

Minutes of St David's Church Green Team meeting on Zoom Thursday 26th November 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: Barbara Allin, Dave Allin, Sue Holden, Hilary Todd, Roger Beer, Paula Lawford, Neil Pragnell, Glynis Harflett, Nigel Guthrie, Charlotte Townsend, Sue Wilson, Clive Wilson (chair)

Apologies received from Emma White, Sarah Rimmington and Alistair Macintosh. Alistair is unable to attend evening meetings. We discussed having some meetings during the day so that he can take part.

The meeting had two main focuses: the churchyard and Eco Church.

Churchyard

Nigel showed us the draft of a poster that Ash had drawn up to explain what's going on in the churchyard. Clive confirmed that we are able to use the A Rocha logo on this. In discussion it was felt that people wouldn't read a poster with too much text on it. There are other more pithy examples around. Nigel to revisit the poster with Ash (NG)

There was an extensive discussion on rewilding and how to introduce wild flower planting. The 2014 report (attached with these minutes) on the churchyard by the Devon Wildlife Trust could be a good starting point. We discussed a trial area and also possibly planting flowers on some graves. Nigel to identify a possible trial area on the north side of the churchyard. (NG)

Nigel asked for possible volunteers for a wild flower sub group.

We may be able to get free wild flower seed from the Council. Nigel to contact Diana Moore as our councillor. (NG)

Something we could do straight away is to plant herbs at the east end of the path, both as camouflage for the concrete slabs and to provide a welcoming aroma. Glynis to look into this. (GH)

Glynis has already planted a lot of daffodil bulbs for next year. We also talked about the possibility of planting fruit trees.

Community Pay Back and the Good Gym volunteers are possible sources of help in the churchyard, for example tidying up around the noticeboards.

One of the big problems with working in the churchyard is the drug users and the proliferation of used needles. Eco Church stress the importance of making a churchyard integral to the local community. We discussed whether to have benches

to encourage people to use the churchyard or whether that would encourage more drug use. CCTV cameras directed at the benches were suggested as a deterrent. Many of the headstones are unstable. We will need to liaise with the council about any major work.

Nigel felt it was important to use this winter period to raise our green profile and suggested that we have a project whereby people either make or provide nest boxes to encourage birds in the churchyard. Dave explained that, as nesting boxes are on List B, the Archdeacon can give permission for them without the need for a faculty. Roger to research suitable designs, starting with swift boxes. (RB)
It will be helpful to identify which species of birds use the churchyard. Barbara to discuss with a friend who is a member of the RSPB. (BA)

Sue ran through the numerous suggestions in David Curry's talk at the Diocesan Green Day. It was agreed that it would be a useful start and help us to understand what we have already and what we can do with it, if David Curry would come and look at the churchyard. Sue, Paula, Neil and Barbara agreed to form a sub group to meet with David. Sue to contact David. (SW)

NB He's been contacted and is willing to meet with us in mid January

A drone survey might also be a possibility to get an overall view.

Eco Church

Their website has now been revamped. Clive has registered with them as an individual who is part of St David's group. We can all do that and access the online surveys. Clive to circulate details. (CW)

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

<https://app.ecochurch.org/signup>

There are lots of resources on there and we can build on the experience of other churches. If we go on the website we will see that there are a number of tweaks that we can make immediately.

Dave has completed the building survey and Clive has been through the surveys generally to identify gaps.

One main issue to address is the church's carbon footprint. The 360 degrees group suggests that we start use 2019 as our baseline year, rather than 2020 for obvious reasons, and set targets from that. We need a small subgroup of people knowledgeable about the church. The churchwardens, Nigel, Dave and Clive were suggested, to meet after Christmas. Date to be arranged. Glynis to check with Mary Quest that the 2019 church diary is available for reference. (GH)

Another major issue is transport to church. A travel survey of both the regular congregation and hirers is a good starting point but there may be data protection issues. This probably needs taking to the PCC. (NG)

Other issues that we can deal with more easily include prayers and sermons on the subject. To be discussed by the ministry team. (CT)

Toilet twinning was discussed and suggested as a good Christmas present.

Hirers need to be encouraged to use the church in an appropriate manner, with suitable signage and guidance.

We discussed the possibility of registering as a Fair Trade church and also being mindful in our catering for social events that we try to use fair traded and local ingredients and cater inclusively.

A communal church Christmas card was discussed as a possibility for next year, with people being encouraged to donate their savings to charity.

We hope to discuss the greening of the church interior with plants at the next meeting.

Other suggestions included visiting speakers, post Covid, and a regular green column in New Leaves, perhaps with a monthly challenge, and 5 Green Things for Lent. Clive has been attending a series of useful webinars from the University. He will circulate the link. (CW)

[Waking up to the planetary health emergency webinar series](#)

The next meeting was set for **Thursday January 28th at 2pm.**

Post meeting comments by email from Neil Pragnell :

Until the meeting I hadn't realised that there had been a survey of biodiversity in the graveyard, so I spent time after the meeting reading it. I thought the report was quite informative and I appreciated the zoning of the space and suggestions for future improvements. ... The suggested position of the wildflower hotspots seemed a good starting point. I wondered if we were to mark out 2 square m or 1 square metre areas that we could encourage members of the congregation to choose a patch and either develop it themselves or to sponsor someone else to do it on their behalf. We could suggest either wild flowers or herbs or perhaps fruit bushes. It might increase interest in the graveyard as a green space and would increase footfall. It might be an idea to encourage the college to take a plot as well as the school. Just some thoughts.

Thanks again

Regards Neil