

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH – WEST MALLING
Minutes of the meeting of the PCC held in the Church Centre
on Tuesday 19th January 2016 at 8.00 p.m.

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

2. Apologies were received from Bruce Dickson.

7. Fabric

7.2. Capital Project and Church Centre

7.2.1. Clare Innes gave a verbal update on progress since the last PCC meeting. Because of a high number of applications going through the system at TMBC, our planning application would not be considered at the TMBC January meeting and would now go to the meeting on 2nd March. The public meeting hosted by West Malling Parish Council had been well attended with concerns raised including over-development, access, parking, and disruption during works. Clare explained that the sub-group had been disappointed with WMPC's written response which included a number of unreasonable requests that would, if implemented, push the project into negative equity. The Sub-Group had written a response to WMPC's document and submitted it to TMBC as part of the planning paperwork. The public's responses on the TMBC website are evenly balanced between those in favour and those against.

7.2.2. On behalf of the Sub-Group, Clare made a proposal that we amend our planning application to reduce the number of dwellings to four instead of five. Whilst the amendment would keep the same square footage, the Sub-Group felt that it would offer a compromise to local residents opposed to the development and address WMPC's comments about over-development. It was also likely to reduce the number of cars accessing the site (because of one less household) and mean the available car parking spaces had a potential greater level of access for neighbours. It would also simplify one or two aspects of the planning process where TMBC had raised a query about whether the site needed to comply with social housing legislation. The Planning Officer had indicated that the reduction could be considered as an amendment rather than a re-submission, thus saving time (and money).

7.2.3. A wide ranging discussion ensued. PCC members noted that such a reduction in dwellings would further curtail the PCC's income from the potential sale of the site for subsequent use on the church. It was also noted, however, that if TMBC agreed with WMPC's comments and consent was either refused or it was accepted but with such level of provisos as WMPC were demanding, the PCC would have little choice but to sell the site without planning consent. Such a scenario would lead to an even greater drop of potential income and leave the future of the existing building in a precarious situation with no ability to restrict development in the sale. The PCC agreed to the Sub-Group's proposal and instructed them to amend the planning application with TMBC to be for four dwellings (three in the existing building, one at the rear) instead of the originally envisaged five (three in the existing building, two at the rear).

