

VESTRY MEETING – 5 February 2024, 19.30
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WATERLOO

Present: Rev. Sunny Hallanan (Rector), Derek Pullinger (Senior Warden), Mike Breton, Paul Hirsch.
Online: Jane McBride (Junior Warden), Felicity Handford
Minutes taken by Fiona White

1. Sunny opened the meeting with a **prayer**.
2. **Absences:** Carole Ducastel
Sunny had received an email from Vincent Musschoot to say he was resigning forthwith from Vestry and being security officer (central committee says he doesn't need to be replaced immediately). The Vestry accepted his resignation with regret.
3. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes from the meeting on 8 January were approved.
4. **Vestry check-in:** Derek provided reflections on his term on Vestry. Carole was not well but we had heard many of her reflections at the last meeting.
Derek began by saying that when he joined Vestry three years ago there was no war in Ukraine, no worries in the Middle East, and no cost of living crisis. Things have changed all around us. Subjects under discussion have been varied: unified Europe, COP-26, unlimited resources, amongst others, all of which he found very interesting. Regarding the environmental task force: a positive change to a gas boiler; the negative is that we still don't know whether it's profitable. ASBL: in 2021, we closed it down, continued with volunteers, but the new statutes have been published, and by the end of this week the building purchase loan will be under €400,000. The church and land is owned by the Fabrique, which has to reimburse the ASBL. According to the *Moniteur Belge*, Mark Barwick is still in charge of the Fabrique. This change needs to be made. Mons still needs a bank account. The Namur mission closed and has not been re-started. The outreach budget has been more than matched each year thanks to everyone's generosity. We now serve fair-trade coffee and juice. We support Ukraine with the art group. Eight organizations are now using the church. Paul has got the building and garden under control but the damp remains in the library. Negatives: we had a profit in 2020 and 2021, then we had a deficit (boiler) in 2022 and again in 2023. Vestry members have dropped by one each year. Congregation numbers are still dropping. The MMR had to be done but not much has resulted from it. Katie Osweiler leaving was a negative, but our Sunday services are still on online, together with Compline. We have achieved many things with limited resources.
Derek was thanked for his reflections and it was hoped that he will stand again. Derek's report showed how he had gone above and beyond the job of Senior Warden and running ASC's outreach program, and the rector and Vestry are grateful for him.
5. **Committee reports:**
 - 5.1 **Finance**
 - a. Mike completed the Parochial Report for the Convocation.
 - b. He produced the financial statement for 2023 showing a deficit on the year of nearly €15,000. The 2023 budget had shown a deficit of €8,000. There were some surprises: maintenance and an over-run on Convocation fees (based on the previous year). Money is still owed to Sunny.

- c. The budget for 2024 shows a deficit of €4,700. Do we make economies? Do we do away with cleaning, one of the cars...? This budget is based on reality and was accepted. Mike was thanked for all his work.
- d. The debt on the building will be under €400,000 by the AGM on Sunday.

5.2 Building & property

- a. Paul sent in his report (attached).
- a. Felicity thanked Paul for acting so promptly on getting the strips on the community stairs.
- b. Derek has told Ampeer that ASC has two legal entities (ASBL and the Fabrique), which needs to be sorted out so that one of them signs the contract. **Action: Mike & Derek**

5.3 Outreach & service

- a. Derek is now looking for projects for 2024. **Action: Derek**
- b. Domisum is about to be finally opened.

5.4 Our community

- a. Jane will buy pancakes & toppings for Sunday.
- b. The Bishop is with us 17-18 February. Mike will explore a pain surprise for 18/2. Dinner on 17/2 will be both old and new Vestry members. Fiona will send out an email requesting vegetables and desserts to go with the turkey.
Action: Fiona

Task Forces:

5.5 Missions: Balthazar and a new Mons member, Charles, are going to the Convocation Discernment retreat in Strasbourg.
Mons wanted to start a new mission in Landen (Flanders) but this is not possible because they want it to be in French.
Sunny went to Namur's week of Christian Unity service so we are known as a church group in the area. This will help when starting the new mission.
Regarding the possibility of an African service at Charleroi, Balthazar has realized that the leadership is not there to run it.

5.6 Formation: New Wondrous Wednesdays will start on 21 February, despite the Convocation also running a program during Lent.
Felicity has a friend in the Emergency Response Unit in the Commission and he would be willing to come and talk to us about his work. AI and its effect in the church could be another topic. She also has her friend who can talk about growing plants. **Action: Felicity**

5.7 Archives: Fiona and Felicity will meet to discuss the PDF/A program.
Action: Fiona & Felicity

6. Other business:

6.1 ASBL update: Derek said everything is up to date.

6.2 Bishop's visitation: Following discussion, it was decided to have a relaxed conversation over dinner at 7 pm on 17 February and not have the earlier, previously planned, meeting.

6.3 Plans for AGM and Vestry nominations: People have been spoken to and so far no one new has agreed to being on Vestry.

6.4 Any other business: There was none.

7. **Rector's report:** Sunny has a clergy conference this week on church evaluation and change, so she hopes to have ideas on a different kind of MMR. She will meet with a possible candidate for Assistant on 15 February. He is a Lutheran and ordained, and people have been positive over him in pastoral settings. He is currently a roving supply priest and based in Gent.

The possible new building next door: If it is built, 1. it is known that the commune will drop the ground level to put up a block of apartments. We would need to check ASC for subsidence. 2. The building could be quite tall, ground + 3 levels, which could affect our light. 3. Today, the foundations were being checked.

Sunny showed her idea for the 'where are we going' part of the AGM. Members were asked to think about the ideas presented and lead a table on Sunday at the meeting.

8. **Closing prayer:** Sunny offered a closing prayer.

The meeting closed at 21.43.

Building Group report

Done

- Office key storage box installed.
- Garden shed hinge repaired.
- Reflecting *and* anti-slip strips stuck on the community hall stairs.

To be done

- Crèche door. Install a second stopper. The existing one is too close to the hinge and bends it.
- North-east facing church window weather seals to be replaced as rainwater is blown inside.
- Look for the cause of moisture-damage in the library, rector apartment and possibly also in Haeven's area. Make use of the Batibouw fair to look for – preferably decent – repair company.
- Base and topcoat repainting of the metal window frames of the gents' downstairs toilets.

Paul Hirsch