

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

**MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 28TH JANUARY 2025 IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE**

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

() means not present

1. Welcome, prayers and apologies for absence

LOE welcomed those present and led the opening prayers. Apologies received as above.

2. To receive the Memorandum of Discussions of the Standing Committee held on 14th January 2025

The Memorandum of Discussions was approved.

Matters Arising

Importance of total revision of the Electoral Roll in 2025 was stressed.

LOE briefly outlined details of Standing Committee's meeting with the Church Architect on 25th January. This addressed an update of original discussions in 2019 with reference to future church building programmes, providing opportunities for discussion and questions. The next step will be a more detailed update and discussion time at the PCC meeting on Tuesday 25th March.

3. To approve the Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 19th November 2024 and matters arising from that meeting

Proposed: CP; Seconded: JT. Accepted unanimously.

Matters Arising

- RB stated that the oil candles for four pedestals will be ordered from Vanpoules before the end of January. AR suggested that perhaps the Paschal candle Easter 2025 could be purchased with donation(s).
- Details for the water butt to be installed in the church grounds had been circulated. PG proposed that the location nearest the Garden of Remembrance should be selected. Accepted Nem con. CP will apply for faculty and follow up funding with AR.
- Chapter House Hiring: CP will refine additions to proposed flier containing information for potential hirers prior to publication, with added photos supplied by PG. Flier to be approved by Standing Committee, Tuesday 11th March.
- Christmas Collections amounted to c. £1200; not yet paid to charities because gift aid to be completed.
- The contactless machine is now installed; despite some initial teething problems, now being used effectively. Thanks to CP for organising and setting up.
- RB gave reminders about special services at St Andrew's: Christingle, Sunday 2nd February at 3 pm and World Day of Prayer, Friday 7th March at 7:30 pm.

4. Draft MAP

LOE introduced discussion about draft compiled by the Standing Committee following discussion during PCC meetings. AR requested headings to be changed on communications, agendas, etc. Following discussions, CP proposed, RB seconded that suggested amendments should be inserted and then the MAP should be published. Accepted unanimously. The MAP was adopted by the PCC, and submitted to the Diocesan website, Friday 31st January.

5. Safeguarding

It is important that new Safeguarding pre-requirements are now mandatory, as opposed to previously for 'due regard'. The training log process is being developed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Helen Tranter, and renewals are ongoing. Thanks to PSO were recorded. All actions must be supported by the PCC and statutory DBS renewals take place 3-yearly. It is imperative that individuals stand back from responsibilities if DBS is not up to date.

5. Group Reports

(a) Finance

AR tabled a written report.

- A £8.5K deficit was reported to the end of 2024
- A deficit budget of £4K for 2025 has been discussed by the Finance Committee.
- General Funds would stand at approximately £10K at December 2025.
- The Generous Giving initiative, October 2024, pledged donations increased by 5%.
- AR is in the process of distributing 2024 Mission giving funds to Carers in Bedford and Sue Ryder St John's Hospice.
- There will be further discussion before the completion of the statutory accounts.

Acceptance of 2025 £4K deficit was proposed by AR, seconded JT. Accepted - unanimous. Proposed additional fees for 2025 Occasional Offices, proposed by AR, seconded CP. Accepted - unanimous.

(b) Building and Grounds

Detailed updates had been provided in writing. Notice of next church work parties were submitted. CP encouraged active participation.

(c) Growth & Mission

Mission Giving 2025. It was proposed to continue the financial support of Mafambisa through Hands at work in the sum of £3,600 pa. Then to support two charities. The Deanery Project 'Triumph Heart', £250, and remaining funding to Brainkind, Stagenhoe Park, St Paul's Walden - a nomination by David Pilgrim. AR proposed that the monetary support of Mafambisa should be capped for the next three years at £3,600. AR supported the need to explore other future options as opposed to simply presenting one charity as a fait accompli.

Renewal of the Hands at Work Partnership. CP outlined the strengths of the partnership; in response to queries he suggested the powerful impact of visits outweighed environmental concerns about energy expended. There were queries regarding other possible options for long-term partnerships, stressing the importance of choices for consideration. Following further discussion, the possibility of a two-year extension was tabled, followed by a period for reflection. PG spoke of the value of seeking a possible project which may be lived out and offering further ministerial opportunities. Discussions also related to increasing involvement of young people and being more inclusive for greater numbers. RB suggested looking at future initiatives more widely, intimating that money can be spent wisely in partnerships near and far with valued and valuable experiences.

LOE proposed adopting the Hands at Work partnership for a further two years, whilst prayerfully researching additional mission opportunities. Accepted unanimously.

(d) Communications.

PG reported that website traffic had been particularly busy in December 2024; 120 people worldwide. Increase at time of Holiday Club publication of details, special events. The use of iKnow database needs to be commenced. CP's training of Parish Administrator imminent. Correspondence from Anna Rutt re posters in church will be discussed by Communications sub-committee as requested by LOE. AR stated that the display could be readily expediated and placed in church if approved. Next meeting Wednesday, 12th February.

(e) Eco Church

PG explained further about water butt installation. The Eco group have been requested to discuss plans for proceeding towards A Rocha silver award with the churchwardens.

(f) APCM Preparation

RMJ had provided a memorandum of key dates.

(g) PCC Secretary Role

Continued prayerful consideration to discern the next PCC Secretary is requested. RMJ retires at the APCM 2025.

7. **Deanery & Diocesan Reports**

Dates for Deanery Lenten Evening Worship have been circulated, and all are encouraged to explore opportunities for retreats, pilgrimages, study during the Diocesan Year of Spirituality and Wellbeing.

8. **Churches Together in Biggleswade (CtiB)**

Alan Dansey is stepping down as Chairman of CtiB; this provides an opportunity for rethinking, refreshing, re-focussing the aims and plans of the local churches. A renewal evening for discussion is scheduled for Monday 3rd March at 7:30 pm at St Peter's Church.

9. **Correspondence**

[i] Rob Butcher and Sue Thorn, liaising with others, are investigating plans for a production of '**Saints Alive**' to include music and singing roles in the context of worship, Sunday @ 6, Sunday 11th May. Initial meetings will start on Saturday 22nd March and regular updates will be shared. It is hoped to encourage children and young people to be involved in different genres of music. The worship will be carefully budgeted, and it has been suggested that funding should be sourced from Restricted Funds, including John Cotton Fund. The Vicar will continue to liaise with Rob and Sue as plans are formulated.

[ii] **A suggestion for Firework Evening at Stratton School has been proposed.** Not being an agenda item, this will be discussed at the next PCC meeting, Tuesday 25th March 2025. CL suggested a joint venture involving St Andrew's Church and the School with work/action commitments and profits being shared between the two groups. Risk Assessments and Health and Safety plans are imperative before decisions are made; to be presented at next meeting of PCC for discussion.

[iii] **Anna Rutt provided details of a set of spiritual posters for display in church.** The correspondence will be passed to the Communications sub-committee, Wednesday 12th February, for further consideration. RB has now responded to Anna's original correspondence.

10. **Any Other Business**

LOE, at the invitation of the Diocese, will attend **Launchpad** sessions for incumbents under the auspices of, and financed by Youthscape, a national project based in Luton, to encourage engagement with children and young people - a focal point of our current MAP. The sessions will culminate with a Celebration Event, Monday 19th May, 7.00 pm. Further details to follow.

LOE reported that the Edward Peake Secondary School Ofsted had been completed; it was pleasing to report a 'Good' outcome. It was suggested that the school should receive written congratulations from St Andrew's Church.

The meeting concluded with prayer at 9.43 pm.

Date of next SC: Tuesday 11 March, 7.30 pm, Ivel Room

Date of next PCC: Tuesday 23 March, 7.30 pm, Chapter House.

(Chair)



(Date) 25th March, 2025