

St. Michael and All Angels Parish Church of Witton Gilbert & Sacriston

An Extraordinary Zoom Meeting of the Parochial Church Council was held
at 6pm on Wednesday 20th July 2021

Present: The Revd Michael Peers (**MP**), Chair; Pat Bainbridge (**PB**) Churchwarden;
Revd Bill Jackson (**BJ**); Rhonda Fenwick-Jackson (**RFJ**); Penny Minney (**PM**);
Jenny Tinkler (**JT**) Churchwarden; Phil Watson (**PW**); David Wilcox (**DW**), Secretary.

- 1. Opening prayer:** **MP** opened the meeting with prayers.
- 2. Apologies:** Noel Dixon (**ND**); Stephen Ellis (**SE**); Alan Suggate (**AS**)
- 3. Single Item:** Consider actions following move to Covid Stage 4 post 19th July 2021:

MP opened the discussion by stating that a 'straw poll' on Sunday morning (18th July) with the congregation indicated that the majority wanted no relaxation of measures i.e. masks and social distancing would continue. **JT** also stated that feedback she had received wanted a status quo with relaxation taken slowly or in stages. She went on to say that refreshments were an important issue socially. **PB** stated that the only person to speak directly to her after last Sunday's service felt singing was a top priority. **RFJ** agreed with the slow or staged approach and felt this was the right thing to do in respect of the vulnerable people in the congregation. **JT** reiterated this point and stated that the positive Covid case in church last Sunday was a 'wake-up' call.

MP said there were a number of questions to consider:

- 1. Singing in church:** **PW** felt that singing with face coverings on made it difficult because you were unable to take in air, others noted that the majority, when singing outside, did keep face coverings on. **BJ** felt strongly that some additional singing should take place. It was agreed that an additional hymn will be sung in church with face coverings on.
- 2. Refreshments:** **DW** stated that refreshments could be provided but would need to be served and consumed outside. If refreshments were served indoors, it would be at the expense of seating/capacity. On balance it was felt too weather dependant, and it was agreed that there be no change at present.
- 3. Communion:** Whilst the common cup can now be shared legally, the Church of England point out the potential health risks at present and noted it remains permissible for the president only to take Holy Communion in the form of wine. It was agreed there be no change.
- 4. Life Events maximum numbers:** There was some discussion about the maximum numbers for baptisms, weddings and funerals. A recent request for a baptism for 75 people was turned down. It was noted that the congregation were not affected by this decision only the Priest and Verger, which was still an important consideration. **DW** stated following last Saturday's wedding, when liberties were taken by the bride on numbers permitted, that numbers should be limited to the present 30. He felt this was right because now that face masks were not compulsory, large

numbers, unmasked posed a threat to the Priest and Verger. Further discussion took place, and it was agreed that the numbers will be increased to a maximum of 40 with facemasks and social distancing essential.

5. Worship maximum numbers: It was agreed that the maximum numbers should remain at 30. It was agreed that over the coming months numbers were not expected to reach this figure so 'booking in' was now not required. Welcomers on Sunday morning will therefore deal with seating as people arrive.
6. Track and Trace: Whilst this was no longer a requirement, the government is asking that venues continue to ask people to register for venue check in (QR code) as it will continue to form one of the main ways identifying people that may have been exposed to the virus. It was agreed that a register of attendance will be kept by the welcomers and stored for 21 days.
7. Breathing Space Activity: Folksinging – **DW** raised the issue regarding the resumption of folk singing in church. **PB** felt face coverings and social distancing made this impractical, especially as some of the singers were indeed clinically vulnerable.

4. Summary:

1. Sunday Worship
 - a. This will continue as before with face coverings, social distancing;
 - b. Communion will continue by taking it in one kind except the president;
 - c. An additional hymn (Gradual) will be sung in church with face coverings
 - d. It was agreed that Hymn Books and the Lectionary will be brought back into use.
 - e. Maximum number 30
2. Life Events
 - a. Maximum numbers attending will be increased to 40 with face coverings and social distancing essential – **DW** agreed to revise the risk assessment
3. Track and Trace:
 - a. This will continue for both Sunday Worship and Life Events
4. Review:
 - a. A review of these measures will be undertaken at the next meeting of the PCC

5. Date of next meeting:

The date of the next PCC had been set previously as Monday 6th September 2021 at 6pm in church.

DW

Signed.....

Date.....