

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PCC
OF THE UNITED PARISH OF EAST HARPTREE WITH WEST HARPTREE AND HINTON BLEWETT
HELD AT GREENWAY HOUSE, HINTON BLEWETT ON WEDNESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Graham Sage (in the chair), Elaine Avery, Mary Cookson, Sara Hall, Judith Hutchins, Hazel Rider, Revd Karen Spray.

Apologies: Maggie Brain, Robert Drewett and Guy Stobart.

The meeting opened with a short act of Evening Worship. It was agreed to take the Agenda items out of order and deal with the business items first.

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July were approved and signed by the Chairman, with matters arising to be dealt with at the November meeting.

2. **Urgent matters raised with/by the Chairman:** an email received from the Parish Administrator was read out and it was agreed to investigate further and to deal confidentially with the matters raised as soon as possible. It was agreed to keep **copies of service booklets in each church** for convenience. The following **VCC/Friends' events were adopted for insurance purposes:** Harvest Supper & Quiz at EH, 6 October; Coffee Morning at WH, 20 October; Christmas Coffee Morning at EH, 17 November; Carol Concert & Supper at WH, 8 December. It was also agreed to adopt the various **monthly and other occasional concerts** at our churches now that they are organised by David Heyes and others from outside the United Parish.

3. **Consideration of admission of children from the regular congregation to Holy Communion before Confirmation:** Revd Karen had previously circulated the Diocesan booklet on this subject, to which reference was made during the meeting. Before the general discussion began each PCC member was invited to share their own experience of Confirmation and their views on whether to admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation. Whilst some had been in favour from the outset, others had originally had reservations about whether it was appropriate but over the years had come to believe that it was, for children who worship regularly with their families and who have been thoroughly prepared beforehand, in an age-appropriate way and with parental agreement. All present supported moving forward with admitting children for reasons including:

Children of our current congregation have asked why they cannot share Holy Communion;

Children are welcomed into the family of the Church at Baptism and in earlier times were welcomed at Communion, even sometimes as infants. Confirmation was introduced later and was not widely enforced until the 19th Century;

The Eucharist is a meal shared by the church family and children who are part of the church family should be allowed to join in the "family meal";

With age-appropriate preparation and support younger children can be more reverent than teenagers and if welcomed fully into the church family at an earlier age may be more likely to continue worshipping as they mature;

Jesus held up children as a model of the Kingdom of God and we have as much to learn from them as they do from us;

Children admitted in another parish or church setting cannot, under Canon Law, be denied at our services; it would then be harder to explain to children in our church family why they cannot receive.

Immediate Next Steps. There is a clear pathway laid down and first steps are: PCC members unable to attend the meeting to be asked to communicate their views to Karen and discuss any concerns with her.

The full congregation to be consulted and given an opportunity to make their views known. Ways in which this might be facilitated included for Revd Karen to write a piece for Parish News and to address a service(s) on the subject, possibly with handouts, and an open meeting of parishioners.

4. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 14 November (please note change of usual date).

The meeting was closed with The Grace at 8.57pm.