

.Minutes of the Parochial Church Council

Held on Tuesday 14th January 2025 at the Duchy Barn

Present: Peter Wilson (Chairman) (PW), Sharon Sarson (SS), John Reed (JR), Helen Sims (HS), Lynne Al-Sad (LAS), Adrian Beckingsale (AB).

Apologies from: Gabbie Watson, Roger Berry (RB)

In Attendance: Rev. Phillip Young

PW opened the meeting with a prayer, and PY offered a reading from Colossians.

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th November 2024 were approved without amendment, and there were no matters arising.
2. Safeguarding:
There was now a reasonable expectation that the vacant position of Safeguarding Officer would be filled in the near future.
3. Christmas Review 2024:
Due to the high level of families coming to the Crib Service, it was agreed that in the interests of safety, two Services would be held consecutively in December 2025.
There had been a small number of negative comments regarding the format of the Christmas Day Service. PY agreed to take this on board next Christmas.
JR felt that at some of the Festive services, the voluntary donations were well below the normal level, and that indicating the ways to contribute would give a greater opportunity to those who tend to only give at Christmas.
4. Finance Report:
JR gave a brief update as to the state of the finances at the end of the 2024 financial year, and the ongoing process to complete the Final Accounts. The key point being that Dedham had paid 100% of it's Parish Share target.

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The Mission Bake fund raising by Ruth/LAS and the team had closed for the year and the total of £2,412 has been distributed to three charities. Additionally, the School concert, the Crib Service and the Carol Service had raised £1,451 that is going direct to three worthy charities. The last Parish Share contribution had been paid over in December, bringing the total to £49,141, which was 100% of what we had agreed to pay at the start of the year.

The 2025 Budget had already been circulated to the PCC, and JR explained a few points and confirmed that the Finance Committee had approved the Plan. The budgeted surplus for the General Fund in 2025 was predicted to be £1,785, which would increase the balance held at the end of the year to £29,759. This was a level of reserve that the Committee considered to be adequate in the circumstances, and JR clarified a point raised, that if either the income or the expenses were materially different by the end of Quarter 2, a half year review would be undertaken.

It was proposed by AB and seconded by HS that the 2025 Budget be adopted, and it was approved unanimously.

PW thanked JR and Sara Marshall for the work done to put together the budget.

5. Children and Family Worker Report:

Claire Arculus had circulated an up-to-date report on all the many activities she had been involved with since the November report. The workload was growing, and the need for volunteers, was partly being met, but still more are needed as activities progress positively.

The re-start of Open the Book, the increased numbers at Junior Church, and the impending re-start of Revive@5 are three of the many things moving forward.

Claire had raised a number of questions concerning the important issue of Safeguarding, including Deb Turner's administrative role, and the Safeguarding of Recruits. The Churchwardens and Missioners would continue to encourage and support Claire, and the appointment of an SGO would probably resolve many of the issues.

6. Anne-Marie Partrick:

The PCC confirmed their earlier agreement by e mail, that Anne-Marie should continue with her Ministry role, and her existing licence should be renewed forthwith.

7. Christina Volkmann:

This agenda item had been tabled following insufficient time at the last PCC meeting for further discussion. A letter to all the PCC members from Christina had raised a series of questions as to how it was decided that she was no longer suitable to be able to proceed with her ordination training in this Benefice/Diocese. The resultant decision of Christina to reluctantly withdraw from all our church activities is recognised by the PCC to be a major loss.

The key question to PY being why none of the Churchwardens or the PCC had been consulted prior to this termination, given their belief that she was an outstanding hard-working member of the congregation, whose competence and spiritual commitment made her an outstanding candidate for further training towards ordination.

PY was asked to explain the background to this decision, and responded by giving a detailed summary of the official process, as laid down by the Diocese, particularly the role of the Director of Ordinands. It did seem that there was an unacceptable delay by the Diocese to respond, and other communication issues played a part, but it was still unclear as to why none of the PCC members were kept aware of this situation, or who WAS approached.

In conclusion, the PCC hoped that we had all learnt lessons from this experience, and that in future, the PCC, the Missioners (and the Diocese) work together to support any candidate that may wish to take up training.

8. Fabric Report:

- A) Organ: The new Binns Organ is now installed, and the project is effectively completed, and the last of the contractual payments have now been made to Nicholson's. Two sockets on the front pillar still awaiting to be wired.

AW had made a request that the PCC should consider an ex-gratia payment to the Glasgow Church for their help in relinquishing the defunct organ. A payment of £500 was approved out of the Organ Fund.

JR confirmed that there would be a reasonable sum available, once reclaims for the expended VAT in 2024 had been received, and it was agreed that the Fund would remain open to cover the annual maintenance fees that had now been confirmed by Nicholson's.

- B) Windows: The Faculty had still not been signed off by the Diocese, but the bats issue had now been overcome with the Preservation Trust.

No further negotiations had been held with the contractors, and getting dates from the glazier was proving difficult.

The opening Appeal in the Parish Magazine had failed to raise significant funds, and PW had now drafted a new letter to circulate to likely interested individuals, as well as approaching organisations that might well wish to give Grants to this kind of project.

With the Architect away in March and April, it had been decided to postpone the start of the project to this Autumn. It was felt that until funds were pledged to the sum of c£100k no decision to proceed would be undertaken.

- C) Electrics: Lissimore had undertaken a two-day survey this week, and PW was awaiting a report on what needed to be done to maintain an electrical system fit for purpose.

9. Muniment Room:

AB gave an updated report on the state of the Muniment Room, and a meeting with interested parties was scheduled, to decide on the best way forward to safeguard the various records, both digitally and/or manually. It is felt that the Muniment room is not suitable atmospherically for books and paper records, and presents logistical

access issues, so it was agreed that an alternative location was going to be necessary.

10. Eco Church:

AB reported that St Mary's was not far away from obtaining the Silver Award, and outlined the last remaining tasks that need to be carried out in order to achieve certification by the end of the January deadline.

The acquisition and installation of water butts outside the Boiler Room, would probably be sufficient. AB had obtained quotes at an estimated cost of £760, and the PCC gave approval to AB to try and complete this project.

AB felt that at some stage, an all-embracing written Eco policy should be drafted for consideration by the PCC.

11. Church Communications:

SS had identified an alternative provider for the audio-visual upgrade, and they had quoted a new mixer at £4,500 but with extra spending on microphones and an antennae, the ultimate cost would likely be close to £10,000.

SS was seeking donations to fund this during the coming year.

12. APCM Reports:

JR reminded the PCC that the APCM was to be held on Sunday 13th April after the 11.00 Palm Sunday Service, so a 12.30 p.m. start was likely.

Deb would have to be provided with all the usual annual reports in a timely manner, and JR would provide the Churchwardens with a list of all the reports to be done, and who will possibly be deputed to provide them.

13. PCC Membership/Churchwarden:

PW urged all PCC members to help encourage new volunteers from the congregation, to take on support roles as well as joining the PCC.

The most urgent need was for a second Churchwarden, due to PW standing down from April 13th.

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14. Any Other Business:

HS raised the subject of the Insurance status of the Duchy Barn, and SS volunteered to look at the details in the Ecclesiastical Ins.Co. policy.

The meeting closed, with prayers from PY.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7.30 at the Duchy Barn