

ST MARY THE VIRGIN – WEST MALLING
Minutes of the meeting of the PCC held in the Church Centre
on held on Tuesday 20 January 2015 at 8.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Revd. David Green (Chairman), Becky Clifford (Churchwarden), John Musker (Churchwarden), Lesley Bays (Treasurer), Margaret Moore, Rob Hancock, Colin Bays, Gail Crutchfield, David Day, Isobel Macdonald, Andrew Mills, Christie Ransom, Anna Tunnicliff, & Canon Alan Vousden.

2. **Apologies** were received from Ralph Alliston, Denise McKeown (Secretary) and Leo Sharp.

7. **Fabric**

7.1. **DAC response on possible extension and Church Centre**

7.1.1. The Chairman presented paper 2015/01-WM05 previously circulated. A copy of the paperwork is available on request. The DAC 's response on a possible extension was discussed. It was noted that David had met with Colin, Issy and Alan to consider next steps and Colin Bays had kindly provided some sketches that were very preliminary but would allow for the DAC's concerns. He had done a sketch for an extension which would form a meeting room for 60 seated and around 100 standing. Colin circulated pictures of Chiddingstone extension which was timber framed glazed building and cost £140,000 to erect (they didn't have to do an archeological dig as it was erected on an area not used for burial). English Heritage were keen to see that we didn't have anything too dominant and didn't obscure the tower. We were also constrained by the position of graves with vaults which effectively form the boundary to the area we could use. A wide ranging discussion ensued around whether it was better to phase the works or try to carry out an extension with loo and refreshment station inside the church at the same time. An additional door into the extension was suggested to avoid a bottleneck. If the works were not to be phased, was it necessary to have a loo facility inside the church itself? It was agreed that the PCC would respond to the DAC with Colin's drawings for their consideration as to whether this represented a good direction to possible plans. The consensus was that, as a PCC, we were keen to carry out the work in both Phase I and II (as they had been envisaged to this point).

7.1.2. It was agreed that we need to commission a piece of work to survey the ground around the vaults properly so that we can ascertain which graves are going to be impossible to overcome, and which could be moved. Colin agreed to take that forward.

7.1.3. In regard to the **future of the Church Centre**, Claire Innes had set out our options clearly. It was noted that, once sold, there is no guarantee what developers will do although there are some self-limiting balances as developers would be subject to planning permission and, as a neighbour, we'd have a right to comment on proposals.

7.1.4. In a wide-ranging discussion, two conflicting threads were very evident amongst the PCC as a whole. On one hand, several members felt that a sale of the Church Centre prior to permissions being obtained for development at the Church was premature and even then, the sale should be made with planning permission for change of use in order to secure best value. At the same time, several members were frustrated by the financial drain of the Church Centre on our reserves particularly when it is not fit for very many purposes at the present time. It was agreed that making progress on this matter was a very high priority.

7.1.5. Claire Innes has said she was happy to arrange a pre-meeting with TMBC (costing around £120) to explore possible change of use. It was agreed that we needed to take this forward and have this meeting.

7.1.6. The Chairman also felt that we were missing a link in our ability to drive this forward. He said that the PCC is the legally responsible body for decision-making, we have a sub-group that includes local residents which is useful for transparency and discussions about the future of the Church Centre, but we need another much smaller core group to move things forward on a day-to-day basis. This group would need to report to PCC at each meeting since they would be accountable to PCC. The Chair felt that Isobel, Colin and Alan had already been doing this work and would be key invitees but possibly with one or two others. The PCC were happy to approve formation of group to drive it forward.

Signed

Chairman

Date