

St Peter's Eastern Hill, Melbourne

Parish Council Meeting
7:30 pm 20 September 2023
St Peter's Vicarage

Minutes

1. Convening of Meeting: opened at 7.36pm.

We acknowledge the people of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we meet. We respectfully acknowledge their ancestors and elders, past and present.

2. Prayer was led by Rachel Ellyard.
3. Attendance. Mthr Kathryn Bellhouse, Geoff Bush-Coote, Rachel Ellyard (chair), Daniel Ferguson, Peter Griffin, Michael Gronow, Stuart Hibberd, Daniel Mitterdorfer (secretary), Anne Scott-Pendlebury, Geoff Sutherland, Craig Wilson. Guests: Stephen Duckett. Apologies: Fr Michael Bowie, Terry Porter, Michael Upson, Peter Wild.
4. Minutes of previous meeting: 23 August 2023 Approved via circular email on 20 September 2023. **Moved:** Daniel Mitterdorfer; **Seconded:** Anne Scott-Pendlebury; **carried.**

5. Budget discussion

Rachel asked if everyone had access to the budget document which was circulated in the preceding days via Google Drive and email. Those present agreed that they had received the file.

Peter Griffin spoke about the budget. Points raised:

- We are in a period of inflation. Clergy stipends are going to increase around 3.8% (housing allowance 5.5%, but the parish provides housing rather than the allowance) as directed by Archbishop in Council. parish support staff salaries are also likely to go up by 5%. Utility costs are also likely to go up.
- Music costs: we are attempting to have the costs of the four choral scholar positions covered by donations to MACO.
- Commercial income: we have reduced means of earning income from property rental as one of the Keble House flats is being used to accommodate our new assistant priest.
- Offertory: we are hopeful that increased offertory will cover some of the budget deficit.

Stuart Hibberd asked if an increase in offertory is likely? Are we experiencing a growth in parish membership? Mthr Kathryn advised that she didn't believe there had yet been an overall increase in parishioners; this will take some time to build.

Daniel Mitterdorfer asked whether the monies being donated via MACO are separate to those being considered for the establishment of a Music Foundation. Michael Gronow advised that the MACO donations need to be spent and cannot be accrued or used as seed capital for a Music Foundation.

Geoff Sutherland asked whether the St Peter's Charitable Foundation supported the parish budget in some way. Michael Gronow advised Geoff Sutherland that the Foundation paid a lot of the costs associated with building maintenance but their coverage of these expenses is not part of the budget.

Rachel reiterated that the forecast increase in offertory was the way we are budgeting to meet the increased expenses. She detailed a discussion that had taken place earlier in the evening between the Finance Committee and Wardens around clergy costs. Rachel believed there was a possible error in how this

breakdown is represented in rows 6121 and 6122 of the budget, and that we may be double-counting one of the figures; the bookkeeper is looking into this matter.

Stephen Duckett has undertaken his own analysis of the budget and thinks that rather than the \$80k deficit we are likely to experience a deficit of around \$40k, even with our projected increase in offertory.

Geoff Sutherland asked for further information about how the Parish expenses that are covered by the Charitable Foundation are handled. Michael Gronow advised that when the Foundation offers to pay for a parish expense, the vendor is asked to invoice the Foundation rather than the parish. None of those expenses are handled in the Parish budget.

Geoff asked whether there was any provision for donations from the parish to external charitable organisations such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and how we fund projects such as the Social Enterprise and Lazarus Centre Breakfast programme. Stephen Duckett advised that these are funded from outside the Parish Budget by the Foundation.

Parish Support Costs

Stephen Duckett noted that the bottom line of the Bookroom budget is that the profits more than cover what we would get for the commercial let of the space.

Rachel spoke to the increased costs relating to the position of Director of Music.

Peter Griffin spoke about the expense budgeted for Bookkeeping and Audit, saying the current bookkeepers offered a large amount of Diocesan intelligence as part of their bookkeeping service. We have explored the alternative of using a Software as a Service (e.g. MYOB or Xero) solution and having the financials done by the Parish Administrator but have decided against this as the Parish Administrator's time would be better spent on opportunities to increase income.

Daniel Ferguson spoke about Events and Hospitality budget, highlighting that we were projected to come in under budget in the current year. If we hold more events (which we hope to do) this cost may go up, even if it is covered in part for income received as a result of Events and Hospitality.

Stuart Hibberd asked why Maintenance Garden & Grounds (6330) and Ongoing Maintenance (6331) have increased so substantially. Rachel replied that this would likely have been based on the actual figures from the current financial year.

Where to from here

Rachel asked us to turn our attentions to the increased offertory. Is this a realistic increase and do we, as a Parish Council, feel comfortable in endorsing this figure to the Parish AGM. She stated that she is of the view that this offertory increase can only be achieved by more people giving and/or people giving more. Is this possible? Various points of view were shared by those present but the general feeling was that the increase would not be achievable as is currently budgeted.

Rachel asked whether the increases in the other Income lines (Donations, Hall Rental, etc) were within the realm of achievability. It was felt that the budgeted income was at the maximum of the possible range of where it could be.

The meeting agreed that Offertory of \$278k was overstated; the meeting agreed that it should be reduced by \$78k. This would in turn increase our deficit by \$78k.

Following extensive discussion, Parish Council agreed to defer a vote on the formal motion of passing the

budget until further information is received from the Finance Committee and the Bookkeeper in relation to the veracity of the projected expenditure figure for clergy stipends. The council have agreed to consider a revised budget (implications above) by circular email at a later date. **Moved:** Craig Wilson; **Seconded:** Michael Gronow; **carried.**

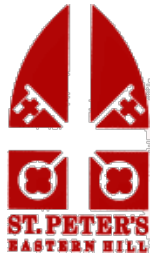
Rachel Ellyard thanked Stephen Duckett for his contribution to the discussion and to Peter for his hard work on preparing the budget. Daniel Ferguson requested a note of thanks be minuted for Rachel Ellyard's chairing of the meeting.

6. Any Other Business

6.1. Prayers for the departed – Stuart Hibberd. *Deferred until next meeting.*

Meeting closed with the Grace at 9.21pm.

Next in-person meeting: 25 October 2023; the revised budget will be circulated for approval before this time, via email, and will be documented.



St Peter's Eastern Hill, Melbourne

Parish Council Circular Email
As at 9:00am 16 October 2023

Minutes

Motion: Parish Council resolves, by circular email sent on 10 October 2023, to recommend the FY23/24 Budget (with Income: \$600,300; Expenses: \$685,975; Profit/Loss: -\$85,675) to the Parish, to be presented at the Parish AGM (26/11/23). **Moved:** Daniel Mitterdorfer; **Seconded:** Pete Wild; **carried by majority replies to email.**