**RECORD OF ST ANDREW’S PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE,**

**18 MAY 2020**

**Committee members participating:**

Fr John Hine (Parish Priest, Chairman)

Deacon Jolyon Vickers Noel Jordan

Sylwia Dorosz Liz Leahy

Liz Walker Roger Styles

**Preamble:** With the Church closed and face-to-face meetings not being viable as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, an information brief was sent to committee members inviting their comments, decisions and issues. This note is a summary record of the meeting and the decisions made.

**Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the last meeting on 3 Feb 20, were reviewed.

**Fr John’s Introduction:**

* Fr John suggested that the subject on top of parishioners’ minds is when will we get into our Church again! For us one of the complications is that the contractor’s workmen should be in the church in the very near future, and so the place of prayer may be in the Parish Centre (temporary altar and tabernacle, etc). He pointed out the timing and date of an open church by printing a section of our Archbishop’s very recent letter concerning this issue.
  + The letter highlighted the meticulous preparations required by each parish to enable private prayer to be permitted. Churches will only be allowed to open if the Parish can demonstrate that it can put the necessary measures in place. Any parish which cannot do this, for whatever reasons, is not obliged to open.
  + Fr John invited thoughts on the proposal and asked for suggestions of how we might go ahead, and who should lead this work within the Parish.
  + In response by committee members, there were very strong recommendations that the Parish should not offer facilities for private prayer all the time the church was in the hands of the contractors. For some of the Committee, even after the contractor’s work had been completed, the use of the Parish Centre was not welcomed as an alternative. Neither were there any suggestions as to who might lead the work if Fr John decided to take it forward.

**Decision: Having noted the Committee’s views and being conscious of the conditions placed on parishes by the Diocese in the current circumstances, Fr John wished to respond to the significant number of parishioners who wanted to have private prayer. Therefore, he would recruit and brief volunteers on duties in supervising weekly periods of private prayer to be held in the Parish Centre.**

**Staffing:**

* Fr John informed the Committee that the 2 staff members were affected by the coronas virus as follows:
  + **Lesley McCarthy**, whose role is providing support to Fr John, was continuing to be paid. Her role to clean and to manage the Parish Centre would not be required. She was content with this arrangement.
  + **Andrew Butler**, our organist is employed directly by the Diocese. He has been furloughed and would remain so until the Church was open again and we were able to enjoy music. He was also content with this arrangement.
* Jolyon reported that he had worked with Janet Brierley, a retired HR professional, who had taken advice from the Diocese HR team to draw up a job specification for a part time administrator in the parish office. It had been planned to have the recruitment process complete by the end-Apr 20. However, Janet is not currently available, and the work will be completed as soon as she returns to Tenterden at the end of COVID-19 restrictions.

**Action remains open: Jolyon**

**Church Refurbishment Programme:**

* Committee members had recently offered support and made recommendations for the assessment of the two contractors who had bid for the refurbishment contract: Hurstway Construction of Cranbrook, and Ash Contracting of Ryarsh, West Malling.
* In the event, Fr John selected Ash Contracting, who offered a lower price and a shorter programme, along with the advantage of being able to start work very quickly.
* A contract is now being negotiated with Ash. Overall costs are likely to be £83,851.80 (excl VAT) from the contractor, with additional costs amounting to £16,563 (excl VAT), from Playle & Partners LLP, overseeing the contract delivery. In additional to provisional sums in the contracted price and other ancillary charges, the Committee agreed a 10% client’s contingency of £10,041, leading to an overall project budget of £114,258.80 excl VAT. (Total £141,060.18 incl VAT and 10% contingency.)
* Fr John had informed the Diocesan Finance Committee of the new price for the work, and on 18 May 20 the Diocese authorised the Parish to go ahead, with the proviso that all works must be completed by 18 May 21.
* Planning consent for the replacement windows in Fr John’s house, promised by Ashford BC to be given by 21 Jun 20, would necessitate the phasing this element of the contracted work programme. In all other respects, the programme can start on 1 Jun 20.
* **Committee members were asked to confirm their support for Fr John’s plans to proceed as he proposed. This support was unanimously given** and Noel Jordan, a retired architect, further offered to provide advice to Fr John throughout the delivery programmed, if required.

**Financial Reports, Parish Main Account:**

* The Committee had already scrutinised and passed the parish accounts statements for 2019 - in their meeting of 3 Feb 20 - although there was as yet no acknowledgement of receipt from the Diocese.
* As at 13 May 20, the parish accounts stood as follows:
  + Parish Main A/C: £25,000
  + Reserve A/C: £180,399.44
  + Development Fund A/C: £19,474.
* Sylwia had been able to clarify that a charge for £4,870 in respect of insurance premiums was a double entry and had been reduced to £2,434.78. She had also made arrangements for all future utility bills to be paid through Direct Debit.

**Financial Reports, Gift Aid:**

* No progress had been made in the recovery of two years’ worth of Gift Aid payments. Fr John agreed that this deficit is becoming serious to the Parish’s financial situation, currently without income from the Church and the Parish Centre closed.
* Following a subsequent discussion between Liz Walker and Fr John, Liz had successfully applied for one year’s Gift Aid recoveries and was attending to the second-year recoveries at the moment. **Action remains open: Liz**

**Financial Reports, Parish Centre:**

* The Parish Centre has been without income for over 8 weeks but had £19,474 in the Development Fund account.
* The Diocese had asked us to repay one of the loans from other parishes early. This payment of £20K was completed through a credit balance in our loan account in the Diocese Finance Office. In the process, it became apparent that the Parish currently had an interest credit balance in our loan account of £2,316.53.
* However, we still owe £17.5K repayment due in 2019. We should consider paying this sum in Jul 20 before Fr John’s retirement. This assessment would need to include current income from parishioners standing orders and routine utility and maintenance charges. **Action: Fr John and Roger**
* When we make this payment, this should leave us with a remaining debt of £6,454.47 to pay before Sep 21. On making the final payment, we should invite those parishioners who pay monthly standing orders to the fund, to consider closing their accounts if they wish to do so.
* The Committee, at its last meeting, had endorsed the proposal to reduce the weekly charges for the Tenterden Memory Café to £10 per session. This has been done.

**Maintenance Issues:**

* The action to set up an annual servicing programmed for appliances and systems throughout the Parish had been interrupted by the COVID-19. This would be actioned in harness with the refurbishment of the Church. **Action: Roger**
* Similarly, the small work in the Parish Centre and painting the rear of the parish meeting room and Fr John’s front door will be undertaken when the chosen contractor (Andy Gill) is able to undertake the work. **Action: Roger**

**AOB:**

* It was agreed that minutes of both the Finance Committee and the Parish Council meetings should in future be published both on the parish website and on the porch lobby notice board for a 2-week period after each meeting. **Action: Roger**

**Rt Rev John Hine, Parish Priest**

**Jun 20**