**St Giles’ Church West Bridgford**

**Parochial Church Council Meeting**

3rd November 2022: 7.30

**Minutes**

Present: Jonathon Ayers, Lizzie Battrum, Lucy Bolt, Barry Clark, Martin Crew, Catherine Elliott, Al Ferraro, Barry Hayman, Jude Hill, Chris Lane, Johanna Langheld, Roger Ottway, Peter Rhodes, Sarah Slack, Claire Voce, Hilary Walters. Sheila Wheaton

1. Opening prayers
2. Apologies for absence: Christine Hutchings, Neil Sutcliffe
3. Appointment of new Rector
4. Review of recruitment process and number of applications received

The whole process was reviewed. The PCC felt that there had been a short time between advertising and interviewing, and this may have been counterproductive. Some had concerns that the wider PCC were not allowed to contribute to shortlisting decisions.

St Giles’ should be attractive, even though the COE has a shortage of vicars. The diocese may be able to advise on how to attract more applications.

We should be proactive and suggest a timetable to the Diocese: perhaps, at the earliest: advert mid-January, interview mid-late February (TBC). A successful candidate may well have to give three months notice, so would take up the post at the end of May, although some might prefer a move in time for the beginning of September.

Action: AF to propose timetable to diocese

Action: AF to ask diocese for advice on how to attract more candidates (see actions for 3d, too)

Action: AF to inquire confirm whether local shortlisting & appointment ‘practices’ are diocesan or COE in origin.

1. Review of the 24-30 hours prior to interview

We felt that the time prior to interview had gone well, and a suitable range of opportunities was available to candidates. The meal with PCC had also been successful. Fears that there were too many of us for the candidates proved unfounded. Some members felt that we should have had an opportunity to debrief after the meal.

1. Summary of the interview process

The interview panel consisted of AF and CE from St Giles’, plus four (should have been five) from the diocese: Bishop Andy, Archdeacon Phil Williams, Dean Nicola (Dean of Southwell, patron of St Giles’), Rev Mark Fraser (as Area Dean). The Lay Chair of the Deanery could not attend as she was unwell. AF & CE confirmed the panel had not seemed too big, and that all members contributed to the interview process. AF & CE gave a broad outline of the interview structure & commented that they’d found all other interviewers helpful, supportive & very professional. AF& CE reassured others that they could both make full & independent contributions to the process and, indeed, were given first chance to feedback their judgments to the rest of the panel.

There was no formal process for candidates to give feedback to St Giles, although Phil Williams had spoken to them afterwards and may have feedback for us.

Action: AF to check with Phil Williams for candidates’ feedback.

1. Lessons learned

Profile

The profile is a key document and a lot of work had already gone into it, but we may need to tweak it. Items discussed included:

* That the profile may ‘undersell’ the remarkable building in which we worship.
* The profile was already out of date in that we have initiated significant outreach events this autumn and held a successful financial stewardship campaign: these could be included in a future iteration.
* We could consider including further information about access to the church and our links with local secular leaders.
* It may help to give more emphasis & explanation, within the profile, about diocesan support & mentoring for local clergy

Action: AF to discuss possible minor changes with profile group (see actions for 3a, too).

Action: PCC to reread the profile and make suggestions.

Website

Urgent action was needed to update the website. We could use material from the profile. Google analytics was a very good tool for understanding how well the website was working. A video about aspects of the church was suggested.

Action: JA to consult Rupert Poon about editing the site.

Other

St Giles may have the largest number of children & youth in the diocese. The diocese recognise our strengths and acknowledge that there is an opportunity here.

1. Next steps
2. Towards a fresh recruitment cycle

Some felt the PCC could not fully contribute to this issue without further additional insights into the appointment process (something that is limited by rules of confidentiality). Hopes were expressed that the diocese would be supportive in future, after previous support had been focused on early phases of the process.

We may well have a clearer view now of the kind of candidate that we want. We have stressed our strong sense of community and our pride in honouring both traditional and modern styles of worship (although future growth may depend more on modern styles); rather than seeking someone who can perfectly cover all these areas, perhaps team leader skills are also relevant (mindful that the team would need to be grown over time).

Might candidates with children paradoxically be put off from applying because the schools in West Bridgford are over-subscribed; could we reassure them in some way?

The advert was also key to the process. Several points were raised:

* The advert may have given the impression that we were inward looking – we can now stress more outreach and that we are beginning to try to reach non-Christians.
* Did the advert capture the imagination of potential candidates?
* Where should the advert be placed? Was there a Facebook page for clergy/ spouses?
* Did the advert appeal only to those who were already actively looking for a move? Could we inspire those who had not yet thought about moving?
* Did the advert make clear that expenses could be claimed?
* It is possible that someone who had decided not to apply initially may feel encouraged to do so when they see the post re-advertised.

Action: AF to seek advice from the diocese (and possibly someone from Trinity church)

1. Sustaining and progressing St Giles’ during a longer vacancy

It is clear that we are not simply waiting for a rector but are promoting new initiatives during the vacancy. The Outreach/ Identity group had put in place excellent events leading up to Christmas; we should plan for after Christmas (see below). The financial stewardship campaign has also been very successful.

We need to take stock of where we are and where we would like to be (as described in the profile). We can continue our progress during the vacancy. It was agreed to form two sub-groups; one to develop our traditional services, another to focus on our more modern and youth/children focused ‘offering’. Each group might have 4-5 PCC members, plus relevant music leads, plus Peter Watkins & Christopher Wheaton.

We need to be sure that guests are welcome (“every service should be an invitational service”).

An up-to-date website was essential.

Action: AF & JH to consider how we should move forward. *Post meeting note: JH will chair a “9am plus”….[Evensong group & Midweek service], AF will chair a “10.30 & young people group”. Invitations to express interest already circulated.*

1. Update from Identity group

This was tabled. We were delighted with and very grateful for the many ideas and the eagerness of congregation members to get involved. In the long term we would continue to need volunteers. Plans for after Christmas were discussed. Options include:

* An Alpha course in January/ February was suggested (TBC).
* The PCC supported the proposal from CW and PW to run a four week Lent course
* Meetings at the Stratford Haven for men to discuss Christianity were suggested. Women could do something similar.
* We should also consider some children’s/ family events, to build on the contacts made in the Christmas events.

Going forwards, care is needed to ensure the PCC are sighted of plans at an early stage. Indeed PCC approval is needed before final decisions are made (to ensure proposals align to strategy, to avoid misunderstandings / scheduling clashes etc).

Action: AF, JH, Identity and Outreach group to discuss how to take things further. Katie Conley to be included in plans.

1. Christmas:

11 December: Beer and carols at Stratford Haven (tbc)

18 December: Carol Service 7.00pm (~~tbc~~ now confirmed at that time)

24 December: Nativity 4.00pm (Ellen Dann leading)

24 December: Midnight Mass 11.00pm (Christopher Wheaton officiating)

25 December: Morning Service 10.00am (Christopher Wheaton officiating)

1. The meeting closed with a prayer and then the Grace.

HAW

Dates of future meetings:

18th January 2023

15th March 2023

April: church AGM

17th May 2023

19th July 2023 (*post meeting note* *by AF: please can we revisit that date?… I’m away)*