**HELMDON CHURCH COUNCIL (HCC) MEETING ON MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT WAPPENHAM ROAD HELMDON**

Present

Cliff Netten (in the Chair) Bill Elkington Judith Elkington Fiona Mason Rebecca Mount Ann Netten Paul Stothard Vanessa Vicars

The Meeting began with a prayer.

Apologies for absence

Penny Bonner Niki Phillips Jenny Saunders

Minutes of the last Meeting (22 May 2023) and Matters Arising

The Minutes were Agreed as a true record, subject to clarification that Wiggy had not actually hosted teas and was grateful to the actual hosts. Matters Arising were:

1. The Quinquennial Review Report had not yet been sent to the churchwardens. Cliff would check on progress in a week or two.
2. The recent Jazz evening had been enjoyed by over 50 people and raised some £560. A small sum had not come in from the Sum Up system but would be sorted out shortly.

Finance

Ann summarised the financial position as at the first of September. The unpresented cheque for £379 was due to the Benefice, not Helmdon, and arose from a misunderstanding with funeral directors.

On a show of hands, HCC agreed to pay £4,000 towards our parish share this quarter. Bill offered his thanks to Ann for her hard work as Treasurer, supported by all Members.

Fundraising events

* The Benefice had organised a fundraising Murder Mystery event for 30 September, with almost all tickets now sold. Helmdon would be responsible for cooked potatoes as part of the supper.
* Vanessa and others would act as a sub-Committee for the Christmas Fair on 2 December. John Coatsworth has agreed to be Santa.
* We agreed that the Words and Music Event would be on Wednesday 20 December to avoid a clash with other village events.
* Pancake Morning would be on 10 February. Cliff has booked the Reading Room.
* We would now hold the Race Night on 27 April. Cliff has booked the Reading Room.
* We discussed the Open Gardens event for 9 June. 8-10 people were needed to open their gardens, and some had already been approached by Bill, Judith and Vanessa, explaining we were not looking for garden perfection! The village pub seemed interested in running simple lunches that day. We would have notices in the Reading Room café mornings, and at the Friday Food Larders to increase publicity.

Update on Appointment of a new Rector

We hoped for formal confirmation from the Archdeacon’s Office shortly, once the necessary background checks have been completed.

Pastoral Care

Wiggy was able to drive once again after her accident and was hoping to be more active. We spoke about the continuing lack of movement at Wappenham and Paul agreed to be included in discussions.

Worship

Rebecca explained the plans for Harvest. On Saturday 7th October there would be a celebration at 6:00 pm on similar lines to last year, followed by drinks and nibbles.

On Sunday the 8th there would be a traditional Harvest Service. On the afternoon of Wednesday 11th, the school would hold their own service in church. Harvest gifts would be for nearby Food Banks, so tins and dried goods rather than any fresh produce would be needed.

School staff had yet to plan their Nativity Play and firm up a date.

Paul mentioned the Benefice Worship Committee taking place in a couple of weeks. The 12 November Remembrance Services might be taken in church by Wiggy and by Paul at the war memorial – he was hoping to organise a reasonable sound system.

Any Other Business

* Fiona hoped that Pews News might be used to try and boost choir numbers, especially with Christmas on the horizon.
* Vanessa was concerned about the condition of the churchyard flower bed close to the porch. It should be possible for a few people to join in and tidy it up.
* Bill and Cliff would tackle the pew frontals moved under the chestnut tree and reduce them to kindling.
* We discussed the issue of access to communion at the altar rail, given the step up to the chancel. One option might be to use the Lady Chapel altar, and another might be to bring the host and wine down to the chancel step for administration. These ideas should be considered by the new Rector.
* Bill told us that a gravestone in the Watson family had recently fallen flat. Upkeep of graves fell to families. Wiggy will ask if John Watson knows of any family members who might be able to help. Bill and Cliff have since looked at some other gravestones which are loose and should be made safe.
* We would ensure that Safeguarding returned as a permanent Agenda item – Cliff to action.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 13 November, again at Bill and Judith’s house. We ended with The Grace