

Friends of St Paul's Culham

Meeting Thursday 11th November 2004

Minutes

1 Present

Brian Bracher, Anne Burn, Rob Kennedy (chairman), James Macdonald (treasurer), Kath Pearce, Charles Reichardt, John Storrs (secretary), Carole Sutcliffe, Dr John Ward.

2 Apologies for Absence

Rev Edward Tildesley.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Accepted.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Village School

At the last meeting, it was suggested that the school be approached to ask if a teacher or governor would be willing to become a member of the Friends' committee. No action has yet been taken, and the committee would like to ask Edward Tildesley if he would do this.

4.2 Party after Christmas Carol Service

Brian Bracher reported that the Christmas carol service at St Paul's is now arranged for 6pm on Sunday 19th December. Rev David Haylett will officiate, and Andrew Churchill Stone will play the organ. We will organise a party to follow the service, in the church. The carol service and party will be announced together in the next Mouthpiece. For the party we will provide gluhwein, orange juice, and mince pies. There will be a box for donations. We will cater for 70 people. Kath Pearce will get cardboard plates, napkins, mince pies, gluhwein sachets and orange juice. Rob Kennedy will get 12 bottles of red wine + glasses through the Lion. John Storrs will make gluhwein and heat mince pies. Forms will be available at the party for potential new members.

4.3 Church Projects

Each of these items is discussed further under section 7 below.

(a) A list of possible projects for support by the Friends was prepared by the PCC and presented by Brian Bracher.

(b) Brian Bracher and John Storrs inspected the inner walls of the church tower and found no obvious damp patches. The report during the last meeting of dampness

needing attention evidently relates to the north west corner of the main church, above and behind the electricity distribution board. An inspection of the gutter and drainpipe showed staining of the external wall due to water overflowing from the collector at the top of the drainpipe. Brian said that Chris Reichardt had cleared the gutter and collector of leaves some time before. The primary cause of the damp problem is evidently the replacement in the past of the original large dimension drainpipe with a small domestic drainpipe, to feed the water butt. This may result in overflow at the top in heavy downpours, and certainly makes clogging with leaves more likely. A single, straight drainpipe of the original dimensions should be reinstated as soon as possible, with a less intrusive method to collect water for the water butt. No repair should be made to the damaged plaster until say 6 months after the drainpipe problem has been addressed, to allow the wall to dry out.

(c) John Storrs contacted Southern Water about water services for the church, and had a meeting on site with them. As a result we now know the locations of the water main and sewer, and have a quote for provision of a mains water supply. Copies of the quote and plans were passed to PCC representatives at the meeting. The water connection can easily be made, at a total cost unlikely to exceed £2500. Though the longer term aim is to provide a toilet as well as kitchen facilities, provision of a water connection would be a useful first step.

5 Treasurer's Report

With the agreement of the committee, the treasurer wrote out a cheque for £2917.40 in favour of the PCC, as the Friends' contribution to the cost of Quinquennial Works 2004. Grants towards this have also been received by the PCC from the Oxford Historic Churches Trust (£1000) and UKAEA (£400). After this payment, the Friends' credit balance totals £8199.15.

6 Future Fundraising

It was agreed that the annual membership subscription should go up from £15 to £20.

7 Church Projects

The committee discussed the PCC's list of desired improvements at some length. As agreed at our last meeting, we felt that the Friends funds should support higher profile, publicity worthy improvements, particularly related to the church building. Consequently, the committee felt that tree maintenance, one of the items in the list, should preferably be financed by the PCC. Another item, removal of the old piano, will have to be dealt with by the District Council or a contractor. Brian Bracher will enquire about this. The Friends would be willing to pay a modest sum (£50?) for this if necessary. It was agreed that the south roof needs fairly urgent attention, as broken tiles are collecting in the gutter and falling to the ground. The committee agreed to pay up to around £1000 towards this repair. If the cost is higher than this, further discussion will be needed. Also agreed was a payment of up to £500 for the drainpipe work discussed above under 4.3(b). The PCC was asked to obtain quotes

in respect of carpet maintenance or replacement, so we can discuss possible support at our next meeting (but see the second sentence of this section).

Discussion about water and sewage connection generated some heat, useful as winter approaches. Anne Burn felt that both connections should be made at the same time, because the main requirement is for a toilet. John Storrs argued that as the service pipes for the two services are on opposite side of the church, the work can usefully be done incrementally. The cost of a mains water connection is not high, and it could feed a simple (perhaps temporary) sink unit in the flower corner, giving running hot and cold water in the church for the first time. If the PCC makes an early application for a faculty, we should have the go-ahead within 3 months, with the work hopefully done a short time after that. The problem with the toilet is that there is no straightforward location for it. The present flower corner is too small to accommodate a toilet and sink unit, and in any case the screening is inadequate. The tower would be ideal, if access from the inside of the church could be realised. This might be easy to achieve by moving the organ forward about a metre, though the practicality of this would need careful consideration. An advantage of the tower location is that it would result in the most direct drain route to the main sewer, which is on the other side of the road from the church gate.

8 Any Other Business

John Ward suggested that a letter be sent to businesses on Culham No 1 Site and the Culham Laboratory site, seeking support. Rob Kennedy undertook to do this. It was further suggested that the letter could include an invitation to the Christmas Carol Service and Friends' party.

9 Date of Next Meeting

8pm Thursday 24th February at the Lion.

John Storrs CEng MICE, Secretary, Friends of St Paul's
8 The Green, Culham, Abingdon OX14 4LZ
phone 01235 520395 email js@storrs.demon.co.uk