

Society of Cambridge Youths EGM

Monday 13th August 2018, 8.31pm in the Ringing Chamber with priest-in-charge, the Very Reverend Peter Judd, in the chair

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Alison Brooke, William Brooke, Hannah Campbell and Richard A Smith.

2. Overview of project to date and future events

Richard Summers was invited to give an overview of the antenna installation project. The major points raised were that NET approached GSM in 2016 to install transmitters expected to be lost from Park Street car park (which was under threat of demolition at the time). The early understanding was that there would be a single cabinet in the void and that was the understanding of the PCC when the faculty application was signed off. However, somewhere along the line, the plans changed and the contract and faculty documents specified three large cabinets on a steel beam across the centre of the room to support multiple mobile phone operators. Richard also noted that many normal elements that one would expect in setting up a construction project appear to be missing – for example, detailed project plans and engagement with the church architect, proper consultation as specified in the faculty and health and safety method statements etc.

Richard has invited NET to a meeting in Cambridge to discuss various aspects of the project and as part of this has asked them to explain the process by which the project changed and why the church was not aware of this significant change. The original faculty applied for has lapsed, and it seems prudent to ensure that all outstanding questions are answered before making another faculty application. It was noted that the meeting has been difficult to schedule on both sides due to summer holidays, and so there is a guarantee that nothing will happen until September at the earliest.

Peter Judd emphasised Richard Summers' statement by saying that what the PCC thought they were giving the green light to was not what was contained in the detail of the faculty application. At this point, questions were invited from the floor.

Jonathan Shanklin made the point that there is no value in trying to ascribe blame in this situation, and the most important feature is to ensure that similar events cannot happen again. Informing the Archdeacon is good step, as he will be able to ensure that other churches going through the same process can be aware of the potential pitfalls. There was broad support for the idea of involving the Archdeacon.

Liz Orme asked if the church is planning to seek legal advice on the project. Richard Summers responded that there is currently no intention to seek legal advice, partly because it would cost money and partly because it would move the discussion to a more confrontational setting. The point

was made that the contract was set up on the basis of trust and there is currently an incumbency on NET to explain how the plans were changed. The direct question has been asked of them, but no answer has been forthcoming so far.

Phil Orme said that the project has put at stake an expensive and well-crafted instrument. The fact that we have arrived at this position makes it a very emotional subject, and his feeling is outright anger that the instrument has been put at risk of irrecoverable damage.

Frank King recognised that it may be difficult for the church to commission a legal opinion on the contract, but could it be feasible for a lawyer acting on behalf of the SCY to give advice?

George Unsworth said that given NET's financial incentive to move from one mobile network to three (changing one stream of income to three too), surely that is also welcome from the church's point of view. It was replied that the contract fixes the payment terms irrespective of how many networks are using the facility.

Barry Johnson returned to the idea of involving the Archdeacon, which is the subject of a later motion for which he is the proposer. Barry wished to explain a little more about the rationale, which essentially is that GSM is bound by contract to apply for a faculty or extension, but the petitioner has no say in whether it is granted or not. It is believed the original faculty application was deficient – the ringers have not seen the Statement of Significance or Statement of Needs, but it seems unlikely that NET would have stressed the historic importance of the ringing room, the significance of the medieval floor of the void or fine brickwork of the belfry. It seems highly likely that the original application was deficient in these regards. The Archdeacon is not bound by contract and can form an independent view which has a direct impact on whether an extension or a new faculty progresses.

Dave Richards asked the meeting to return to Frank's point about seeking legal advice. Richard Summers reiterated that he doesn't wish to seek formal advice at this time. Frank made the point that Susan Black is a barrister who is already involved through the Registry and may be able to give informal advice. Richard says he is happy to speak to her, and she has already helped in this case.

Dave Richards asked if Richard can confirm the invite list to this meeting in September. The invite list is given as:

- The incumbent (Rev Adrian Daffern)
- The churchwardens
- Richard Summers (Operations manager)
- Gina Vivian-Neal (Chair of Property Committee)
- Tom Culver (many capacities, including member of PCC and one of Faulkes Fund Managers)
- Karen Lim (Church architect)
- Officers of the SCY
- Frank King (as University Bellringer)
- Robert Smyth (Head Verger)
- Patrick Brooke (Chair of Finance Committee)

Liz Orme asked if Barry could also attend, being familiar with the faculty application process, the DAC and having a great deal of insight into the bells and installation at GSM. Richard Summers said that Barry will be welcome to join.

Mark Norris noted that his job relates to this type of antenna and he is also willing to lend expertise.

It was noted that there is broad support for the idea of raising the various issues with the Archdeacon, but there is a request for clarity on exactly who should be involved. The conclusion was that Peter Judd should be involved as priest-in-charge. It was noted that Adrian Daffern has already been briefed that this project is in progress. Richard Summers would be involved, and he also would invite the officers of the SCY. Barry asked whether Peter Judd would be able to talk to the Archdeacon as a 'parting gesture'. Peter responded that the archdeacon might not be available in the short time remaining before Adrian arrives.

There being no further topics for discussion on the background, the motion was put:

MOTION [PROPOSED: DAVE RICHARDS, SECONDED: LIZ ORME]

That the Officers of the Society or their representatives cannot agree to any proposed installation or part thereof without first obtaining agreement from the Society members at a further General Meeting

PASSED – 15 votes for, 4 abstain, none against

Richard Summers departed and was thanked for attending the meeting.

3. Discussion of Youths position on the project

It was realised that the debate had already taken in much of the discussion surrounding the second motion in this section (i.e. to inform the Archdeacon). Frank asked whether we can move directly to vote on it.

MOTION [PROPOSED: BARRY JOHNSON, SECONDED: JONATHAN SHANKLIN]

That the Society wish a representative of the church to communicate the Society's concerns about the antennae commissioning process informally, but directly, to the Archdeacon

PASSED – 16 votes for, 3 abstain, none against

Discussion moved to preparation of a position statement as proposed in the first motion of this section. Jonathan Shanklin recommended that the officers just keep up what they are doing with regular update meetings. Liz Orme made the case that a position statement (effectively saying where the backstops are) is an actively beneficial tool in negotiation. Akiko Saito commented that if NET were to get hold of the position statement, it could be used against us. Jonathan Shanklin made the point that whilst we are specifically concerned about this project, the risk register or position statement should consider a wider range of issues to make it of use to future projects.

Jonathan Agg asked what the position statement entails. Liz Orme replied that it should be a summary of risks and the Society's position on each of those risks (effectively whether they could be countenanced as part of any agreement). Barry asked whether the officers would be happy to take this on in addition to their other duties, noting that others were willing to help with the preparation of such a document. Jonathan Agg noted that, based on experience to date, there were several issues where developing an agreed society-wide opinion would be difficult. Dave Richards asked whether the antennae e-mail list is an appropriate place to seek assistance and there was general agreement that it was.

MOTION [PROPOSED: LIZ ORME, SECONDED: BARRY JOHNSON]

That the Officers will prepare a position statement for the Society on the current proposed installation that will be put to members for agreement at a further General Meeting.

PASSED – 12 votes for, 7 abstain, none against

Frank drew the meeting's attention to the new guidelines for mobile phone equipment installation which have been published by the Church of England. The document, published in March 2018 (well after project kick-off), details many potential pitfalls. As Frank comments, we seem to have stepped on almost every available landmine.

It was noted that a specific prerequisite for the SCY to agree to any installation programme should be full compliance with the published guidance.

Dave Richards asked again whether the SCY wish to instruct a legal adviser. Frank was asked if he wished to put a motion to that effect, and declines. It was commented that the contract is not a public document, so it may not even be possible for the SCY to get an opinion on it. Frank is still concerned about taking a meeting with NET and them coming away with an implicit assumption that all the questions have been answered. Basic legal advice on what to say and what not to say seems to be important.

The request from the meeting to Richard Summers is to take all possible preparation prior to the meeting with NET. Patrick Brooke clarifies that what is actually being suggested is a meeting prior to the meeting with NET to ensure that everyone is clear what the position is and ensure that any advice has been passed on.

Michael O'Callaghan proposes thanks to Peter Judd for chairing the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 9.29pm

The meeting was also attended by:

Jonathan Agg, Megan Bardsley, Claire Barlow, Patrick Brooke, Nick Elks*, Hannah Guggiari*, Philip Hensman, Barry Johnson, Frank King, June Mackay, Sue Marsden*, Mark Norris*, Michael O'Callaghan, Liz Orme, Phil Orme, David Richards, Akiko Saito, Jonathan Shanklin, Catriona Shearer, John Sherwood, Luke Smith, Courtney Spoerer, George Unsworth, Phillip Wilding*, Owen Winter*