THE UNITED BENEFICE OF
HENLEY-ON-THAMES WITH REMENHAM

PARISH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, HENLEY-ON-THAMES
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Minutes of a Meeting of the Parochial Church Council
held on
Tuesday 31st March 2009
at 8.00 pm
in the Chantry House

PRESENT Brian Brent, Carol Brook-Partridge (Churchwarden), Andy Butler, Stuart Crippen (Treasurer), Anne Forrest, Liz Preston, Geoffrey Taylor (Churchwarden, and Chairman), Martin Whittaker.

1. PRAYERS.
The meeting began with prayers.

2. APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence were received from Mary Wood, Stephen Nichols, Ceridwen Cranford, David Dew, The Rector.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.
The minutes of the last meeting on 20th. January were approved subject to an alteration to paragraph 5d. The minutes will be amended and then signed by the chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a. The Chairman explained that the Buildings Committee has now been convened and the initial focus has been on items requiring urgent attention. The item of most concern because it involves water ingress is at high level between the east gable of the Lady Chapel and the Sanctuary
b. There are a number of areas which can be attended to immediately without professional support. Work has already commenced on some of these items which include: Painting the roof of St Leonard's Chapel, vermin protection, trip hazards, securing loose parts of

the pulpit, access to the boiler room, sundry H&S items, testing of fire extinguishers, fixing the loose lightening rod earth strip, asbestos survey, and security issues.

c. Oxley Conservation has quoted for professional services in connection with the east gable repairs in the sum of 15% of net total cost with a minimum fee of £3,500 exclusive of VAT. It is anticipated that the total cost of these repairs including fees and VAT will be c£8,000.
d. The Treasurer reported a balance of c£20,000 in the Fabric Fund, although some of this money was donated towards repairs to the floor of the Jesus Chapel.
e. Carol Brook-Partridge proposed, seconded by Brian Brent that an application be made for a faculty for the repairs to the east gable and that Richard Oxley be appointed to oversee the work, and further that an application be made for a faculty for the repainting of the roof of St Leonard's Chapel. Both motions were carried unanimously.
f. Brian Brent explained some good reasons for the PCC to approach the Quinquennial Report with some scepticism. He suggested that the immediate need is to deal urgently with the East Gable repairs where the damage is due to ongoing water ingress and therefore progressive, and items also deemed urgent for H&S reasons. The Report should then become the basis for the development of a conservation plan. He suggested in some detail how this should be approached.
g. The Chairman urged the PCC to obtain a copy of the Quinquennial Report from the parish office and said that the Buildings Committee are working on an action plan to address the issues raised therein.
h. The Chairman thanked Brian Brent for his efforts and said that the next step was for the Building Committee to consider the matter.

5. MATTERS FOR DECISION AND REPORT

a. **Stewardship campaign.** The returns have not been analysed. They will be looked at after Easter. A number of people have come forward offering to help with Chantry House teas

b. **Chantry House Lift.** Martin Whittaker reported that early in 2008 the PCC discussed the possibility of installing a lift in the Chantry House and asked for a feasibility study to be carried out. A thorough feasibility study was undertaken together with report for the PCC meeting in September 2008. The PCC rejected the report. Following the rejection by the PCC, the CHMC decided to pursue the feasibility of installing an incline platform lift as an alternative the original vertical lift proposal and as a first step to proceed with applying for Listed Building Consent. Listed Building Consent was secured in January 2009.
c. The recent CHMC meeting considered whether the installation of the incline platform lift was appropriate and whether a recommendation should be made to the PCC.
d. The issue with the vertical lift had been the loss of space downstairs and its visual and physical intrusion upstairs. The incline platform lift would leave the downstairs room as it is. The impact on the stairway and the end wall by the stairway would be considerable. The equipment was considered to be bulky, visually intrusive, and simply ugly.
e. Six months ago the cost was estimated at £26,000. There would also be an annual cost for maintenance. The cost would be met entirely out of Chantry House funds.
f. There is a significant issue relating to manually removing disabled persons from the top floor in the event of an emergency and or power failure.
g. The Chantry house Management committee decided not to make a recommendation to the PCC to proceed with the installation of the incline platform lift. The main issues leading to this decision were: A) The visual impact upon the north wall of this unique building. B) The operational difficulty of ensuring that a strong and fit trained operator is available at all times when the upper floor is in use.
h. Thanks to the CHMC were proposed by Brain Brent, seconded by Anne Forrest, and carried unanimously.
i. **Lady Chapel re-ordering.** The changes to the Lady Chapel have been completed at a cost of c£500, considerably less than the £1,500 allocated at the last

PCC meeting. The chairman extended thanks to everyone involved with all aspects of this work including the recent party especially Brian Brent, Mary Wood, Anne Forrest and the Social Committee.

j. **Double glazing for the Rectory**. The Chairman reported that St Nicholas, Remenham have agreed a 25% share of the benefice contribution. The benefice contribution figure has not yet been agreed.
k. **Welcome cards.** There is now a system in place to follow action the welcome cards which are received.

6. TREASURERS BUSINESS

a. Income has reduced in comparison with last year but most of the reduction is artificial because there is a gift aid payment due from HMRC.
b. Occasional legacies which we have enjoyed cannot be relied on. Rationalization of phone company installations will result in a small reduction of revenue this year with a greater impact next year. It is therefore essential that we exercise tight cost control.
c. There has been a slight reduction in gift aid income.
d. Total funds in the draft 2009 accounts are £194k compared with £206k for 2007. The shortfall of £11,976 is due to: PCC shortfall £2,772-, Chantry House profit on activities £4,938, and a Paper loss in value of COIF shares £14,146.
e. The Treasurer reported on a discussion with the auditors about the presentation of debtors and creditors in particular the debtor amount shown in the draft accounts for the gift aid tax reclaim which was to be £6500. The auditors agreed that a higher – still cautious assumption – would be £9000, which will be shown in the final accounts thereby increasing our overall funds from £194K shown in the draft accounts to £196K shown in the final accounts.
f. A resolution to approve the draft accounts (including the alteration shown in ‘e’) was proposed by Andy Butler, seconded by Brian Brent and carried unanimously.
g. There was a discussion about the suitability of a full audit or an inspection being applied to the accounts. This led to a proposal that the PCC continue to have the

accounts fully audited, being proposed by Liz Preston, seconded by Brian Brent and carried unanimously.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**
    a. Brian Brent suggested that as the eagle lectern appears to be redundant the PCC might consider selling it. The discussion which followed was inconclusive. The Chairman suggested that a further discussion at the PCC could be appropriate.
    b. The grand piano will be moved to the Jesus Chapel.
    c. The faculty for the re-ordering of the Lady Chapel is still outstanding. The Rector is pursuing the matter.
    d. The proposed repairs to the antique altar frontal were discussed. The cost is expected to be c£5.5k rising to c£8k once the cost of materials has been included. The Treasurer is concerned about our ability to find this money in the fabric fund and he urged caution so far as reducing the balance held in the deposit account is concerned. Whilst the merits of restoring the frontal are not in question there was a general feeling within the PCC that the restoration should not be carried out until more funds are available. However, if any individual would like to take on the task of fund raising for the frontal repairs they will receive the full support of the PCC.

8. The meeting closed with prayers at 9:05pm

Signed by the Chairman……..

Dated…….