

**DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS
PARISH OF ST ANDREW, BIGGLESWADE**

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 25th MARCH 2025 IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE**

PRESENT: Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong, Rosemary Bentley, Lucy Dilley, (Vivienne Gayfer), Peter Giles, (Hilary Johnson), Rob Lackey, Claire Leeks, Ruth Marshall-Jones, Adrian Maynard, (Chris Parker), (David Pilgrim), Andrew Rutt, Harriet Shannon, Judith Thatcher, Nettie van de Weerd.

() means not present

1. Welcome, prayers and apologies for absence

Rev'd Liz welcomed those present and started with a reading following by a short reflection from 'Living Hope'. Apologies received as above.

2. To receive the Memorandum of Discussions of the Standing Committee held on 11th March 2025

The Memorandum of Discussions was approved.

Matters Arising

AOB Lucy asked if the reference to a part time self-supporting curate would be an associate minister. Rev'd Liz said that this would be a very short-term placement for an SSM curate in their second year of training, a week in June, and possibly a further week or two later in the year.

PCC Secretary Role Rev'd Liz had spoken to Chris; the person he had in mind to take on the role had declined. Rev'd Liz has emailed Edward Peake School to see if there might be an opportunity to fit together the PCC Secretary role with that of a clerk to governors. The school are going out to recruit for the role and they don't want to hold up the process but once they have someone, then as part of the process, they will link that person to Rev'd Liz so that she can approach them to see if they want to do some extra hours. Andrew pointed out that it is not necessary for the person to be a member of the PCC to undertake the role or attend the meeting. Ruth suggested circulating the job description to PCC.

3. To approve the Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 28th January and matters arising from that meeting

Peter noted that the date of the next PCC meeting was incorrect and should read 25th March. The minutes were approved

Proposed: Andrew Rutt ; Seconded: Rosemary Bentley. 10 Approved/1 Abstention

Matters Arising

Matters Arising: Lucy asked about the oil candles which were to be ordered in November. Rosemary said that the order was put in immediately but because they are specialised they could not complete the order over the Christmas/New Year period. They have now arrived but we will use up the candles we currently have first. The cost was £450 which will come out of the donations fund. Rev'd Liz confirmed that the old candles had gone to Ukraine, including the old paschal candles, although we always keep one in reserve in case of breakages.

Peter referred to the Standing Committee's meeting with the Church Architect in January and the detailed discussions referred to. Rev'd Liz said that these would be postponed partly because of the situation with Chris and the fact that we are not in a position to further the discussions at the present time. The subject of the north aisle roof would be discussed under building and grounds. Nettie noted that at the time of the meeting with the Architect the question was asked as to whether we should complete the works on the north aisle prior to commencing any reordering works; his recommendation was that we should complete the work on the north aisle roof first.

Claire asked about the flyer for the Chapter House which had not yet materialised and offered to assist if help was needed. Rev'd Liz said she would be speaking to Chris tomorrow and would raise the matter with him. She believed the flyer was currently in draft form.

Correspondence (i) 'Saints Alive' Rev'd Liz noted that due to Sue Thorn being out of action following her ankle operation, and after discussion with Rob Butcher, it has been decided to postpone the performance of 'Saints Alive' and potentially look at doing it at Pentecost next year. Rev'd Liz thanked those who had expressed interest in being part of the production.

Any Other Business Rev'd Liz stated that she had been to the final session of the Diocesan programme Launchpad for those wanting to think about their youth work in a more updated way. She added that the sessions had been very good and quite challenging. The Celebration Event is on Monday 19th May, 7 pm at Youthscape, Luton, when each participant can go along with a reflective plan about what they have learnt. Rev'd Liz mentioned three areas to help us as a church:-

- common vision and strategy

- content and resourcing

- supporting with training, supervision and social for our children and youth leaders

The invitation to attend is open to anyone who would like to hear more about the course.

ACTION: Ruth to circulate the email and invitation

4. **Discernment for a new Bishop of St Albans**

The meeting split into small groups to discuss the responses to the three questions set out in the paper circulated ahead of the meeting. The responses were gathered up and will be sent to the Diocese. All replies remain anonymous.

5. **APCM Preparation**

- **Accounts**

The various paperwork had been circulated ahead of the meeting. With regard to the heating project shortfall, Rev'd Liz noted on behalf of Chris that his thoughts were that anything under the heating project should come out of the Peter Vickers Fund or the Friends of St Andrew's, therefore should we as a PCC approach them to settle the balance outstanding rather than take it out of church funds? Andrew stated that part of the shortfall (£15K, including costs of £9K in 2022) was taken out of the Major Fabric Fund. He added that he wouldn't be able to approach the Friends until early May and if approached the likely answer would be that grant making bodies do not make retrospective grants after an applicant has fully met costs. This would leave the Vicar and Churwardens to make the decision about the Peter Vickers Fund. If the Trustees wished to contribute towards the shortfall, it would effectively replace the monies taken from the Major Fabric Fund and they would need to agree the amount. The shortfall was £16K in total. They need to also consider whether it is best to withdraw money only to put in a deposit account earning a lower interest rate than might be achieved in the Peter Vickers Fund. Andrew's recommendation would be not to withdraw any money from the Peter Vickers Fund and to leave these funds available for future projects.

Ruth asked about the stewardship campaign and whether the annual giving had increased as a result of the campaign. Andrew reported that at the time of drafting the budget, the increase in the regular giving would be 4.8%. However, since then Adrian was able to provide an update on the result and commitments which would now make the percentage increase 3.1%.

Claire asked about the Holiday Club money and where it was held. Andrew said that the Holiday Club bank account is separate from the PCC and they report their income and expenditure to him, therefore it is reported in the statutory accounts. As at 1st January 2024 the balance stood at £1,640 and as at 31st December 2024 it was £3,180. Claire asked if there was any potential to use the balance for the youth groups. Rev'd Liz stated that she will be working up a plan as from 19th May about youth work and resources and will engage with Chris on this. She acknowledged that it is something we need to address in terms of mission and growth and diversity.

A proposal was made to accept the Annual Accounts. Proposed: Andrew Rutt; Seconded: Peter Giles. All in favour.

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- **Adoption of Annual Report**

Lucy noted that there was no mention of the Holiday Club and requested a paragraph be inserted. **ACTION: Ruth to follow-up.**

A proposal was made to accept the Annual Report of the PCC. Proposed: Ruth Marshall-Jones; Seconded: Judith Thatcher. All in favour.

6. **Safeguarding**

A report from Helen Tranter had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Peter asked how often the PCC would receive a report. Rev'd Liz stated that one would be circulated for every meeting as far as she was aware. Peter asked with regard to point 3 (Incident Reports) what the time span was. Rev'd Liz said that it was since the last report. She added that there was a Safeguarding Officer Thanksgiving service on 3rd May at 5pm in St Albans Cathedral.

7. **Group Reports**

(a) Communications to include Website and Social Media. Reports had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Rosemary noted from the Communications report that with regard to 'A Church Near You', this had now been taken on by Sue Oldroyd and Mary Dominey. Nothing in general otherwise to report other than Oliver asked to remind PCC that if anyone has anything to publicise in connection with social media, to please contact him with good notice to allow for its publication.

(b) Eco Church. Nothing to add to the report circulated.

(c) Building & Grounds. Whilst the committee hadn't met, Nettie reported on the following:

- **Water Butt:** the faculty has gone out and the notices displayed. The costs will be met by Nick Gurney in memory of his father. Once the notice period has expired (30 days), the faculty will be sent to the Diocese for approval by the Chancellor.
- **North Aisle Roof Repairs:** Mike Dales, the Church Architect is happy to start the process once the PCC approves; all costs will come from grants. Nettie stressed the importance of having the work done before March 2026 **It was proposed that the PCC approve permission to move forward with exploring the works to be done. PROPOSED: Nettie van de Weerd; SECONDED: Lucy Dilley. All in favour.**

Nettie reported on the outstanding electrical work which needs to be carried out, some of which Nick Gurney has agreed to do, i.e. replacing the light bulbs in the chandeliers. There is a hole in the floor which Vaughan Johnson has agreed to look at. The other work that needs doing includes converting the north path bollard to LED, high level spot lights within the church, and connecting the noticeboard light via a time switch. Chris had obtained a quote from the electrician who had worked on the installation of the heating system and was therefore familiar with the system. The quote was for £2,136 including VAT. Nettie recommended that the PCC approve the quote so that the work could start as soon as possible since it had been outstanding for some considerable time. After some discussion, it was agreed that PCC should ask Chris to obtain two more quotes, as it was good practice to do so. **ACTION: Nettie to ask Chris to obtain two further quotes.**

It was proposed that going forward any works needing to be done amounting to less than £500 can be carried out with one quote; anything over that figure would require three comparative quotes. PROPOSED: Rev'd Liz; SECONDED: Andrew Rutt. 10 Approved/1 Abstention. It was agreed that the Standing Committee would go with the best value for money quote.

8. **Deanery & Diocesan Reports**

Nothing to report. Rosemary thanked everyone for their support of the first Deanery Evensong at St Andrew's and those following.

9. **Churches Together**

10. Correspondence

A letter had been received from two of St Andrew's Church Youth Leaders (Noah Dilley and Emma Pallett) regarding the donation of a sofa for the children's corner of the church, with the aim of enhancing the space for families to use during church services. The letter requested the PCC's approval for the installation of the sofa. Rev'd Liz noted that prior to this email, the sofa had been placed in the church with no prior discussion, and it had since been removed. She noted that it was not good practice to just bring something into the church building without permission and she didn't feel it was in keeping with the current church architecture nor did she feel that it would allow for better engagement during formal services. She recommended that PCC did not accept the gift, but she would be happy for it to be considered as an addition to the Ivel Room. It was discussed how best to engage with the youth group as we didn't want to have a negative impact on the relationship with them. A suggestion was that three members of the PCC meet with them to listen and discuss how they would like to be involved in the future. **It was proposed that we accept the donation on a temporary basis, keeping the gift in the Ivel Room and that a chat with the two youth leaders concerned to see how they would like to be involved moving forward. PROPOSED: Lucy Dilley; SECONDED: Peter Giles. Approved by all.**

11. Any other Business

- **Country Fayre Proposal**

The Country Fayre Committee had submitted a proposal asking for support of two charities for this year's country fayre, namely Multiple Sclerosis Trust (MS Trust), and the Willow Foundation which works to provide young people and families who are living with a terminal diagnosis or life-threatening illness with life-long memories. **PROPOSED: Lucy Dilley; SECONDED: Andrew Rutt. All in favour.**

- **Fireworks Evening Joint Venture**

Claire had submitted a proposal for the PCC to consider for a joint fund-raising initiative to strengthen community outreach and raise funds to be run in partnership with Stratton school. She felt it would be a nice thing to with the support from Chris and St Andrew's Church. Risk assessments will be done ahead of the event and volunteers will be needed. Chris will be in control of the fireworks side of things. Rev'd Liz queried whether Chris would be able to do this. **It was proposed that we agree in principle to supporting the event but that if Chris is not fit then St Andrew's would not be able to do the letting off of the fireworks. PROPOSED: Claire Leeks; SECONDED: Andrew Rutt. All in favour.** Claire will get the risk assessments done and get the date in the diary. She will need to know by the end of the summer term if Chris is fit enough to oversee the fireworks, so that if not, she has time to find an alternative person.

12. Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded with prayer and the Grace.

Date of next SC: Tuesday 1st July, 7:30 pm, Ivel Room

Date of next PCC: Tuesday 15th July, 7.30 pm, Chapter House.

(Chair)

(Date)

15 July, 2025.