THE UNITED BENEFICE OF
HENLEY-ON-THAMES WITH REMENHAM

PARISH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, HENLEY-ON-THAMES
www.stmaryshenley.org.uk

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parochial Church Council
held on
Tuesday 10th June 2008
at 8.00 pm
in the Chantry House

PRESENT

The Rector, Carol Brook-Partridge (Churchwarden), Ceridwen Cranford, Stuart Crippen (Treasurer), David Dew, Anne Forrest, Peter Hopkins, Stephen Nichols, Geoffrey Taylor (Churchwarden) and Martin Whittaker .

The meeting was preceded by a celebration of the Eucharist in St Leonard's Chapel.

1 PRAYERS

The meeting began with prayers.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Brian Brent, Andy Butler, Liz Preston and Mary Wood.

3 ELECTION OF PCC SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Stephen Nichols was nominated to replace Peter Hopkins as PCC Secretary. This was approved by the PCC. Stuart Crippen agreed to continue as PCC Treasurer, which the PCC approved.

4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last PCC meeting on the 25th of March were approved. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Buildings - Geoffrey Taylor reported that he had noticed some rot in ceiling rafters near to the organ pipes. There is also some damp in the roof in the South Aisle. He will arrange for these to be inspected to determine what needs to be done to fix the problems. We are looking for an architect able to perform the quinquennial inspection as soon as possible, after our previous architect declined the work.

Statue of Our Lady – Geoffrey, Carol Brook-Partridge, Anne Forrest and Fr Martyn met to discuss where a statue of Our Lady could be put in the church, and agreed on a site next to the altar in the Lady Chapel. Geoffrey will look for a suitable statue.

6 PARISH RENEWAL AND DISCIPLESHIP

Carol and Geoffrey (among others from St Mary's) attended the Bishop's "Living Faith" conference, which discussed what parishes in the diocese can do to improve and deepen their discipleship and mission. They were impressed by the conference and have brought back many ideas which could be shared with the parish. This is planned for September and October.

7 PASTORAL MATTERS

There were no pastoral matters to be discussed.

8 MATTERS FOR DECISION AND REPORT

St Mary's has two eighteenth-century brass chandeliers which were removed from the church in 2000, and are in need of restoration. Geoffrey obtained three quotations for this restoration work, and recommended the lowest of these at £2000. We recently received £1000 from a film company who filmed from the Tower, and it is hoped £1000 can be raised by selling the Broadwood piano (see Any Other Business below). The PCC agreed to pay for the restoration, and will decide later where in church the chandeliers should be put. Fr Martyn will notify our insurers that we intend to use candles in the chandeliers.

Geoffrey will be tidying the porch area, adding stands for literature and noticeboards. The PCC agreed to pay £300 for these materials.

9 TREASURER'S REPORT

Stuart presented a report on the church's finances, which had been scrutinised by the Standing Committee at its last meeting. Our total assets, including the Lima fund, Chantry House fund and Organ fund, stand at £208,116. The balance in the Restricted funds is largely unchanged from the last PCC meeting. As at 31st May, Unrestricted funds stood at £50,576, compared with £57,404 last year. Excluding the effect of the Organ fund, PCC income for the year to date is £59,350, with expenditure at £68,072 (a deficit of £8,722). The deficit last year was even higher. Our annual spreadsheet indicates a break-even situation by the end of 2008, although the effect of the fall in the stock market is likely to decrease the value of our Coif units, and result in a paper loss in our accounts.

The Organ fund stands at £47,468, of which we have already spent £26,118, leaving a balance available of £21,350.

The Standing Committee recommended donations of £500 each be made to the Burma Appeal and China Earthquake Appeal. The PCC agreed to pay these sums from our Charitable Donations fund, which currently stands at £3802. The Standing Committee also recommended pay increases of 5% per annum for our Tower Captain Norman Topsom and cleaner Caroline Loveridge. The PCC agreed.

Geoffrey spoke about plans for a Stewardship Campaign to reverse the decline in planned giving. The Bishop of Oxford had said at the "Living Faith" conference that the sacred centre of our work as a church must be sound before we do anything. Fr Martyn agreed, and it was decided that a Stewardship Campaign should follow autumn's Renewal and Discipleship courses.

10 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The fire equipment and alarm were checked recently at some expense. The paving in front of the church is becoming dangerous, and the railings on the steps outside the South-East corner of the church need repair. Both of these are the responsibility of South Oxfordshire District Council. Fr Martyn will speak to them about this.

11 AOB

Geoffrey will arrange for the Broadwood piano to be advertised for sale in the Henley Standard and on eBay.

The churchwardens are required to keep an inventory ("Terrier") of everything in the church, and a log book of decisions made when running projects. Geoffrey will arrange for photographs to be taken of many items in the church so that these can be updated.

Fr Martyn will ask the Council for Care of Churches for permission to sell the Petrus van Schendel picture in the church's possession.

Julie Griffin, the Parish Secretary, is now a permanent contracted employee. Elspeth Villet, the Site Manager, will shortly be returning to work on lesser hours after illness. The churchwardens have discussed her safety at work with her.

A request was made at the recent APCM for newer hymns to be used in services. A suggestion box will be put in church so members of the congregation can suggest hymns. The Rector and Organist can then review when these are suitable for inclusion in services.

The Additional Curates Society is looking for a Parish Secretary. Anne Forrest volunteered.

The PCC agreed to mark the 175th anniversary of the start of the Oxford Movement with an hour of silent prayer in St Mary's. This will be at 6:30pm on Monday 14th July

Fr Martyn asked that prayers be said in anticipation of the next meeting of General Synod and the Lambeth Conference.

The meeting closed with prayer at about 9.45pm.

Signed by the Chairman ……

Dated ……