

The Parish Church of St. George, Jesmond



Parochial Church Council

Minutes of a meeting of St. George's PCC on Wednesday 24th March at 7.30pm via zoom.

Present	Revd Canon Brian Hurst (Chair)	Bill Apedaile
	Revd Derek Avery	Louise Chapman (Churchwarden)
	Mike de la Hunt	Donald Gaze)
	Joan Grenfell	Graham Hatt (Churchwarden)
	Revd Stephanie Keates	Alison Mattinson
	Enid Pearson	Kay Plumley
	Paul Taylor	
Apologies	Bill Apedaile	Revd Derek Avery
	Caroline Field	Izzy McDonald-Booth
Not Present	Carmen Hubbard	Sophie Leach
In Attendance	Catherine Laidler (Secretary)	

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Prayers</p> <p>The vicar welcomed John Sadler and PCC members and the meeting opened with a prayer.</p>	
	<p>Discussion on Way Forward</p> <p>John had produced a discussion paper on the way forward, based on what he had heard previously from the PCC and the smaller group created in the previous meeting. Based on the discussion paper, the following questions and discussion points were raised:</p> <p>What is Church?</p> <p>Members were asked to consider what is church? Something to go to or something to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was both. The Building was where people went to meet and to worship but the people who meet and worship are the church and take the church with them wherever they go. • Church was both building and community. There was a risk it became more about the maintenance of listed buildings with more time spent discussing matters relating to the building which bore no relevance to what the church did/was about • Church was about people. The pandemic had prevented people from meeting and friends formed through church were missed. • Same word was used in two different ways – to refer to the church building and to refer to the people who went to church. • Many had the sense that church was something you went to once a week • Church was a community of people who had committed themselves to God. <p>A consultation four years ago had defined that it was about four areas Worship/Nurture/Inclusivity/Engagement with groups formed to progress these areas. Engagement had not progressed as much as other areas but this meant progress could be made in a more deliberate way.</p>	

What is God calling us, as community/church, to be and to do?

- Individual people engage with the community in particular ways
- Need to consider what we already do and what else we could do
- Easy to say we do certain things without going deeply into what we actually do
- It would be useful to do an audit of what people were engaged in within Jesmond and the wider community and include the areas as part of worship
- Are we a collection of individuals who turn up and then go our own way?
- We have a corporate engagement as corporate body of the church.

What reputation does St George's have? What does the non-church going community of Jesmond say about St George's?

- Many people make use of the green – to sit or to play. Known as a resting place
- Known for its good Christmas Eve service. It has a good reputation for providing a service at Christmas that families can enjoy.
- Many people would say always asking for money. Need money to keep buildings maintained but can distract from actual purpose.
- Seen as rich in human resources and rich in skills. Can be seen as a snobby and posh church.

What would we like St George's to have a reputation for?

- The Eco Group was working towards the target of being carbon neutral by 2030. It would be good to be known as one of the churches working towards this target
- Would be good to have a reputation for Compassion, Love and Justice – which was what Christ was about.

What is God saying to us?

- Need to be open to God to discern his purpose for us.
- Need to identify what in Jesmond needs God's work
- Need to become in touch with God to identify what the community needs and build on that so that the community is engaged and excited, making Finance less of an issue.

Engagement

- There was a tendency to ignore issues, such as homelessness, even when confronted with it. Think about creating safe spaces and addressing the issues
- How to make the church a place of welcome and wellbeing is something that someone could come to talk about
- Don't understand all the nooks and crannies of Jesmond. Opened up into a chasm over the last year. It would be good to bring together community leaders to understand what the issues are and contribute towards making the church a place of welcome. Need to understand what is going on and what has gone on during the last year
- Have to learn how to welcome people who are different to us.
- Need to broaden view and share expertise and experience with churches that are poorer
- People outside of church have preconceived ideas of what the Anglican Church is. Reluctant to spend much time in any of the church buildings in case they get asked to join in.
- People were not frightened at Christmas but scared of being asked to join in at any other time

- Going into church buildings is not always easy. Need to put ourselves in the shoes of someone who's never been there before. Need to break down perceptions.
- Coming to St George's for the first time, it was good to be able to hover on the edge of things and not be asked to do something. It was important to hold onto that, especially for new people.
- Lot of goodwill amongst us for what we can do. Need to find out what the community needs us to do for them – need to find out what the community identifies as its needs and not what we think its needs are.
- St George's is situated in the middle of a really big student area and there was potentially a lot of work that could be done, particularly with students who may be struggling
- Recently employed a Family and Youth Leader whose main job function was to reach out to the community. There were some initiatives just beginning that would be very helpful.

Know your Church, Know your Neighbourhood

Information on Together Newcastle, an organisation that was happy to work with churches to help them discover what was going on in their community, was shared. The process was Know your Church, Know your Neighbourhood and was four or five sessions designed to help churches think about their neighbourhood. It could be adapted to meet the specific needs of individual churches and neighbourhoods. There was a leaflet which John would send to the vicar for distribution to the PCC.

Time was spent discussing the initiative and there was a concern raised that it could be another process which, whilst useful, may not ultimately achieve anything. John explained that a driver/coordinator should be appointed who could ask the right questions and keep the project moving forward, ensuring meetings were scheduled and actions were completed. It would need to be one person rather than a small group of people.

Louise Chapman proposed that Kerry Crellin be invited to talk to the PCC about starting and working on the process of Know your Church, Know your Neighbourhood. Joan Grenfell seconded. A majority were in favour, with one abstention.

John would get in touch with Kerry and explain the background. It was noted that a driver/coordinator would need to be appointed.

John was thanked for all his input and help.