

# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF LUXEMBOURG

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Monday 18 September 2017  
7.30 pm, Centre Jean XXIII, 52 rue Jules Wilhelm, L-2728 Luxembourg

### MINUTES

**Present:** Lynn Barclay, Tania Buhr (Secretary), Gabriel Chelladurai (Treasurer), Gerd Gebhard, Catriona Gillham, Moira Hogg, Simon Norcross (Churchwarden), Philippa Seymour (Churchwarden) and Evelyn Sweerts (Lay Pastoral Assistant); guest (for item 4): Nick Jones

#### 1. & 2. Welcome & Bible reading and prayer

Philippa Seymour, as Chair, opened the meeting at 7.35 pm with a reading from James 5, v. 7-11, and prayers.

**3. Apologies for absence** – John Dimond, Victoria Hodgson, Nik Legge and Isabel Page.

#### 4. Presentation on sound system (Nick Jones)

Nick Jones, who had responded to a call for volunteers to look into what the Church needed in the way of a sound system and how the present equipment could be improved, had been invited to the meeting to put forward the proposals he had drawn up as a result of his enquiries (a paper was circulated). He explained the limitations of the present sound system, presented his proposals for equipment to address these limitations and proposed two sets of equipment at different costs. Depending on the equipment chosen, the total cost would be between €1 254 and € 1 879. The Church would be inclusive and welcoming if it installed a loop system for users of hearing aids. All the equipment except the loop system could be taken with us for use in another church building if need be. After some discussion, it was agreed to purchase all the higher-spec equipment proposed by Nick Jones, who would order it and install it, probably by early November. The Council thanked Nick Jones for all his work on this.

#### 5. Approval of Minutes of 12 July 2017 meeting (rev.1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2017 were agreed to be an accurate account of the proceedings.

#### 6. Action Points Review and Matters Arising

Action Points Review: nothing to discuss;

Matters arising: None.

#### 7. Churchwardens' Report

The Churchwardens reported as follows:

- i) Locum arrangements: locums had been arranged until January 2018; the flat was being cleaned between locums by a cleaning company; locums had said they would like to be invited to more social events; the locum over Christmas would need Christmas lunch;
- ii) Convention/Luxembourg government subsidy: the Archdeacon, Paul Vrolijk, had sent the final version of the letter enquiring about our subsidy to the Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel, on 23 July 2017 but had not yet received a reply; Simon Norcross would make enquiries about the situation;
- iii) Recruitment of next Chaplain: the post had been advertised at the end of August; the Churchwardens would go to Brussels for a shortlisting meeting on 20 September 2017 with Bishop Robert and the Archdeacon, with a view to holding interviews with the candidates on 2 October 2017;
- iv) Meeting of CCC on 23 July 2017: Philippa Seymour had attended a meeting of the *Conseil des Cultes Conventionnés* called at short notice to discuss the draft law concerning the management of Catholic Church buildings in Luxembourg. The draft law derived from the new Convention on relations between religions and the State and was principally concerned with what would happen to church buildings. The intention was to abolish all the *fabriques d'églises*, which were bodies responsible for

looking after their local church buildings, and replace them with one organisation responsible for management of Catholic Church buildings throughout Luxembourg. Most churches would become the property of the local authority where they were located, and if the Catholic Church wanted to go on using them it would have to rent them from the local authority. Since the Anglican Church did not own a church building, this did not directly concern us. However, the reason that the meeting was called, and representatives of other faiths were invited, was Article 19 of the draft law, which stated that local authorities may not provide any kind of support to faith groups except for their obligations under the new Catholic Church building management organisation. So this draft law about Catholic Church buildings suddenly applied to all faiths, and on the face of it looked as though no local authority would be allowed, for instance, to make a public park available for an open-air mass, or a church fair or sports day, or allow the use of a building for a church meeting. The Catholic Church representative had arranged a meeting with the Interior Minister, Dan Kersch, at which it planned to raise three points with him: (1) this article was not covered by the *Convention* between the Government and the Catholic Church; (2) there should have been consultation with those affected (i.e. representatives of other faiths); (3) this article infringed the Constitution because it removed the right of elected local councils to give financial and other support to any groups they choose. Philippa Seymour and the other faith representatives supported the Vicar-General on this approach.

v) Rental agreement Assistant Chaplain's house in Howald: Simon Norcross reported that the Church had received a letter from the landlords dated 11 September 2017, attaching a new version of the repair bill which excluded some of the previous items and provided supporting documents for about half the items; the Churchwardens would meet with the landlords to work out which of these items we would pay;

vi) Retreat 13 January 2018: the short retreat for Council members, rota organisers and some other people involved in running things would be held at the Centre Jean XXIII on Saturday 13 January 2018, led by Margaret Whitaker;

vii) Choir plans: the Music Director had plans for the choir to give concerts and record a CD; he had also written to the Archbishop of Luxembourg offering the choir's services for the *Nuit des Cathédrales* in May 2018;

viii) Christmas services/events: a list of special services and events was circulated; no 11am service would be held on Sunday 24 December, Christmas Eve;

ix) Meeting with Mr Lo Piccolo: Simon Norcross reported that the Altrimenti organiser, Mr Lo Piccolo, was unhappy about the state in which we left the Salle Rheinsheim and said he wanted us to put things back exactly as they were before we used the hall; we argued that other groups apart from us also used the hall and we did not consider that we had done any damage.

## **8. Treasurer's Report**

Gabriel Chelladurai presented the receipts and payments account for January to August 2017; there continued to be a deficit.

He reported that he now had access to the bank accounts and could pay the salaries and bills; the *fiduciaire* should be able to start doing the accounting the following month. He was now paying advances on charges for the new flat.

The audited accounts for 2016 had to be sent to the Diocese, and for this he needed to do some work with Chris Vaudrey.

Evelyn Sweerts proposed that, as the Church was continuing to run at a deficit, the Churchwardens should ask the congregation for interim help until the new Chaplain arrived. Simon Norcross said it would be best to do this in the form of an e-mail. The average monthly deficit this year was €4 000.

## **9. Ministry report – Lay Pastoral Assistant**

Evelyn Sweerts reported as follows:

- the Christian classics book club would start on 21 September 2017;
- as Graham and Isobel Weller, who had contributed a great deal to the life of the church, were leaving Luxembourg after four years, she proposed that a farewell card be circulated and the Churchwardens thank them at the 11am service on Sunday 1 October 2017;
- training for intercessors (and anyone else who wished to attend) would be held on Sunday 29 October 2017, run by herself and Carol Birch;
- a 'Prayers for the Chaplaincy' group was being set up, to meet at 9.30am on the last Sunday of each month in the crèche room;
- 'Quiet Days' were being held by Steve McCarthy and Ann Thorogood at the McCarthys' house

on 29 and 30 September 2017;

- Harvest Thanksgiving, to be held on 24 September 2017, would not be a family service and so Junior church would be running;
- the proposed Taizé service had been postponed until January 2018;
- contributions of Kapla, Lego and Duplo had been requested for Junior Church;
- the Junior Church material 'Roots' had been purchased;
- she was still awaiting her training schedule for the year;
- a couple had requested a service of thanksgiving for the life of their child on 29 July 2018; it was agreed that this service, which existed in the Anglican liturgy, could be held.

#### **10. New flat in rue Jules Mersch**

The Churchwardens had just had a pre-reception meeting with the promoter and, except for one minor point, were happy with the flat; they would receive the keys by the end of the month.

#### **11. Isabel Page's proposal**

In the absence of Isabel Page, discussion of her proposal to help prepare and facilitate an exercise in strategic risk analysis was postponed until she could be present.

#### **12. Safeguarding and insurance (Bishop's e-mail of 13 July 2017)**

Bishop Robert had circulated a letter dated 13 July 2017 saying that, in the light of a recent incident in the Diocese in which a priest had been accused, falsely and without foundation, of a serious sexual assault on church premises, he wished to remind Chaplaincies of the need, first and foremost, to follow the simple guideline of never allowing church officers to be alone with children or young people and, secondly, to ensure Chaplaincies had adequate insurance cover to meet a range of costs that might arise whilst a safeguarding case was being investigated.

Moir Hogg, as safeguarding officer, was asked to look into the question of insurance (policies and costs) with her safeguarding contacts and report back at the next meeting.

#### **13. Communications Group report**

The Communications Group had met on 11 September 2017 and discussed various matters including arrangements for upcoming events in the autumn and the parish Dropbox account.

The Council discussed ways of ensuring important documents were stored securely and were adequately backed up.

#### **14. Christmas tree**

As having a real Christmas tree in the chapel involved a lot of work putting it up and removing it, Victoria Hodgson had proposed that the Church buy a high-quality artificial tree, which could be stored in the Salle Rheinsheim cupboard. This was agreed.

#### **15. Fun and Fundraising Group report**

Philippa Seymour asked for people to support the Treasure Hunt to be held on Saturday 23 September 2017; unfortunately, the Syrian charity which it was advertised as supporting had gone bankrupt (other ways of helping the children concerned were being looked into).

#### **16. Any other business**

- i) Chalice rota: the Council agreed to renew its requisite formal approval of the list of chalice bearers;
- ii) Wellsprings: Simon Norcross proposed inviting Alexander Grodensky, the rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Community of Luxembourg in Esch-sur-Alzette, whom he had met at a *Te Deum* in June, to lead a meeting of Wellsprings; the Council agreed;
- iii) Chaplaincy prayer: it was agreed to shorten the Chaplaincy prayer.

**17. Dates of future Council meetings**

- Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 7.30 pm, Centre Jean XXIII;
- Wednesday 8 November 2017;
- Wednesday 6 December 2017.

**18. Closing prayer**

Philippa Seymour closed the meeting at 10.55 pm, the Council joining together in saying the Grace.