MINUTES OF THE CHURCH SUPPORT GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN

ST MARGARET’S CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2017

PRESENT: David Frost, Penny Savill, Michael Scott and Harold Taylor

1. NOTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2017

These were agreed as a correct record.

2 MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA

Minute 2 - Matters Arising

**NADFAS (1976 report on St Margaret’s church)**: The original copy has been found. Michael volunteered to sort out the pages, illustrations and photographs into the correct order. To prevent further deterioration these will be placed in separate plastic sleeves in the file marked ‘church property register’. The register will be stored in the locked vestry box for safe keeping.

Jean Offord will be informed the report has been found. **ACTION: M SCOTT**

We agreed to check if the hand bells kept in the vestry are included in the church insurance.  **ACTION: P SAVILL**

Minute 6 Church Spring Clean: This was a success with seven volunteers taking part.

Minute 8 - Any Other Business

**Wallpaper pasting boards**: Members of the PCC agreed these are unwanted items and can be recycled or thrown away.

A note advertising the boards will be placed in May’s Margaretting News. **ACTION: P SAVILL**

*Since the meeting three of the six boards have been recycled.*

3. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Penny reported on the various matters discussed at a PCC meeting held on 23 March which included:

PCC membership: Liz Lawrence has resigned from the PCC.

2016 Accounts: The signed off church accounts for the year ending 31 December will be presented at the APCM on 27 April. The treasurer advised the PCC that the Tithe Chancel Trust investment which has increased to £17,956 can be used for church repairs. Bill Carnochan, the church treasurer, who has acted as St Margaret’s treasurer for four years, will be standing down after the APCM.

Church website: The contract for managing the website has been renewed. The website needs updating. The PCC is waiting for the contractors to respond to this request.

Church services: The times of the twice monthly Sunday services have been changed from 11:00am to 11:15am. The concept of St Margaret’s becoming a Festival Church is to be explored. The church would still be available for ‘rites of passage’ – baptisms, weddings and funerals. We agreed if the number of church services are restricted as a consequence of St Margaret’s becoming a Festival Church we may wish to consider purchasing a dehumidifier.

4. CHURCH SUPPORT GROUP FINANCES AND MEMBERSHIP

Harold reported on our current financial situation. We now have £3,434.59 in the bank. There was a good response to the membership renewal requests with only a handful of renewals outstanding.

5. CHURCHYARD IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

David will be reporting the following improvements at APCM on 27 April.

Porch: The woodwork was treated in November 2016.

Paths: The widening of the path to the right of the porch was completed on 21 April.

During the next two weeks a volunteer will be spraying the paths with glycophosphate.

The reshingling of paths will take place after the drainage works to the porch.

Compost bin and signage: A new compost bin and signage have been installed.

Gravestones: Volunteers have started clearing the brambles, ivy and self rooted shrubs from the older gravestones. Work has started on mapping and recording details on the gravestones.

Churchyard spring working party: Two dates have been agreed – Saturday 22nd and 29th April – four volunteers have been signed up – two for each date.

Hedges: The south facing overgrown hedge has been cut down to waist height.

This hedge and other boundary hedges will need an annual trim. We agreed to write to Patrick Wreathal to thank him for cutting back the south facing hedge. **ACTION: P SAVILL**

6. CHURCHYARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

Copies of the RCCE’s churchyard management guidelines were circulated at the meeting. We agreed we needed to put together a churchyard check list and a walk round the churchyard before our next meeting would help to determine the key aspects of the plan. **ACTION: ALL**

Grass cutting: Harold confirmed the costs of the churchyard grass cutting last year totalled £840. Seventy hours at £12 per hour plus £50 materials. The parish council contributed £450 towards these costs.

David reported he had received a complaint about the damage to a wooden cross and that he had spoken to Chris Elphick about this. We noted several grave curb stones have been damaged. We agreed grass cuttings left all over the churchyard looked unsightly.

Harold will let the committee know when he is in a position to take on the responsibility of monitoring of the grass cutting. Meanwhile we agreed to approach the two contractors which look after the Margaretting verges and the Ingatestone churchyard to find out what their maintenance charges would be. **ACTION: P SAVILL**

Churchyard survey 1990: The 1990 survey records 301 graves. A copy of the 1990 churchyard survey, register of names and gravestone inscriptions were circulated at the meeting.

Churchyard survey 2017: Penny reported she had recorded and marked on a draft map all the post 1990 gravestones. John Currie’s grave starts the new list with his grave being recorded as grave 302 on the draft map. It is hoped the updated information, map, names and inscriptions, can be posted on the church website. The gravestones’ inscriptions were recorded by one of our volunteers.

Penny is to seek advice as to how best to present this new information. **ACTION: P SAVILL**

7. CHURCH BUILDING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Roof tiles and gutters: The missing and broken tiles have been replaced.

Dampness Problem: Archdeacon Elizabeth has authorised the remedial work. Bakers of Danbury have measured up for the new drainage hopper. Bakers will let David know when they are ready to install the new hopper and repair the internal plaster work.

Porch drainage: Harold reported Ian Houghton will be starting work on the improvements to the drainage some time in June. He reported also that Ian Houghton had advised that a shallow gully in front of the porch to allow the water to flow round the porch would not affect the front stone step. The shingle would be scraped away and the new gully installed level with the front step.

We noted there are some leaking gutters which require attention. The drainage improvements will include clearing gutters, drains and gullies. The cracks in the gullies will be sealed also.

Church Cleaning: Harold reported the cleaning costs for last year totalled £420. Forty two hours at £10 per hours plus £18 for cleaning materials.

8. FUND RAISING

U3A Church Tour: The Rayleigh church group is due to visit the church on Monday, 8 May at 11am.

Art Demonstration: Susan Keeble is willing to organise an art demonstration in the church next summer. This would be a weekday afternoon event. Susan has asked for possible dates. Penny to raise this with the PCC and come back with suggested dates for Susan to work on. **ACTION P SAVILL**

Music Concert: Liz Lawrence has close family ties with Cantate. Penny to check to see if Liz would contact Cantate to see if the choir would organise a concert next summer. **ACTION: P SAVILL**

Soul Appreciation: Michael to check with Tim Boem if he would be willing to organise another soul appreciation event in the church. **ACTION: M SCOTT**

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 5 June 2017 at 10am.