

DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS  
**PARISH OF BIGGLESWADE**  
*Christ-Centred – Welcoming – Inclusive - Outward-Looking*

**A MEETING OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

held in the Chapter House  
on **TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 at 7:30 pm**

PRESENT: Rev'd Liz Oglesby-Elong (LOE), Rosemary Bentley (RBe), Rob Butcher (RBU), Lucy Dilley (LD), Peter Giles (PG), Hilary Johnson, Claire Leeks (CL), Adrian Maynard (AM), Chris Parker (CP), David Pilgrim (DP), H Shannon (HS)\*, Nettie van de Weerd (NvdW).

*Apologies were received from Andrew Rutt (AR)*

\*Minutes

**1. Welcome, prayers and apologies for absence.**

LOE welcomed those present and started with prayers from the Iona community. Apologies were received as above.

**2. To receive the Memorandum of Discussions for the Standing committee help on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025.**

The Memorandum of Discussions was received.

Matters arising

Looking ahead – priorities. LD enquired as to the progress of CP's return to duties discussions with HR. LOE confirmed that the process is ongoing and would be presented at the upcoming leadership and ministry team meeting in early October. Action points will be brought back to the PCC. First action, PG invited to continue as joint Health and Safety officer with CP. All agreed.

**ACTION:** LOE, PG, CP to meet with church wardens to discuss delegation of tasks.

**3. To approve the Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and matters arising from that meeting.**

Point 6c (page 3) Growth and Mission: LD requested that her viewpoint be clarified to: LD expressed disappointment that Saturday prayers would not be reinstated at this time. The minutes were approved.

**Proposed: RBe, Seconded: PG. 9 approved/0 against/1 abstained.**

Matters Arising

Point 3 (page 1) Sue Thorn (ST) was appointed as Parish Secretary and began working on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025. RBU confirmed (from discussions at interview) that her duties would be reviewed after 6 months regarding any additional tasks or responsibilities.

Point 4 (page 1) Electrical works (CP): 3 quotes were received; however some time has since elapsed so they may need updating.

**ACTION:** CP to reconfirm 3 quotes for electrical work and circulate them to the PCC ahead of the next Standing Committee meeting.

Point 4 (page 1) Chapter House Hire leaflet. CL enquired as to the progress of the leaflet. CP confirmed that this has now been produced and is available in the foyer.

**ACTION:** LOE to inform Sue Thorn (ST) of the leaflet, to be given to anyone visiting the church building.

Also, ST to add a note in the Pew News to inform the congregation.

**ACTION:** PG to add an electronic version to the website.

Point 4 (page 1) On-call for church building alarm. This has now been updated to include CP (first point of telephone contact), John Dilley, RBU and Noah Dilley (on-site responders).

Point 5c (page 2) Fire safety. PG is in the process of leading on the development of a new policy for Fire Warden training, drills and practice.

**ACTION:** New Fire Safety Policy to be approved at this meeting. Training will follow.

Point 6e (page 3) Parish News. LD had a query about this, which will be followed up at the communications meeting next week.

Point 13 (page 4) MU Quiet Day is now being organised by Revd. Barbara Ebeling for 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025, including a 12:00 Eucharist led by LOE. All are welcome to attend the Quiet Day/Eucharist or both, full details to follow.

#### **4. Mission Action Plan 2025 – review to date, actions going forward**

##### Christ-centred (RBe)

The year of spiritual renewal and wellbeing has been advertised, and congregants (including the PCC) encouraged to check the website: <https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/news/2025-a-year-of-spiritual-renewal-and-wellbeing-for-st-albans-diocese/>

Flourishing churches continues to offer workshops and updates, with lots of ideas and contributions from the Diocese <https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/parishsupport/growing-your-church/>

LD observed that these opportunities often fall during weekday/office hours. RBe stated that this has been raised with the Diocese, although online webinars are recorded for later viewing and there are also weekend activities.

RBe asked what a reasonable goal by the end of the year would be. General discussions suggested that we should be encouraging others (and ourselves) to explore vocations, particularly with regards to lay ministry. Encourage individuals to take an active part in worship, including reading and intercessions, as well as other forms of lay leadership. LOE stated that there are many forms of vocation including Sunday school and youth work, cleaning, maintenance and gardening, welcoming and hospitality. We could work towards linking this with the next Vocations Sunday (Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026).

##### Welcoming (NvdW)

NvdW directed the discussion with the following questions. How effective are we as welcomers (both in the formal role and more informally)? Do we need to change our approach? Is there anything we could do differently?

PG suggested that a consistent welcome is important, particularly maintaining links beyond initial introductions. Encouraging others to join us for coffee and fellowship after worship is important. DP agreed that this needs to be done sensitively, with an awareness that some people prefer to be left alone, while others are looking for conversation. LOE shared the challenge of greeting congregants at the end of the service, particularly where some individuals need more time with their Vicar. PCC members were requested to help facilitate this where needed, particularly bringing people into the coffee and making them feel welcome.

##### Inclusive (PG)

PG asked the PCC to think about how we consider the environment and environmental impact in the decisions we make. RBU suggested that we can all do a little to support the environment individually. RBe said that consideration for the environment should be in everything we do. We could also

regularly reflect on our commitment to the eco-church to ensure it is always kept in mind. It is the responsibility of church groups to ensure that taps are not left running, lights are turned off and heating is switched off after meetings and activities.

Regarding the church fabric, there was discussion about continuing to develop both the worshipping space and the chapter house. LD felt that the chapter house is beginning to look a bit shabby and the worshipping space could be developed into a more flexible space. The Diocese has the expertise to help with this.

**ACTION:** LD to audit usage of space

#### Outward-looking (LOE)

LOE regards most of our activities as outward-looking and as members of the church we are sent out to do God's work. LOE is considering adding more to the APCM annual report to include our outward-looking activities such as engagement with local schools and civic relationships. We should also consider how we pray for the parish in a wider sense and suggested that we develop a prayer diary or calendar to acknowledge the different people, places and activities within the parish.

**ACTION:** prayer diary to be taken forward to Growth and Mission, could be launched in 2026. If anyone has examples of prayer diaries from other parishes, please pass them to LOE.

#### **5. Areas of Responsibility (update circulated)**

Areas of Responsibility has been updated by RBe and was circulated to the PCC. This will be reviewed and updated annually. Copies to be held by the Administration Assistant and a copy kept in the Sacristy. Cleaning rota is the responsibility of the church wardens. Jan Gardner will be stepping back from this role after Harvest. Flower arranging will need a new lead person (LD considering this role).

**ACTION:** RBe to add a note in the pew sheet to inform congregants of the whereabouts of the 'Areas of Responsibility' document.

#### **6. Group Reports**

(a) Finance: Finance report was circulated in advance of the meeting. PG noted that the deficit is smaller than expected, which is good. Any questions or concerns regarding finance should be emailed directly to AR following this meeting.

(b) Building and Grounds: Next meeting is on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

Health and Safety Policy documents were circulated to the PCC, with comments requested to PG by email. Three queries were received. Firstly, whether near misses should be reported. It was agreed that a log of near misses and areas of concern are kept by PG and highlighted as appropriate. Secondly, whether the defibrillator is included within the policy, PG confirmed that it is. Thirdly, whether a full asbestos report is needed. CP confirmed that this is not necessary, but that asbestos reports could be requested as part of individual work undertaken.

CL raised a concern that someone had fallen in the car park at the weekend and first aid items were missing from the boxes. CL asked who is responsible for the first aid kits. PG confirmed that First Aid kits should be maintained by the church wardens and expiry dates on individual items checked by the Health and Safety Officer.

CL queried the lighting in the car park. There are lights both for the car park and the path, however the switches are not particularly obvious. Further work could also be done to raise awareness of uneven surfaces in the car park.

**ACTION:** CP take this to Building and Grounds for further consideration

How people access the roof is ambiguous in the policy. PG to amend.

Hard copy of the Health and Safety Policy document to be placed in the foyer and electronic copy added to the website.

**ACTION:** PG to amend Health and Safety policy as per discussions, place hard copy in the foyer and upload electronic copy to the church website

Fire risk assessment (CP) has been carried out and document circulated to the PCC. CP summarised the process, measures and recommendations made following this assessment.

The Fire Risk Assessment was adopted by the PCC.

**Proposed: CP Seconded: NvdW, 10 approved/0 against/0 abstained**

Organ (RBU). A replacement cable, from the organ console to the CATS socket on the chancel screen, has been installed and the organ now seems in good working order once more. RBU to continue to monitor the workings of the organ and report any minor discrepancies. There does not appear to be any mould in the organ chamber currently. There does, however, appear to be a moth infestation in the bell chamber carpet, which has the potential to cause serious damage to the organ works. RBU has contacted Charlotte Smith to inform her of this.

**ACTION: CP to organise disposal of the carpet in the bell chamber.**

Garden of Remembrance (RBU). RBU and his son have removed the dead shrubs and cleared the area. Next week the soil will be activated. New plants will be ordered imminently. Monies raised plus donations will allow us to purchase the larger plants. Watering is still an issue. To be discussed at Building and Grounds.

**ACTION: CP to discuss watering at next building and grounds meeting**

CP thanked Vaughan Johnson for restoring the bench on the South Path. The North Roof needs to be re-metalled and an architect is working up the specifications for this. Adding insulation to the North Roof was considered but not advised because heat would simply be lost elsewhere. The PCC were asked for agreement that this insulation work should not go ahead.

**Proposed: CP Seconded: NvdW, 10 approved/0 against/0 abstained**

RBU noted that better signage is needed to prevent people from using the church carpark for general purposes, including overnight parking. Uneven surfaces notices were also mentioned.

**ACTION: CP to take this to building and grounds**

(c) Growth and Mission

CP stated that several opportunities have been identified during Advent for quiet prayer and reflection. Monday nights 7pm for Night Prayer led by LOE and Thursday 9.30am Holy Communion homilies and intercessions, led by RBe.

Other Christmas activities to be confirmed:

Carol singing on the lawn, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December (date tbc)

Carols in the community (King's Reach), Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December (date tbc)

Tableau in the Market Square Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December

Charities for Christmas collections and Mission payments for 2026 have not yet been identified.

**ACTION: CP to add note to pew sheet asking for suggestions for charities.**

(d) Eco church (PG)

A survey is going to be distributed on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September, with feedback planned for 26<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The current focus is on expanded involvement in Eco Church activities beyond the subgroup.

Item for November's PCC Agenda – proposal for a Spring meadow for 2026 in the church grounds.

**ACTION: LOE to add agenda item**

(e) Communications committee

Due to meet next week and will report back at the next PCC. Website report was received in advance of PCC from PG. There were no discussions relating to this item.

**7. Worship – advent 2025 to Candlemas 2026**

A list of activities and worship has been circulated and is available in the church. There were no discussions relating to this item.

**8. Safeguarding**

Helen Tranter (Parish Safeguarding Officer) will join the next PCC meeting. Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November is Safeguarding Sunday, this year's theme, "Actions Speak Louder".

**9. Deanery and Diocesan Reports**

Next Synod meeting is on the 14<sup>th</sup> October, which will begin with a talk from Lucy Chapman, current head of Sutton primary school. This starts at 7:30pm in Moggerhanger and all are welcome to attend the talk.

**10. Correspondence**

No correspondence has been received.

**11. Any other business**

Jenny and Richard Blackford will be moving to Bury St Edmunds in mid-October. Sue Oldroyd has volunteered to take over the servers' rota. There have been no volunteers yet for the Sacristan role, although some people have expressed an interest to help out with related tasks. LOE to continue discussions around this. Thanks and appreciation was expressed to Richard and Jenny for their service to the church in these roles.

Nick Gurney has funded new albs in Loving Memory of his mother and father, Jo and Norman Gurney. The new Albs will be blessed on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, when Nick and some of his family will be present in the service.

**12. Closing prayers**

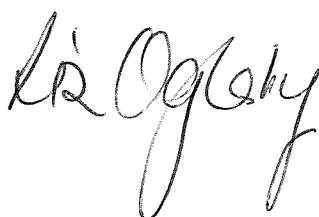
LOE led closing prayers and thanked the PCC for their time.

Meeting closed at 21:25

**Date of next SC meeting:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm in the Ivel Room

**Date of next PCC meeting:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm in the Chapter House

Chair



Date

24.11.2025

## Summary of PCC ACTIONS

Agenda item	ACTION	INITIAL/S
2 (page 1)	To meet with church wardens to discuss delegation of tasks for joint Health and Safety officers.	PG, CP
3 (page 1)	CP to reconfirm 3 quotes for electrical work and circulate them to the PCC ahead of the next standing committee meeting.	CP
3 (page 1/2)	Hire leaflet: inform Sue Thorn of the leaflet, to be given to anyone visiting the church building. Also, to add a note in the notices to inform the congregation.  To add an electronic version to the website.	LOE  PG
3 (page 2)	To present draft fire safety policy to the PCC once it has been completed	PG
4 (page 3)	To audit usage of space for Inclusive MAP (To fully investigate the possibilities of developing the Church and Chapter House to support a wider diversity of prayer and worship, activities and events for both Church and community use)	LD
4 (page 3)	Prayer diary to be taken forward to Growth and Mission, could be launched in 2026. If anyone has examples of prayer diaries from other parishes, please pass them to LOE.	All/CP/LOE
5 (page 3)	To add a note in the pew sheet to inform congregants of the whereabouts of the 'areas of responsibility' document.	RBe
6b (page 4)	Building and grounds to discuss signage for lighting in the car park and warning signs for uneven surfaces	CP
6b (page 4)	To amend health and safety policy as per discussions, place hard copy in the foyer and upload electronic copy to the church website	PG
6b (page 4)	To organise disposal of the moth infested carpet in the bell chamber.	CP
6b (page 4)	To bring issue of watering the remembrance garden to the next building and grounds meeting	CP
6b (page 4)	To consider signage and/or a barrier for the car park to prevent improper use. CP to take this to building and grounds.	CP
6c (page 4)	To add note to pew sheet asking for suggestions for charities for Christmas collections 2025 and Mission payments for 2026.	CP
6d (page 4)	To add agenda item for November PCC regarding Spring Meadow for 2026	LOE