

PARISH CHURCH MINUTES 1877 - 1958

For most people, reading the Parish Church Council Minutes is not considered high on the list of priorities! However, looking through the Minutes of years ago does make interesting reading. Here are a few extracts taken from the original records which are now held at the County Record Office in Truro.

1st June 1877: Meeting held to select two foremen for carrying out the new scheme for the management of the Endowed School. There was a show of hands to vote for these two from four nominations - Mr John Blake, 12 votes; Peter Palmer, 4 votes; Francis O'Dogherty, 13 votes and Edwin Toll, 7 votes. After Messrs Blake and O'Dogherty were duly elected, a poll was demanded on behalf of Peter Palmer and Edwin Toll. This was arranged for the 8th June, 1877, between 3 and 8pm. The result was: Blake 66; Palmer 106; O'Dogherty 107; Toll 85.

25th March 1878: Resolved that the churchwardens take steps to dispose of the old bell metal and that the proceeds be applied to the liquidation of the church restoration debt.

25th March 1879: The churchwardens be empowered to fund the tower clock at an expense not exceeding £5.

24th March 1881: Churchwardens asked to 'take such steps to make the bell chamber secure'.

26th March 1888: 30/- was paid for the winding of the tower clock. Mr Browne took exception to this because of the inaccurate time shown and proposed 'that the winding be discontinued'. Mr Henry Panter moved an amendment 'that the clock be kept going and that Mr N Panter, the custodian of the clock, be informed that 'unless greater attention be paid to his duties in this respect during the ensuing year, the matter will be taken out of his hands'. The amendment was carried. Thanks given to Mr R Steed for some trees he had presented in the churchyard. 'The southern entrance gates be opened on Sundays during divine services' was proposed and carried.

25th March 1889: Mr Browne reported that the time kept on the tower clock was 'less misleading than in the year before'. Shrubs that had been planted on the north side of the churchyard had been wilfully damaged. Notices were to be posted in public places offering a reward for information that will lead to the detection of any persons found injuring the trees.

25th March 1891: Resolved that John Ough be appointed stoker for the church heating apparatus at a salary of 30/- for the season.

23rd September 1892: A meeting called at 4pm to elect a governor for Landrake School was adjourned at a proposal by Mr Blake to a later time "say 7.30pm so as to allow any of the labouring class to attend." But this was rejected by an amendment .

15th April 1895: Mr W H Rogers raised an issue regarding damage in the churchyard by fowls. A notice to those who kept poultry near the churchyard was to be issued requesting them to prevent these fowls from trespassing in the churchyard.

10th April 1896: It was resolved that the church clock be unwound for the present and that the churchwardens should ascertain the cost of repairing and cleaning.

12th April 1898: Mr C H Cornish, of Plymouth, restored the clock for £27-10-0 plus £2-2-0 for carpentry to Mr Churchward.

6th June 1898: Meeting 'to consider the state of the roof of the tower and its repairs'. Mr W Riddle, mason, gave a verbal report of the leaky and defective state of the tower roof. Estimate given as £4-16-0. The vicar, Rev Behenna, promised £5 towards the cost of an architect's service, and also £20 to a restoration fund for the tower.

Mr Panter, Hon Sexton, stated that the newer portion of the churchyard contained room for sixty internments. He suggested graves should be 8ft deep and two of a family might be interred in the same grave. Mr Hosking thought that steps should be taken to secure additional ground and sooner this was done the better as the Medical Officer of Health intended to give us notice of its necessity, it being his duty to warn parishes about the need of new churchyards being provided or otherwise he would be censured by the Home Office. Mr Churchward stated that he had only found room for eleven more internments. A resolution was moved by Mr Menhinick and carried that 'Lord Mt Edgcumbe be approached with a view to the parish acquiring the gardens, about $\frac{1}{4}$ acre, adjoining the new churchyard on the east, the old churchyard on the south.

The chairman announced that all gates of the churchyard would be locked for one day a year, July 1st, in order to prevent any claim of a public right of way through the churchyard.

20th June 1898: The chairman, Rev F Behenna, reported on the outlay on the tower as being £180. Strengthening of the tower and turret parapets, £50. Pointing the south and west walls £60. Lead head and downpipe £20. New roof, £50. The meeting was surprised at the large outlay of £180 or £200 if a lightning conductor were added. It was arranged that Mr Sedding's report be forwarded to Lord Mt Edgcumbe in order to take his lordship's opinion, he being a major landowner of the parish.

19th September 1895: Lord Mt Edgcumbe sent his terms for selling the land for the churchyard. £50 for the freehold, the purchasers pay tenants compensation (they were gardens) and all legal expenses. They felt this was too much - "That Lord Mt Edgcumbe be asked to kindly reduce his terms of sale, considering for which it is required and seeing that a piece of land equal to, or larger than it, was sold to the parish by his lordship in 1867 for only £15.

26th September 1898: Lord Mt Edgcumbe replied that he was unable to reduce the price asked - but if the money raised is voluntarily contributed, he would give £20.

26th June 1901: The vestry meeting was held in the Sir Robert Geffery's Schoolroom because the parish vestry room 'being unfit for the purpose owing to the corpse of an unknown adult having been lodged there awaiting inquest and burial'.

12th January 1904: Rev Behenna, vicar, explained to the meeting of parishioners about the storm damage of the past year. Much rainwater had been driven through the south and west walls and flooded the belfry. He also read out Mr Edward Sedding's report of 1898 on the condition of the tower. An appeal to raise money was begun.

24th September 1908: Resolved that a screen is needed beneath the belfry arch in the church of St.Peters for the adornment of the church and as a remedy for the draught which causes discomfort to the congregation. That the plan of Harry Heins & Sons, Sculptors, Exeter, for the screen be approved of. This was dedicated on January 18th 1909.

The interior of the church was redecorated, the ceiling whitewashed during the autumn of 1909 for £14.

March 1913: Vicar reported that water had been percolating through the tower walls, south and west, owing to the trees in the churchyard not allowing the walls drying out after storms. Agreed that some lopping needed to admit sun and dry damp places.

12th April 1917: It was suggested that the sidesmen should show strangers into seats in the church and that some prayer books and hymn books should be provided for visitors.

April 1919: The organist's salary was £20.

It was suggested a roll of honour be erected in Landrake Church in honour of those parishioners fallen in the war.

A complaint was received concerning the noise caused by the church heating apparatus - Vicar promised to enquire of the makers, Longbottom & Co of Leeds.

Mr E Menhinick expressed his opinion that the church services were not bright enough, that processional and recessional hymns were seldom sung, and that the prayers were read too rapidly. The vicar, Rev F Behenna, pointed out that processional hymns at the beginning of divine service were not in accordance with the liturgical principles set out in the order of morning and evening service in the Prayer Book (except for great Church Festivals) so that to commence the services in the praise before confession of sin verged on irreverence and presumption.

16th January 1920: A petition, signed by Miss E J B Browne, praying for a faculty for the erection of a stone pulpit in Landrake Parish Church in memory of the late Mr Solomon Browne. The vestry approved of the proposed work and heartily thanked the Misses Browne for their proposed gift.

9th April 1920: A resolution was passed to protest against the unfair rating of tithes attached to a benefice. This protest to be sent to the Prime Minister and the Member of Parliament for this decision.

The Rev F J Behenna died on the 18th January 1927 after 43 years as curate and vicar of the Parish. The Rev G W Herbert was inducted by the Lord Bishop of Truro, the Rt Rev W H Frere, D D on the 9th March 1927.

30th May 1927: A memorial to the late vicar, Rev F J Behenna, was agreed - A new altar and reredos at St Erney Church.

February 1928: Discussion took place as to whom the Parish Church was dedicated, St. Peter or St. Michael. It was decided to write to the Lord Bishop for his opinion and advice on the matter.

23rd April 1930: Mr W Panter presented, on behalf of the congregation, the Easter offering which amounted to the splendid sum of £8-5-0 to the vicar. The vicar returned thanks and said he was proud to receive this generous offering. He was glad that this ancient custom was rapidly being re-established in the parish and although some people could only give a small amount, he was nevertheless, very pleased to accept it.

December 1930: The PCC decided to provide the necessary stage curtains and stage scenery for the Sir Robert Geffery's Memorial Hall, now in course of erection and present them to the committee.

22nd September 1931: Mr Clatworthy was appointed organ blower at a salary of £2 per annum.

12th January 1932: At the PCC the Rev Walton gave a short address to the meeting - The need to renovate the tower and the organ. Also a Children's Come in Church - He asked for loyal co-operation of the meeting in assisting him to build up the church and make it a real live one, to the Glory of God. The vicar welcomed Mr Wickett to the parish, and referred to the deep respect of the late Mr W J Jane who was schoolmaster for 26 years in the parish and also secretary of the church council.

March 1932: The new vicar, Rev T A Walton, thanked the church for the Easter offering gift and said he hoped the same loyal support given his predecessor would be extended to him, and that the church would grow more and more into a real live Church of God.

Report from Messrs Hele & Co on the condition of the organ gave an estimate for certain specified work to be done at £40.

April 1932: Money was needed for the organ renovation. Rev Walton spoke on the methods used for raising money by having games of chance and expressed his opinion that such means were advocating the evils of gambling and he hoped he would receive the support of his council. He was assured of their co-operation.

1958: The Rev T N Bateman was to be instituted on March 8 th. The PCC were angry because they found out through reading the Deanery Magazine. A letter in suitable terms was to be sent to the Rural Dean.