

**PARISH OF SANDERSTEAD**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

**IN ALL SAINTS' CHURCH HALLS**

**Present:** Bishop Peter Price (Chair for items 20/16-23), Canon Martin Greenfield, Rosemary Kempzell (Chair for items 20/12-15), Rev Jeremy Groombridge, Lynne Davison, Sarah Deacon, Jeremy Dearden, Veronica de Grasse-Grant, Linda Etheridge, Mike Fixter, Robin Gordon, Helen Howe, Gill Pates, Margaret Quiney, Judith Robinson, Marc Smith, Sue Thomas, Barbara Webster-Dudley, Richard Wragg, Sue Wragg, Kevin Wright, Chris Babbs (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Indrani Balachandran, Katheryn Hewitt

**20/12 Welcome, Bible Reading & Prayer**

Canon Martin Greenfield welcomed everyone to this special meeting. He then read from Matthew chapter 6 and led us in prayer.

**20/13 Formal Appointment of Independent Examiner for the 2019 Accounts.**

The Secretary spoke to his paper which had been circulated. The following motion was proposed by Jeremy Dearden, seconded by Marc Smith, and agreed unanimously:

Using the contingent authority granted by the 2019 APCM, Sanderstead PCC appoints Ms Tutu Taiwo of Curtlee UK Ltd to provide formal sign-off of the 2019 parish accounts.

**20/14 Update on Progress of the Scheme to Dissolve the Team Ministry and Implications for the APCM**

The Secretary explained that, having been through an informal consultation process, the Scheme would now be subject to two formal consultations, one by the diocese and one by the Church Commissioners. Each of these would take six weeks. Schemes came into effect on the first of the month following that in which they were "made" by the Commissioners. He had been advised that, assuming no objections during the process, this would be 1<sup>st</sup> June or, more likely, 1<sup>st</sup> July.

His first reaction had been to recommend that the APCM was deferred until late May, a possibility which had been recognised when PCC had sent the current date of 27<sup>th</sup> April. However, on further consideration, he was of the view that 27<sup>th</sup> April was no worse in formal terms than late May and could provide some practical advantages. With a likely implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> July, we would be faced with at least a month in an interim state – would two months be any worse? In practical terms, All Saints' PCC and DCC members could be elected on the current basis at APCM, on the understanding that they would together form the "new" PCC once the Scheme came into effect. The only feasible date for a deferred APCM was 26<sup>th</sup> May. This was already earmarked for All Saints' DCC and it would be useful to have that meeting to deal with any immediate issues which arose. Finally, May & (probably) June would provide a useful hand-over period to the officers of the "new" PCC.

Accordingly, he proposed that the APCM date should remain on 27<sup>th</sup> April. Subject to clarification of the position of churchwardens in the interim period, this was accepted *nem con* (one abstention).

*[Secretary's Note to clarify the position of churchwardens: The Churchwardens Measure 2001 makes it clear that churchwardens are only "admitted" to the office once they have made the necessary declaration at the Visitation, not on election. There are specific provisions for existing churchwardens to continue in office until their successor is "admitted", or until 31<sup>st</sup> August if that does not occur. So, I do not see any problem with existing churchwardens continuing to act after 27<sup>th</sup> April, at least until the Visitation. CJB]*

## **20/15 Welcome to Bishop Peter Price**

Canon Martin Greenfield welcomed Bishop Peter who was here to help us to a decision, not with any particular agenda. It had to be admitted that this process had not gone as well as any of us would have hoped. This was to be lamented, but we could now go forward on the basis of long-term friendship.

## **20/16 Introduction by Bishop Peter**

Bishop Peter recalled his past connections with Sanderstead and rehearsed the sequence of meetings etc in his involvement with this issue from mid-December. He stressed that his role was simply to help us to a decision. Experience showed that discussions of this kind of difficult issue always went wrong in some way. He had felt it important to talk to the clergy first to ascertain their views and to discern how people felt generally. A preparatory meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February had identified the issues to be considered at this meeting. A series of options had been identified which we needed to consider. He felt that another meeting could very well be needed to consolidate the outcome of this meeting, and he would be happy to attend. Bishop Peter reminded the meeting that the Clergy are the authority and responsible for the direction of the Church.

## **20/17 Options**

An options paper (appendix A) was then distributed. The Secretary talked through each of the options, stressing that there could well be better ideas, either for amendments to existing options or for entirely new ones.

## **20/18 Points of Clarification/ Information**

These included:

- The reason for the reference to the Parish of St James's, rather than the United Benefice of St Mary's and St James's, was that the latter had yet to come into formal existence; therefore, any transfer would need to be to the existing adjoining parish.
- St James's had substantial capital for investment, but this was restricted to use on buildings; it was also unable to invest in a building it did not "own".
- Whilst a rigid deadline (eg Easter) was not in place, it was true that the process had to be completed before too long. If not, St James's would need to explore other options.
- The situation regarding the electoral roll was that the current one was defined as one roll held in three sections. Therefore, for purposes such as determining Synod representation it had been agreed by the diocese that the parish total for 2019 (206) should be used. It was, of course, for individuals to decide over time the roll(s) to which they wished to belong.
- The terms and timescale for the Scheme to dissolve the Team Ministry were unaffected by any of the options.
- All Saints' Mission Action plan (MAP) had been published on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

- The work now being done with Riddlesdown High School did not have any implications for the use of buildings.
- Bishop Peter's understanding, which he could confirm if required, was that the Bishop of Croydon, whilst he had a view, was prepared to allow the PCC to make the decision.

### **20/19 Points Made in Discussion**

These included:

- The test against which the options should be judged was what was best for Christian Mission in the area.
- It was important to reach a conclusion before the APCM as after that date the PCC would not necessarily reflect the views of people at St Antony's and St Edmund's.
- Could the parish of Sanderstead realistically develop Mission in both Hamsey Green & Riddlesdown at the same time?
- Mission development was long-term and resource hungry. It was important to do a few things well and not overstretch resources.
- This was particularly true now that we were dealing with an essentially un-churched society.
- Whichever option was selected, there would be a sense of bereavement among some people; this would need to be managed.
- People in the Riddlesdown community were asking what was going to happen; we needed to be able to tell them as soon as possible.
- Whilst the Sanderstead MAP did include St Edmund's & Riddlesdown, there was not a lot of detail.
- It was important not to foreclose options which might be needed as the Sanderstead MAP developed but options 6 & 7, which included the possibility of Sanderstead using the building, allowed for this.
- It seemed immoral that PCC members were voting on the future of the Parish knowing they were going to resign immediately afterwards.

### **20/20 Summing Up by Bishop Peter**

Summing up, Bishop Peter suggested we should put aside questions of ownership and concentrate on Mission. There was clearly a Mission for Hamsey Green based on St Antony's, being developed with the help of Canon Will Cookson, and this thinking could influence that for Sanderstead & Riddlesdown as well. Of course, there would be reservations and risks that planned activities would not come to fruition. But generally where financial investment was made, as was being offered by St James's, a higher level of commitment followed.

Could anyone really object to a scenario in which, under an overall broad view of Mission for the whole area, and subject to a clear memorandum of understanding allowing Sanderstead use of St Edmund's building, transferring the building and a small patch of "territory" would allow major investment there and Sanderstead to concentrate its efforts on a small number of Mission projects?

In response, some members felt that the case for transfer had not been made. At least all the options needed to be fully evaluated.

### **20/21 The Way Forward**

Whilst some members felt that we had not really spent a great deal of time considering such an important issue, the general feeling was that we could not prevaricate any longer. We needed another meeting at which a decision would be taken.

So as to allow maximum attendance, it was agreed that the meeting already scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> March would be used. This would begin at 7pm so as to allow time for essential pre-APCM issues to be covered as well.

The decision would be based on one (or possibly two) amendable propositions which would be worked up and circulated in advance. Any members who could not attend the meeting could put forward their views in writing. Fr Grant Cohen would be asked to re-state his proposal in writing, to be contrasted with the Sanderstead MAP.

### **20/22 Gathering for Prayer**

It was agreed that what we had not done enough of on this very difficult issue was to pray together about it. Rev Jeremy Groombridge kindly undertook to arrange this. *[Done; three sessions have been arranged and advertised.]* there also needed to be as many conversations as possible to exchange views before we met formally.

### **20/23 Conclusion**

Canon Martin Greenfield then led us in further prayer; and the meeting concluded with the Grace.

CJB 22/2/20