

Draft Minutes of Springfield PCC meeting

29th January 2024 at 7.45 pm @ St Paul's Church Roundshaw

Present : David Atkinson (Chair), David Foulkes (Secretary, in the absence of Sarah Miller), Roger Brodie, Mike Cushion, Jenny de Rougemont, Rob Downer, Janet Downham, Kitty Olulari, Tim Samuel, Kathryn Schofield, David Silcock, Mel Wynn.

Staff not in attendance: Sarah Miller

1. **Welcome**

David Atkinson welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened in prayer.

2. **Apologies**

Cathy Brearley

3. **Worship**

David Silcock led a time of worship based on Psalm 96 and a sense of God pursuing all of us individually even though He has also created the vastness of the universe.

4. **Good News**

Mel shared with PCC that she had found out she was being made redundant from her paid employment shortly after she had preached on the book of Jonah at the Sunday Service. Despite this unexpected turn of events she had experienced a real sense of God's peace and of God's timing, with Mel being freed to devote more time to her calling at Springfield particularly when David was away in February. At the same time another employment opportunity was a possibility to be explored.

Kathryn shared that, after the death of her grandfather, a letter from him had been found where it was clear he had a deep-seated personal faith even though he was not a church goer. This was a comfort to her and her family.

Mike related the story of his friend who had been badly burnt but clearly recalled experiencing a bright light and sense of love in his hospital room which he believed was a true spiritual experience.

David Foulkes reminded PCC of the difficult financial and staffing decisions which PCC was faced with at its November meeting. Although there had been transitional challenges in the intervening period, the PCC had been able to agree a balanced budget for 2024 and the timings of staff movements have felt very much in God's leading.

5. **Matters Arising not dealt with elsewhere**

The Minutes of the PCC meeting on 20 November were approved by a Council vote by email in December 2023. The Minutes would be uploaded on to the website at the

same time as those of this meeting, There were no Matters Arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

6. **Ministry Updates**

David referenced the briefing document which he had sent out in advance to Council. Council noted the updates on the following:

Advent & Christmas

There had been a real buzz about our events and activities over Advent and Christmas which connected with many in our community. Seeds had been sown and planning had already started for Advent and Christmas 2024.

New Sunday Series "Returning to the Call"

There had already been a positive response in that four people had made enquiries about a vocational pathway towards pioneering.

Training for the Welcome Team, Stewarding Team and Mental Health Training

Role descriptions to help train the stewarding team and welcome team had been drawn up by Mel, which could be used to brief potential new members of these teams.

A session on Mental Health training had been arranged after the service on 4th February for PCC and group leaders.

Wellbeing and Wonder Group

These sessions, led by Jules Atkinson & Charlie Davies, had proved to be a creative and meaningful gateway into Christmas. The team are exploring other seasonal, contemplative and creative opportunities.

Popcorn and Ponder does Alpha

Beginning last term, there have been clear signs of God at work, transformation, and increasing hunger to meet more deeply with God and engage with the Bible. The team are now reflecting on next steps for the discipling of this group and the next group.

Update on CAP - particularly CAP Life Skills and Money Course

After much prayer and discussion, it had been decided not to run the CAP Life Skills group this term as Jean Grima will be stepping down as manager at Easter and a few people have stepped down from the team. However discussions were taking place with a CAP Life Skills Manager from Carshalton Beeches Baptist Church where there was a possibility of a partnership with teams from Springfield and the Beeches Baptist Church. This would allow Jean to continue as a CAP representative for Money Coaching and supporting Roundshaw pioneering as a member of the staff team.

PCC also noted that team member Duncan Prince had a CAP stall at the Phoenix Centre January drop-in, the CAP Prayer WhatsApp group had continued its prayer support, there had been a CAP Sunday at Holy Trinity on 14 January and that in this period of transition for CAP activities a few taster craft and bible sessions were being considered at Vanguard Way on Monday lunchtimes.

Prayer

Weekday prayer meetings continued to attract a faithful group of prayers and the prayer calendar has proved a helpful aide-memoire for those wishing to pray. Mel and Wendy will be reviewing all other prayer activities in the coming months.

Safeguarding

Cathy and Sarah have had a meeting to discuss safeguarding at Springfield and Kathryn has started her role as Safeguarding Administrator.

Diversity training

Honest feedback had been provided to the Diocese regarding the Diversity training which took place in November. A response would be awaited before arranging a second session for those who could not attend the first.

Pastoral Team

It was noted that the pastoral team is depleted at present with a large proportion of the volunteers in the team having had surgery, ill health or family issues. The “right” people were urgently needed to increase the team’s capacity with Sarah’s pastoral role being much less hands-on.

One approach has been to ask individuals close to someone with acute need to support them on a one-off basis. In reply to a question, David confirmed no special training was required to be part of the pastoral team but members of the team would need to be “Safer recruited”.

Stanley Park Road

PCC noted that the Ruck family were still living at 49 Stanley Park Road as their purchase of a property had fallen through. They can stay for the foreseeable future and we have reverted to the one month notice contract. Roger confirmed that the maintenance works would soon be completed so that a valuation of the property could take place on 9th February.

PCC thanked Roger for his “above and beyond” work in repairing the storm-damaged fence and attending to some noxious drainage issues.

7. Mission Giving

Update on RUSH

More reassurance was needed on RUSH meeting the necessary due diligence and governance standards to enable Springfield to support RUSH in its new season of existence. The Mission Partner Sub-Group led by Jenny, with the assistance of David

Silcock, would be drawing up a policy on what reassurances were needed to support any charity.

In the meantime, there was a sum of over £25k of unspent mission giving and it was proposed that the charity "Open Doors" with whom Springfield has a relationship (David Bowen is now our church representative for Open Doors) be given a donation of £5k which could be used for trauma care for churches and individuals who have witnessed atrocities and also for long term livelihood projects which could help to rebuild churches.

After discussion it was agreed to vote on the proposal to donate £5k to Open Doors with the proviso that the charity provide a report to Springfield in three to six months on how the money was spent.

Proposed: Janet Downham, seconded David Foulkes. Agreed nem.con

8. **MiniChurch, Roadrunners, Fluorescent Proposal**

PCC noted that we are currently short of leaders across all three Sunday groups. The hope is that by the end of Easter we will have a better aligned team and can build them into a place of growth but until then there is a need for "one-off" help to fill the gaps in the teams. The proposal was that in the first instance the members of the PCC would fill that gap to stop any issues of burn out or added stress to the team.

Those taking on this role would have the following areas of responsibility:

- To be willing to be a support to the rest of the team, encouraging the children to listen, join in and be respectful
- Get involved within the sessions as required and chat to both the children and any parents during drop off
- Help walk the group over to St Paul's when the session ended.

It was agreed that any PCC member who did not wish to provide this "one-off" help until a recruitment plan for MinChurch, Roadrunners and Fluorescent was in place should speak to David directly.

Luke would be in touch to arrange this.

9. **Roundshaw Pioneering and Diocesan Investment Funding (DIP)**

Roundshaw Pioneering including the Greenhouse Initiative

PCC discussed two developments related to Roundshaw pioneering.

Firstly, the Greenhouse initiative is a shared learning space from the Diocese to pioneering and fresh expressions which Springfield has been part of for the past three years. "Meal and Meditation" was the first "gathering space" of our Roundshaw pioneering but as we now have multiple Pioneering spaces on the go the decision

was taken to make Greenhouse a strategy and prayer group looking at the overarching Pioneering on Roundshaw. The group will meet a couple of times a term and comprises David and Jules Atkinson, Mel Wynn, Jean Grima, Wendy Samuel, Luke Davies and Andrew Green.

Potential Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) Funding

The second development was a potential opportunity of funding from the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP). David explained the background to this proposal which was that the Diocese had approached him with a proposal for Springfield to be part of a nine year long national CofE programme designed to invest in missional innovation which can offer shared learning across the Diocese, with a particular focus on Pioneering in deprived areas.

In particular the Diocese believes there is value in seeing how Springfield could take our pioneering pathways such as “Meal and Meditation” and “Popcorn and Ponder” and “package” them in such a way that other churches pioneering on estates could be trained to make use of them.

The funding is applied for three years at a time and the Diocese have asked if Springfield wish to be involved in drafting a proposal for the first three years of funding. The funding could potentially cover a pioneer youth pastor, a Pioneer Curate, including their housing cost, and a Pioneer Associate Vicar. If we want to be considered for the first three years of funding (to be available from 2025) we need to be putting together a draft proposal in February as the next “window” is not until 2027.

PCC discussed the proposal and the following comments were made:

- David’s initial response to the proposal was that it was exciting seeing what was happening on Roundshaw but the numbers were comparatively small and that we were in the midst of a challenging restructure.
- David was however moving towards the view that this might be part of the New Thing that God has in store for the next season of Springfield. There was also the fact that Mel’s curacy was due to end in 2025 or 2026 and this could be a way of offering an ongoing pioneering role to Mel at Springfield if that’s where she sensed God leading
- David’s biggest challenge would be the line management of the expanded team at his disposal so any proposal would need to include provision for this
- Some PCC members wished to be reassured that there was enough flexibility in the proposal for Springfield to adapt its approach within the three year funding period if priorities changed.
- It was agreed that it was important not to have an ‘outside agenda’ imposed on Springfield church and that David retain his ability to lead the church where God was calling it to be.
- Any possibility of the “tail” of a potential grant wagging “the dog” of our overall Pioneering on Roundshaw should be avoided.

At the end of the discussion PCC agreed, without a formal vote, to progress the proposal, provided that the Diocese would do the “heavy lifting” of putting together a proposal with a steer from Springfield

10. **Finance and Staffing Update**

Finance Update

PCC noted the financial year end summaries for 2023 which were sent with the agenda. The "bottom line on the finances" was that were roughly where we expected to be in terms of unrestricted reserves when PCC met in November. The FinanceSub was keeping the reserves situation under review. Currently the reserves stood at 33k just above the £30k threshold.

The PCC noted a donor had offered £10k to support the period of financial transition. Full details of how the money was to be allocated is given in the Appendix to these Minutes.

The headline news was that we now have a balanced budget for 2024 and were no longer looking at the downward trajectory of recent years. The FinanceSub was now focussed on preparing the accounts for 2023.

Staffing and Office Update

The handover week from Nigel to Sarah had been positive (although a shorter length of time than anticipated due to various factors) and the team will be supporting Sarah as much as possible in the coming weeks.

Plans were progressing on a renovation of the church office and help would be requested from the church family to clear out the office. The current landlord has been very supportive of the renovation and is paying for new desks and other office furniture although there may be a marginal rent increase when the current contract expires. We would also need to sign for another year's contract without committing to a longer period.

The response from the church family to the staff changes had been largely positive with some people coming forward to offer their gifts of time (such as website support), which was very encouraging. David had reassured those who enquired about pastoral care going forward that it remained an absolute priority for the church, that we would need to think about how we care for one another in new ways, with groups being particularly suitable vehicles to offer pastoral support to their members.

Ongoing prayer for the team was requested, particularly for Sarah with the new challenges of her role during the trial period which the team are doing their best to support.

David, on behalf of PCC, thanked the StaffingSub (particularly Carol Driver) and the members of Standing Committee for their work over a difficult and challenging period. It was agreed a gift was appropriate for Carol after the end of Sarah's trial period.

11. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business and Mel closed the meeting in prayer

Dates of the AGM, PCC and Standing Committee (SC) meetings in 2024:

26 February - SC
25 March - PCC (worship Mike C)
29 April - SC
19 May AGM
10 June - PCC (worship Kathryn S)
24 June - SC
15 July - PCC (worship Jenny de R)
16 September - SC
30 September - PCC (worship Roger B)
14 October - SC
25 November - PCC (worship Mel W)
2 December - SC