

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF LUXEMBOURG CHURCH COUNCIL

Wednesday 9 April 2014
7.30 pm, the Vicarage

MINUTES

Present: The Rev'd Chris Lyon, the Rev'd Andy Markey (Assistant Chaplain), Catherine Allen (Churchwarden), Lynn Barclay, Tania Buhr (Secretary), Philippa Seymour, Evelyn Sweerts, Chris Vaudrey (Churchwarden) and Dennis Robertson (guest).

1. & 2. Welcome & Bible reading and prayer

The Chaplain, as Chairperson, opened the meeting at 8.10 pm by welcoming everyone, including Dennis Robertson, who had been invited to contribute to the discussion of point 5 of the agenda. He read from Ephesians 3, starting at v. 14, followed by a prayer.

3. Apologies for absence

Cheryl Fisher, Moira Hogg, John Overstall, Sarah Parkhouse (Treasurer), Rani Roloff, Neil Ross, Paul Townend.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2014 were agreed to be an accurate account of the proceedings.

5. Vicarage redevelopment

The option now being envisaged was basically to sell the Vicarage site to IMMO DPI and move to office space and clergy accommodation elsewhere in the same area. At the Council meeting the Chaplain gave an overview of the process, talked about the valuation that had been made and explained how the church might proceed in making a decision. The discussion was extensive, lasting for over an hour, and the views of the absent Treasurer were read out by Chris Vaudrey.

A meeting had been held on 8 April 2014 between the Chaplain, the Churchwardens, Dennis Robertson and Alain Devresse (of Kairos Advisors), who had been engaged to give the Church some professional advice on this whole matter. Alain Devresse had submitted a draft valuation report which put the value of the Vicarage site at between €1.1 million and €1.3 million. He had negotiated a selling price of €1.25 million with IMMO DPI. This was higher than they were previously offering.

Dennis Robertson commented at the Council meeting that the valuation of between €1.1 million and €1.3 million was based on a method that involved two key assumptions, the meterage and the cost of construction for developing the site. The Vicarage site had 786m² to be sold and the key figure was the market price per m². He considered that Alain Devresse knew the market and the area well and had been able to answer his and the Churchwardens' questions confidently. The valuation had, in his view, been based on a robust professional process and was a good basis on which to move forward. The final meterage might change if IMMO DPI were to make an '*accord de voisinage*' with the Ville de Luxembourg, in which case we would have more usable square metres for development

purposes; we would want to ensure that the sales agreement took account of such a change. He also said there was scope for Alain Devresse to try to raise the price being offered by IMMO DPI.

Catherine Allen said she had been impressed by Alain Devresse and Chris Vaudrey commented that he seemed to be being honest with us. Evelyn Sweerts, however, pointed out that as Alain Devresse was being employed by us we should perhaps have another independent valuation.

The Chaplain said that the changes in the final meterage that was accepted for the sale agreement could affect the price we thus obtained by as much as €100 000 or €200 000. After discussion it was agreed that the minimum acceptable price from the sale would be €1.15 million. He pointed out that if we were to annul the sale of the Vicarage because of a reduced price, we could perhaps renovate the Vicarage instead; however, this would cost at least €500 000 and would take a long time to do. IMMO DPI's offer was also subject to their being able to obtain planning permission for developing the site.

Decision point 1: The Chaplain and the Churchwardens **recommended accepting the valuation** (circulated at the Council meeting as Kairos Advisors' document entitled "Valuation Report, 89 rue de Muhlenbach, L-2168 Luxembourg – Valuation as at 11 April 2014") with its valuation range of between €1.1 million and €1.3 million. The Council **voted unanimously in favour**.

Decision point 2: Alain Devresse had negotiated a selling price of €1.25 million with IMMO DPI. The Chaplain and the Churchwardens **recommended accepting this offer subject to the following conditions:** The '*compromis de vente*' would include a clause relating to changes in the m² so that a reduction in the m² which reduced the price by more than €150 000 would annul the sale and an increase in the m² would be to our profit (e.g. if an '*accord de voisinage*' were to be granted by the Ville de Luxembourg). The Council **voted unanimously in favour**.

The Chaplain explained that the process could thus continue as follows: once the selling price was agreed, a '*compromis de vente*' would be drawn up. The Church would discuss with IMMO DPI the possibility of continuing to occupy the Vicarage until it was demolished (possibly within a year at the most of the signing of the '*acte authentique*'). The Anglican Church would submit the '*compromis de vente*' to the Diocesan Board of Finance in London for approval (3 to 4 weeks); the '*compromis de vente*' could then be signed and IMMO DPI could obtain authorisation in principle from the Ville de Luxembourg (6+ weeks); the '*acte authentique*' could then be signed (probably in September) at which point the purchase price would be transferred to the Church account on that day.

As regards future office and residential accommodation once the sale of the Vicarage was going ahead, the Chaplain and the Churchwardens recommended exploring the option of office accommodation at a new development in the rue de Muhlenbach (Résidence Hortis managed by Elliot) and that if the accommodation and price were suitable we could proceed with a commitment to purchase. Alain Devresse could negotiate this. The Résidence Hortis building was still under construction and would take about 2 years to complete, so office space would have to be rented in the meantime. We needed a meeting room of approx. 50 m² and two offices of 20 m² each. The Church would also search for a flat for the Chaplain as soon as possible in the rue de Muhlenbach or within walking distance of the office and this would be purchased as soon as it was available. Again, Alain Devresse could negotiate this. We would also instruct Alain Devresse to negotiate a rental agreement with IMMO DPI for the use of the Vicarage whilst we sought other accommodation. The Church Council would decide on the price range.

Dennis Robertson pointed out that one part of this proposed deal was quite advanced, but the other part less so, and said it was important not to sell the vicarage without knowing how much it would cost us to buy/rent future accommodation. We needed to know how much

money we might have to raise. It was decided that he and Chris Vaudrey would draw up a cashflow forecast to underpin the future process. The Council expressed its appreciation of Dennis' contribution to this process and the debate.

Other agencies apart from IMMO DPI had continued to express an interest in this project but had been told that they would not have any further involvement in it.

There had been no further definite information on the question of whether the Church would be liable for tax on the Vicarage redevelopment.

Alain Devresse would be paid a maximum global fee of €2 000 for his services.

The Chaplain said that he would contact those members of the Council who were not at the meeting to explain what had been decided and to ascertain whether they were also in agreement.

6. Treasurer's Report

The March 2014 accounts, the financial statements and the 2014 budget were discussed in the absence of the Treasurer, Sarah Parkhouse.

Income for March was generally in line with the budget, whereas collections were high in comparison with the budget but this was normal for the early months of the year. Fuel and utilities and accommodation costs were high compared with the budget. This was again because the budget for the year was basically divided by twelve for a monthly figure. The budget took into account the additional amounts spent on fuel and repairs in the last three months and should equal out as the year progressed. A charity payment of €2 051 had been made for the purchase of a portable dentist's chair in India as part of the Jambange project. The special charities collections included €245 for the Institute for Healing Memories, money raised by the Lent lunches (Rani - €530) and the Lent appeal.

The financial statements were circulated for the Council to examine prior to the AGM. A provision had been made for repairs to the Vicarage. As the situation with regard to the Vicarage was uncertain it seemed prudent to provide for some maintenance work. Nearly €2 000 had been spent so far this year and even if the Vicarage were sold, there would still be a requirement for maintenance at a certain level.

In relation to the budget presented to the AGM in 2013, there were two main reasons as to why our situation was worse. Firstly, Dana Luccock had become a salaried employee and this had not been anticipated at the time of the AGM. This had a significant impact on the salary costs despite contributions from Dana's 'angels'. The second major difference related to accommodation costs. This was the first full year with an Assistant Chaplain and we now had the full costs of the accommodation rather than just the rental amounts.

The proposed 2014 budget was also circulated. This did not reflect the loan to the Chaplain or the repayments by the Chaplain and the Assistant Chaplain as these were in effect just cash flows.

The Chaplain said that we were still budgeting at a loss, as we had done in 2013. It had not been spelled out to the congregation that we needed increased giving. Catherine Allen said that the message that had been conveyed at the congregational meeting was that there was no problem with the Church's current finances and therefore there was little incentive for people to give more money. She said that a project (the Vicarage, perhaps) was needed to galvanise people into raising money. The Chaplain said we needed positive energy to approach this issue.

7. Action Points Review and Matters Arising

- a) Vicarage boiler, chimney and gutters: The boiler and the chimney had each received

the required '*certificat de conformité*', the guttering had been partially cleaned but the remaining parts still needed cleaning/replacing.

- b) computers and WiFi: The Chaplain reported that a computer specialist had had a look at the WiFi situation and computer set-up at the Vicarage and suggested that the problems could be overcome by purchasing a new piece of kit with a stronger signal for the WiFi, and by purchasing one new computer (a laptop for Lynn) because support for Windows XP had expired.
- c) Church Fair Organiser: Catherine Allen had asked Clive Munn if he was willing to be the Fair organiser and he had agreed. The Council expressed its thanks to him for taking on this task.

8. Ministry Report

The Chaplain reported as follows:

- a) Lent & Easter: the study group "The Bible and life basics: land, blood, sex and food" was going quite well. The services at Easter time had been arranged, a sunrise service and a baptism at the 11 am service would be taking place on Easter Sunday.
- b) Michael Lapsley: Father Lapsley had given a talk about his work and the Institute for Healing Memories on Sunday 23 March in the Konvikt Chapel; the Chaplain wanted our Church to support this charity and would talk to the Charities Committee about this at their next meeting in May.
- c) Events organisation: the Chaplain circulated a draft paper he had written entitled "Event planning and co-ordinating". This set out a number of points that needed to be observed by those running events in connection with our Church. For example, groups wanting to organise an event needed first to sound people out about it beforehand to establish who would be able to attend, then the date/venue needed to be coordinated with the Parish Coordinator; groups holding events were to be responsible for drafting their own publicity and for running their events. It was important to ensure that events were open to everyone and that safeguarding rules were complied with. The Church Council would financially underwrite events which were planned in accordance with its policies and were notified to it in advance. The Council discussed the paper and made a couple of amendments. The Chaplain said the amended version was now final and would be sent to all the groups involved in organising events.

9. Konvikt Chapel and Salle Maria-Rheinsheim

Lynn Barclay said that the team responsible for the Konvikt Chapel wanted to know when people connected with our Church were using the building and were threatening to throw out anyone they found using it at unauthorised times. The Goeres hotel team responsible for Salle Maria-Rheinsheim were now using the hall for many other activities and it was getting very booked up. They did not want our Church to have music playing when the hall was being used for these other activities.

The Chaplain explained that we paid for a certain amount of use of the chapel, which included Sundays and saints' days, Wednesday evenings and Thursday evenings. On Saturdays the organists practised in the chapel and the flower arrangers came to do the flowers. There was occasional use at other times during the week by organists or the choir. He said our Church was held in low esteem by the Konvikt chapel team and we were being blamed for everything that went wrong. He would write to the Goeres hotel team and the Konvikt chapel team about this matter.

10. Community Group

Geoff Thompson was happy for his group of volunteers to be called the "Community Group".

11. Social event in the Vicarage for Officials and Group Leaders in May/June

A social event was being planned for May/June.

12. Outstanding Contact Forms

The Chaplain said that the Church office would write to those who had not yet sent in a new contact form saying that the Church presumed that they assented to their details being kept on record.

13. AGM elections

A form nominating Simon Norcross to be a member of the Council had been received. The Council was reminded to ensure that other possible candidates for the Council duly submitted a nomination form soon. A representative and an alternate for the Archdeaconry Synod needed to be elected at the coming AGM. (**Action point:** Catherine Allen to ask John Overstall and Moira Hogg whether they wished to stand again.)

14. Any other business

In response to Philippa Seymour's query about the next issue of the Konvikt magazine, the Chaplain said that the material already received by the Church office could be sent out as it was, if necessary without the "Dear Friends" introduction, as a print-out from the computer rather than being sent to the printers.

15. Dates of next meetings

(**NB:** AGM – Tuesday 29 April 2014)

Wednesday 14 May 2014 at 7 pm for food, with the meeting to start at 7.30 pm;

Wednesday 11 June;

Wednesday 2 July.

The Chaplain said he reserved the right to call extra Church Council meetings at short notice to deal with any urgent matters in connection with the property development issue.

16. Closing prayer

The Chaplain thanked Philippa Seymour for providing supper and Evelyn Sweerts and Catherine Allen for supplying cakes. The meeting closed with a prayer at 11.15 pm.