

Joint PCC Meeting for St. Michael Smarden & All Saints, Biddenden

held on Tuesday 26th May 2020 at 7pm using Zoom

Present: Tom Hay, Revd Alex Bienfait (Chair), Ann Courtness, Peter Cutts, Julie Lupton, Stu Tucker, Paul Webster, Joanna Winston, Tony Lush, Mike Barkway, Vivienne Rose, Joanna Winston, Edward Demery, Ewa Loffstadt

ITEM		ACTION
1.	Opening Prayers: The meeting opened with prayers by Alex Bienfait.	
2.	Apologies: None	
3	Open Forum/ other business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarden Union flag – Brian Bristow has highlighted that the flag may need replacing. It has been proposed that the British Legion may contribute towards a new flag and also Brian B has said he would like to contribute. Estimate is 140 in total. 	
4.	Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Quota – Biddenden and Smarden parish quota subgroups have met and discussed how to split the quota between the two parishes. A summary paper was sent by Tom with the agreed analysis and parish split to both PCC groups before the meeting for review. See attached Appendix which gives full details of the review and proposal. Proposed by Ann Courtness and Mike Barkway, seconded by Edward Demery and Alex Bienfait. Both PCCs all in favour of the proposal. Thank you to the working group for all their hard work. • PCC Employees – Tanya continues to work remotely and coming into the office when required. Mark Wilson, benefice organist, cannot work as the churches are not open. He is being paid until July and this will be re-reviewed. • Joint Benefice Account update – before the meeting Tom sent an email to both PCC groups with a Joint PCC account update document for review. Contributions have been suspended for 3 months as there is enough credit in the account and expenses are down. Once payments are resumed in August, the amount will be reduced to £350 per month (previously £660 per month). • Laptop for office administrator – currently Tanya is using a 2nd hand Mac book Air which is 9 years old to work from home during lockdown. As this is an Apollos Trust asset it will need to be sold at some point. Alex and the Churchwardens have discussed purchasing a new laptop approx £300-400 . Both PCC are both in agreement. • Archdeacon Darren Miller letter in response to query on Parish Quota during lockdown– for interregnum parishes, there is accumulating debt and a question on whether it can be carried over or written off due to the Covid crisis. The gap in unpaid parish share is expected to be approx two million pounds deficit. Both Smarden and Biddenden have continued to pay their parish share in full for many years. PCC members feel that the Diocesan House attitude needs to improve to give a more positive and proactive approach to the current crisis. 	
5.	Welcomers leaflet review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomers leaflet was drafted by Stu and Alex. This was sent to both PCC groups to review before the meeting. More emphasis on fellowship and community was suggested. Action Paul Webster to help with the Biddenden draft of the welcomers leaflet. Aiming to give the new leaflet to the new housing developments which is a new demographic. Not too glossy, middle 	PW/AB

	ground.	
6.	Access to churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still not allowed to go into church so there are no weddings or baptism being held. Funerals can be conducted at the graveside. Churches may open at the beginning of July for private prayer. 	
9	Dates of next meetings: Biddenden PCC meeting: 7 th July 2020 at 7pm Smarden PCC meeting: 13 July 2020 at 2.30pm	
10	The meeting closed at 20.40pm	

Appendix

Parish Share Quota Split

'The Parish Share is a financial contribution made by every parish to the collective life of our diocese. It's an expression of our interdependence and mutual responsibility, enabling every community to share in life-changing mission and ministry.'

Until 2018, parish shares across the Diocese were split according to a formula called 'parish potential'. This was a way of apportioning parish shares based on a calculation of the potential of a parish to generate income

Parish potential = average weekly attendance x index of multiple deprivation factor

Average weekly attendance is described below

The index of multiple deprivation is the official government measure of the relative deprivation of small areas in England

The IMD factors for each parish are almost identical but Biddenden has a higher average attendance which has meant the split has been weighted more towards Biddenden.

From 2018, the Diocese has not been calculating parish potential. The parish shares for 2019 and 2020 were based purely on a percentage increase from the previous year. For reference, the previous splits are as follows

Biddenden	55.0%	56.7%	56.7%	56.9%	56.9%	56.9%
Smarden	45.0%	43.3%	43.3%	43.1%	43.1%	43.1%

Historically the diocese would have assigned a level of parish share to each parish but more recently Benefices have had the discretion to agree a split between their parishes themselves. In Biddenden and Smarden the split was maintained as in previous years. Following discussion at Combined PCC meetings, it was agreed that a working group would be established to review the split between the two parishes and agree a proposal for how the parish share should be apportioned going forward.

Review The working group looked in detail at how the parish share had been calculated in the past and that the attendance figures on which the current split was based had not been updated for 2 years. A discussion was had about whether this was a sound basis on which to continue splitting the share, whether there were other considerations that should be included and whether a simple 50-50 split was appropriate. Consideration was given to what made up the parish share, how it was spent by the Diocese and whether different elements should be split in different ways.

It was noted that, while the Diocese based their calculation on average weekly attendance, there were a number of different statistics collected by the Diocese and the Church of England

Usual Sunday Attendance

Attendance on a usual Sunday (not a major festival or other event). This is an indication of 'normal' attendance and therefore less subject to year-to-year variation resulting from special events. *Average Weekly Attendance* This is derived from attendance over the first four weeks of October (the 'October count') and it includes Sunday and mid-week attendance during 4 specific weeks at church services and fresh expressions of Church.

Worshipping Community Those people who attend church regularly (for example once a month or more) or would do so if not prevented by illness or temporary absence. This includes all regular worshippers, whether they worship on a Sunday or during the week, and whether they come to church every day or just once a month.

Christmas and Easter Attendance Attendance at Christmas and Easter services offers an insight into the number of people who are still in contact with their church but not necessarily regular worshippers.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals This records the number of occurrences and not attendance.

It was noted that, while none of these measures tells the whole story of the life of a church, each offers insight into different aspects of church participation.

The group also discussed whether income was an indicator of a parish's relative ability to contribute more or less and an analysis was carried out for each parish of items of income that were not directly related to equivalent expenditure.

All of the above attendance and income figures were collated and splits between the two parishes were reviewed and discussed in the context of the most appropriate way to apportion the parish share between the two parishes.

Outcome The main crux of the issue is whether or not the parish share should be split 50-50 between each parish. If not, what is the most appropriate and fair way to calculate that split.

The real or potential benefits that each parish does or could get from the different components of the parish share are substantially equal. In that context a 50-50 split could be seen as fair.

However, that approach does not take into account the concept of mutual responsibility and interdependence that the diocese uses to ensure that mission and ministry is available to every community. Or, put more simply, those with the most resources contribute more to the 'pot' to give every parish the opportunity to benefit from the Church irrespective of size or wealth.

The group discussed and debated these two approaches and agreed that the most appropriate way to determine the split was to establish a formula that could be updated each year to take into account not just the potential of each parish (attendance statistics) but also the reality of how that potential is being realised (income). The time period these figures would cover was discussed as it was felt that the most up to date numbers should be used but also that an element of averaging was needed to avoid fluctuations being too sharp. It was agreed that three years would provide that balance.

In looking at attendance, it was agreed that no one measure gives a full picture and that each of them told a different story about potential sources of income. It was also agreed that comparing certain types of income was a good indicator of how willing and able each community was of providing that income through all the different ways people can be encouraged to provide funding for the church. *Proposal* - Based on the outcome of this review, the working group would like to propose the following be approved by the PCCs

That the parish share of the Benefice of Biddenden and Smarden be split between the two parishes based on the average split over three years of the following:-

- Usual Sunday Attendance
- Average Weekly Attendance
- Worshipping Community
- Attendance at Christmas and Easter services
- Number of Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
- Income from defined sources

The average will be calculated as an arithmetic mean, there will be no weighting

The attendance numbers will come from the Registers of each church

The income sources are: PCC-retained fees from baptisms, weddings and funerals; net income from the parish magazine; general collections at all services, excluding special collections for specific causes and seasonal appeals; regular and one-off donations; gift aid received; net income from fundraising; investment income; and any other relevant and comparable income as agreed by the Treasurers.

These figures will be updated annually and used to calculate the split for the following year. This new formula will take effect for the 2021 parish share.

As an illustration, based on currently available diocese statistics (2017, 2018 and 2019), the split would be Biddenden 53.6% and Smarden 46.4% (as opposed to Biddenden 56.9% and Smarden 43.1%). If that was applied to the 2020 parish share, it would be a difference of £2,420 (less for Biddenden, more for Smarden).