

Minutes of the Church Meeting at Goring URC
on Thursday 25th April 2024
at 7.30pm in the Church.

Welcome: Val G

Devotions: Val G - A time for anything, Ecc 3:1-8, Jer 29:11, Heb 13:8 and prayer.

Those present: 14 Apologies 5

Minutes of meeting agreed and signed by Val G

Matters arising:

Safeguarding Training Update:

- Nothing to report this month and Val G thanked Mary for all she does for Safeguarding.

Church Family News:

- **Hilary** reported that 2 people are having an operation next 2 weeks, others are awaiting Doctors appointments, 3 of our older members are in rest homes and 2 are happy but are becoming very frail and one is very happy and content. Hilary ended with prayer for our friends in Christ. Val thanked Hilary for all she does as pastoral Secretary.

Elders Time:

- Val G reported that our Visionary Companion Rev Roger Wood, joined our Elders meeting, there was much discussion as he asked questions about the church and how we have been getting on without a Minister. He left us with 3 questions for members to consider and reply to covering what we need in our church to go forward. **Val G** will be sending these out to get some feedback by the next Elders meeting. They are: As a Church where are we going? How does God want us to work? What do we want from a Minister?

Outreach:

- Val C reported that the Easter eggs and the christian story books for Safe in Sussex and Little Fishes were well received.
- Coffee and cake is still well attended.
- 20 Families are regularly attending Mini Fishes.
- Next Coffee Mornings are Fridays - 10th May in aid of Christian Aid and 12th July for Mind.

Property:

- Paul Redman reported that the Quinquennial Survey has been done, which Matthew Smith will report in Admin and Finance slot.
- He thanked both Bett and her husband for going round the church doing lots of odd jobs in need fixing.
- The fire alarms have had their regular checks.
- Little Fishes had a fire drill which was well executed the children were very good.
- Electrical Testing has been done by Keith Best - Pat Testing and Servicing.
- Paul thanked Bett for come to the church to let all the various people in.

Finance, Admin and Hall Lettings.

Report by Matthew Smith as follows:

Manse update

We had an offer at the asking rent of £2.3k p.m. but unfortunately this fell through this week and the Manse is back on the market. I have agreed to maintain the asking rent at the present level as spring is a generally favourable time. We may need to consider offers below that figure or possibly reducing the asking rent at some point. I will consult Elders as and when circumstances dictate. Another post was that the toilet flush was broken and will be fixed by Jacob Steel.

Questions?

Val G, Val C, Wilf R and I met with the Synod Property Convener David Walters on 3rd April. David was unable to allay our concerns regarding the **Manse Policy** – we had to agree to disagree, and he suggested we put our concerns to the Moderator. I sent a carefully worded email on 19th April, which the Moderator has acknowledged. Her initial response was that the manse policy is a “national policy and comes from the Plan

for Partnership”. However, she has undertaken to look into our comments and get back to us! Matthew has some queries that don’t make sense therefore he has written to the Moderator and is waiting for her full reply.

Questions?

Property

- I received the **Quinquennial Survey** Report yesterday afternoon and have shared it with Property Group. There is a lot to consider in the report. **Copy will be sent to Val G.**
- While there is nothing particularly unexpected in the report, we probably need to revisit our “4 year plan”, if only to provide overall assurance as to whether and how we can afford everything – especially the Sanctuary Windows, as well as providing sufficiently detailed financial arguments to optimise success in our “grants and loans” application to Synod.
- The report identifies 4 items requiring immediate attention and 29 items requiring attention within 12 months. There are a further 29 items requiring attention over the remainder of the Quinquennial period and other more general recommendations. You will therefore appreciate the size of the exercise to sort out the wood from the trees, **it needs strategy.**
- While the Surveyor recommends remedial action within specific timescales we may decide otherwise – where we do we need to justify such decisions.

Questions:

- On the subject of the **Sanctuary Windows** the Surveyor reports “The precast concrete is starting to fail in a number of areas due to corrosion of the steel reinforcement. Although repairs should be possible this will become an ongoing issue and I would therefore recommend the church considers replacement of the windows with aluminium with double glazed units. Consideration will be needed on the method of fixing and also wind loadings, due to the overall size of the opening” – obviously subject to such things as affordability and cost/benefit considerations (my words).
- Current very rough guesstimate of cost would be c £110K/£120K. But the report, alongside a conversation with my neighbour this morning determines that we need to secure the services of a structural engineer before we can proceed to obtaining quotes for the work involved. This will be an upfront cost but key to progressing this issue – I have the contact details of a suggested architect/structural engineer. However, I do not know costs or reporting timescales. Can I seek your approval to take this element forward please.

The above was agreed by the meeting.

- It may be necessary to revisit the works in the areas of the **East Transept and the Cornwall Room Entrance roofs** in the light of some of the Surveyor’s comments . The finalised quote was £1,340 but this may need revision. Given your previous approval, albeit based on a rushed ball park estimate of £1K to £1.2K, are you content to continue to delegate decision making to Property/Finance as to the best way forward assuming we are able to make quick progress on this. Generally speaking Property Group look to deliver quick solutions to roofing issues but we need to “get it right”!
- **Matthew asked if the meeting are still content to allow decisions by groups, the meeting agree**

Accounts 2023

I have not been able to progress things since last Month. However, I have managed to secure the services of a Chichester accountant to act as independent examiner and yesterday sent her the accounts and supporting material electronically. I got her name “Jenny” from Gaynor (she performs the same role for Little Fishes). Unfortunately, I don’t have her surname but would ask your agreement in principle for “Jenny” who comes from (Evans Weir in Chichester) to act as independent examiner – I will of course let you have her full name in due course. Jenny will only make a nominal charge of around £50, which is very generous.

I will do my best to present the accounts at the next meeting but beg your patience if I fail to do so due to other pressures.

Hall Lettings

Nothing new to report but Wilma Reminds everyone to remember the Key Audit and to fill in the form at the back of the church asap if you are a key holder.

Val G thanked Matthew for the work he does for our church.

Notes and Correspondence:

- No correspondent this month but a father of one of Little Fishes kindly cut the hedge all the way down the west side of the church and has left a pile of debris, we have all been asked to try to pick up some of it if they are going to the tip.

Any other Business:

- Christian Aid: Bett reported the events coming up to raise funds are 10th May - Coffee afternoon and 11th May - a Quiz with tea and cake £5.00 for adults.
- Christian Aid envelopes will be in the Welcome on Sunday.

Bible Society:

- Christina has stepped down as Bible Society representative in the church so we are in need of someone to take her place.
- Eileen has kindly offered to collect any information from Mary Stewart and distribute it but only as a temporary arrangements, she doesn't want to take over the job.

Elders Election 2024

- It was announced at the
- April Church Meeting that this years Election of Elders will be in July, nomination forms available through May.
- Up to now the nominee should have been a member for 2 years.
- The meeting discussed whether this could be changed to 1 year, Mary checked whether it could be changed from 2 to 1 year and discovered 1 year is necessary the 2 years was brought in by Goring URC.
- Val G called for a vote: result as follows 4 voted for 2 years - 8 for 1 year and 1 abstention. Therefore the meeting was for 1 year. And the following message will be read out every Sunday morning in May.

Good morning and welcome to our service of worship this morning.

The election of Elders this year will take place at the July Church Meeting. Five of the current Elders are due to stand down. Caroline, Mary and Ryan have completed 2 terms of 3 years (plus 1 due to Covid) and will not be standing for election. Val Cooper and Val Berry have completed one three year term and are willing to stand again.

Nomination papers will be available in the Vestibule through-out May. These will be attached to an envelope and will need to be returned to the Vestry or an Elder in the envelope by the last Sunday in May. Each nomination will need to be signed by a proposer, a seconder and the nominee, and the nominee will need to have been a Church Member for a minimum of one year. Please prayerfully consider who you would like to nominate, and if approached please prayerfully consider your answer. If you have any questions about being an Elder, please do look at the notice board at the back of the Sanctuary or ask any of the Elders. All these details are in Welcome throughout May

The Meeting ended at 8.30pm by sharing the Grace together
The next meeting is Thursday 30th May 2024 at 7.30.

Signed byVal Gill on 30th May 2024