it viable?

JR – Why is the Bishop wanting to look at mission around St Antony's not St. Edmund's? Can Will Cookson look at Riddlesdown as well?

GC – *I have half of Riddledown.*

CS – Yes, hopefully. Different approach to mission is needed. We can ask Will to look at this too.

Robin Gordon – is it this PCC that kicks this all off?

CS – Yes it is the PCC that recommends it. All have to be listened to. It would be spelt out depending on what you decide. If you wanted to transfer part of the Parish somewhere, it would have to be started from here, the PCC. People may not be unanimous.

Richard Wragg – everybody on the PCC must have an open mind. We do this with an open mind. Otherwise, it goes round and round like Brexit. We must listen to ALL sides, and base our decisions on this.

CS - Yes that's why it's good to have someone from outside to work with you.

Mike Fixter – Question to Grant - how does your proposition help Parish of Sanderstead?

MG – GC doesn't have to be looking at that. This will be looked at, for example, what is the population, at a higher level.

Sue Wragg – Yes we have to abide by committees, but we must act as Christians, we must serve the area. Look at collaborative – what would benefit this area of the world? We're supposed to be Christians. *This Parish thing irks me.*

CS – Everybody has to be somewhere.

Rosemary Kempself – Is there a collaboration that could work across the boundaries, with the same aims then we should be able to work together.

Gill Pates – the advantage of St Mary's Proposal is the immediate injection of youth with potential to increase, youth attracts youth. Already established. and we at St Edmunds have struggled to get youth.

Chris Babbs – We must look at how we make it work. Healing process in next 6 months.

Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones – All these different parishes. We must recognise that HG is a distinct area. So is Riddlesdown.

CS – important juggling act. At every level, we're seeking to make people disciples of Christ.

Important to ensure that have a secure local framework and structure so that once this is clear, you can get on with the main thing. But there's some work to do first before being able to get on with it. *"The reason you get on with mending gutters is not for its own sake, but to further the mission of the Church."* After period of angst and working out, the mission of the church in this place can go forward. Somebody's got to sort out the detail but all must hold on to the bigger picture.

VOTE – Proposed by Kevin Wright, seconded by Richard Wragg.

Unanimous. All PCC voted for it.

It was unanimously agreed:

1. The three separate church DCCs will be dissolved and a single Parish formed with a single PCC. This will be hopefully done by Easter 2020.
2. PCC review will take place to seek a right way forward for the district and buildings of St Edmunds, also by Easter 2020.
3. Rev Will Cookson (Dean of Fresh Expressions) will be invited to research the mission potential of St Antony's as part of the whole parish, and make recommendations.

It was also decided that:

- Sunday worship will cease at St Edmund's at Christmas 2019.
- St Antony's DCC will discuss with the Rector how long Sunday worship will continue, and its frequency.
- Chris Babbs (CB) highlighted that we need to look at how to introduce the Facilitator to get it going.
GC – Will the Facilitator speak to me too?
CS – Yes.
- Chris Babbs said that the next PCC meeting is scheduled for 14 Jan, so we will have to have a special PCC meeting before that.
CS suggested we make it before 1st Dec, before Christmas happens. Decision needed about whether we want to stay as one body or form a small group.
CB For further thought.
- CB – The ending of St. Antony's and St. Edmund's as quasi-independent entities involves a lot. We have to be getting on with it in the next 6 months alongside the other points. There are

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batons that mustn't be dropped e.g. St Edmund's Caring Group. How do we get on with this?
Who drives it?

ACTION

- A Comprehensive list needs to be written up. Let Chris Babbs know by **Monday 11th November** what needs to be considered.

19/32 Prayer, Grace and Close

The meeting ended with Open Prayer, followed by the Grace.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING 14/1/20 AT ALL SAINTS'

(BUT NB ADDITIONAL MEETINGS MAY WELL BE REQUIRED AT SHORT NOTICE)

CB/RM 6/11/19

Rev 20/11/19 CB