

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's New Beckenham, held in the Church hall on 7th January 2026.

2025 / 2026 No. 6

Present: Rev'd Rachel Winn (in the chair), Sarah Butler, Andrew Griffiths, Wesley Guy, Clari Harrington, Sandra Horner, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Ian Johnson, Penny Power, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Maria Adu, David Charlesworth, Anne Harkness, Paul Lashmar, and Roger Wells.

Rosemary Dear was in attendance for minutes 11303 – 11305.

Keith Howick opened the meeting in prayer.

Penny Power was welcomed to the meeting, as it was the first one she had attended following her appointment on 29th October 2025.

11303 Conflict of Interest

Keith Howick declared a Conflict of Interest as a trustee of St Paul's Pre-School, and of The Ugly Duckling Company.

1304 Appointment of leader for *Your PCC Matters*

Ian Johnson offered to prepare a report on the meeting for the notice sheet.

1305 Financial matters

(i) Budget 2026. The PCC recorded a vote of thanks to Tim Harrington for his work on preparing the report. A summary of the financial position of the church for 2025 and a projection for 2026 had been prepared by Rosemary Dear, Keith Howick and Tim Harrington. The church had recorded a deficit of £37,481, excluding legacies, at the end of November 2025. In 2026 costs were projected to be £213,780, an increase of £21,802 over 2025, partly due to the cost of a new cleaning contract and the planned addition to the administrative team. As a result the deficit for 2026 was budgeted to be £51,687, excluding legacies. The report included a table showing how the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which had been launched in 2025, had impacted on donations. Members agreed that there should be someone on the PGS help desk at the monthly Connect café, on 28th February (Rosemary Dear was no available until February). Although income had been helped by the receipt of several legacies, regular income and expenditure were widening. The congregation should be encouraged to give regularly to support the core income of St Paul's. It was reported that the CollecTin machine had not been working at the Christmas services and so people had not been able to make donations. This had happened because some wires had been accidentally cut during the office rearrangement. The church regularly donates to the Church Repair Fund which is a savings account with the Diocese. These funds are for building work. Keith Howick had checked with the Diocese how St Paul's could access this fund, which has approximately £60,000 in savings, in 2026. Rev'd Rachel would be informing the congregation about the widening expenditure/income gap with a reminder about the PGS and a mention of the help desk on 28th February.

(ii) Legacies. The legacies received in 2025 had been unrestricted and would be put in the designated funds.

(iii) Independent Examiner. Rosemary Dear would be contacting Ernest Kabera to check he is willing to continue as the Independent Examiner.

1306 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 4th December 2025

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 4th December 2025 had been received. Wesley Guy proposed, seconded Sarah Butler, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 4th December 2025 be received as an accurate record of the meeting. **Agreed, with four abstentions as four people had not attended the meeting.**

1307 Matters arising

(i) Minute 1283, Energy Audit. Sarah Butler requested that the sentence regarding solar panels be deleted.

(ii) Minutes 1282 and 1283, Church heating and Energy Audit. Keith Howick gave an update on the heating system. A Cleanheat engineer had visited in December 2025. Five minutes after he had started the system it started leaking carbon monoxide, and he had found a badly cracked diffuser plate. The parts were too old and could not be replaced. A new heating system would be needed as a matter of urgency. The 10.30 am service on 11th January would be in the Church hall but for the service on 18th January the heaters would be moved and areas roped off in the church so that the 10.30 am service could be held in the church; this is because we typically have larger numbers for Holy Communion and after this service there would be the interment of Margaret Doubleday's ashes and more people were expected. Rev'd Rachel hoped people could be encouraged to wear more clothes and to sit closer together. The Working Group would be meeting on 8th January with people from the Diocese.

Regarding the Energy Audit, there were two possibilities, air to air heat pumps, which might be noisy, or overhead InfraRed heaters. A church in Maidstone had purchased pendant heaters at a cost of £10k per chandelier. The Diocesan adviser had been very engaged and the possibility of having solar panels on the South facing roof would be considered. There might be a grant of £25k for the boiler repair and a grant for carbon zero which might apply to solar panels.

(iii) Minute 1285, Safeguarding and Inclusion. Rev'd Rachel and Sandra Horner would be running a Domestic Abuse Group training session for the Sunday Squad and Creche Team on 20th January.

(iv) Minute 1289, Christmas gifts. Anne Howick reported that the recipient had been very grateful for the gifts.

(v) Minute 1291(ii), Water butts. Adam Winn had looked at possible places in the garden for installing a water butt. The Climate & Ecology team had agreed that they would like Adam to install a water butt.

(vi) Minute 1293(i), Church lobby. The vicar and Martin Steele would be meeting to review the welcome space.

(vii) Minute 1294(v), Parish Offer. Keith Howick confirmed that the amounts were correct.

(viii) Minute 1294(viii), 3 Ashford House and garage. Anthea Prendergast would be informing the tenant of the increase.

1308 Action Sheet

(i) Minute 994, Church heater. Working group to research possible replacements. Update to PCC February 2026.

(ii) Minute 1246, Legacies. These would be unrestricted unless specified by the donor.

(iii) Minute 1281(viii), Champions for new noticeboards. Sarah Butler offered to take on this work.

(iv) Minute 1294(ix), Hall hire. Information was received regarding the rates charged by local churches and the public halls, many of which are higher rates than St Paul's currently charges. The Finance Team was asked to review the rates charged by St Paul's.

1309 Standing Committee

Anne Howick reported on decisions made by the Standing Committee.

(i) Virgin Media Faculty application. It had been reported that a Full Faculty application (Chancellor approval) would be required. This request had been approved.

(ii) Use of the church halls as a polling station on 7th May. Bromley Council had requested use of the halls. The Standing Committee had discussed the fees which should be charged for hire and cleaning. The Standing Committee had agreed that St Paul's should charge £750 for use of the hall and £120 for cleaning, £60 of which would be paid to the Pre-School to clean the hall before the event and £60 to Tony and Shiona Pilgrim to clean the hall after the event.

1310 Safeguarding and Inclusion

Sandra Horner reported that Safeguarding Sunday had been well received, with very encouraging comments regarding the video. It was hoped the video could be used again in future.

Regarding safeguarding training, members were asked to check the new requirements. The Diocese will remind members when their training needs to be renewed. Members were asked to let Sandra know if they need to do training and when they have completed the training. Sandra would be attending an online Safeguarding Conference in January. She requested that members use the safeguarding@stpaulsbeckenham.org.uk address when contacting her.

1311 Review of Christmas Services 2025

The Christingle, Nativity and Carol services had been very special. The service on Christmas Day morning had been well pitched. Attendance had been good at the services with about a hundred on Christmas Day. Due to the bad weather the outdoor carol service with the band had been inside and there had been a wonderful atmosphere and lots of people had attended and stayed for mulled wine and mince pies and for the Carol service.

Some of the streaming of services recently had started and then cut out. As the service on 4th January had been in the hall it had been recorded but it had not been possible to upload it to the website. Robin from Idium to give some training in future, and Anne Harkness was asked to liaise with Robin. There had been problems with the memory stick being needed by several people on the same day. It was mentioned that having all VideoPsalm information on one memory stick was worrying. Rev'd Rachel was asked to speak with the Church Administrator about purchasing and using an external hard drive to make sure services are kept as a backup.

1312 Legacy Policy

Members discussed how to inform people who would wish to make a donation in their will to St Paul's. It would be important to explain that if the legacy is unrestricted 10% will go to Away giving. It was agreed that the current giving leaflet, "Where there's a will" should be reviewed and there should be information to the congregation regarding making a legacy. The congregation would not be advised regarding how much had been donated by individuals.

1313 Appointment of additional Lay Assistants at Holy Communion 2026

The vicar would be speaking personally to people, and asked that if members had thoughts regarding who might be approached they should speak confidentially to Rev'd Rachel and the churchwardens.

1314 Sunday space for youth group and dedicated creche space in church

While services were taking part in the church hall it would not be possible to allocate a designated area. In future it was hoped half the hall could be for the Youth group and half the hall for the Sunday Squad. There should be a fenced off space for the creche in the church with safe and quality toys. It was hoped there could be more leaders, in addition to Jash and Liv Masih. Members agreed the creche should be in church, possibly in the Chapel, and it would be important to make sure the area was fenced off; this would be trialled for three months.

Youth Alpha, for teenagers and young people, would be meeting on Wednesday evenings, starting on 14th January. Seven people had already signed up. There would be a meal, video and discussions. The vicar, Keith Howick and Jash Masih would be running the course.

1315 Appointment of new part-time Church Administrator

An advertisement and job description had been prepared and would be sent round to several Churches Together groups, and to the Diocese for inclusion in the Digest.

1316 It was noted that the next PCC meeting would be taking place on 9th February 2026.

1317 Booking for children's party

The vicar had been asked whether it would be possible for a family to use the church lawn space to play games on the lawn during a children's party in May. Concerns were expressed about the fact that there are no gates so the lawns are available for anyone to walk through the grounds, some people walk through with their dogs and the lawns open on to the roads. Currently the booking contract only refers to parties in the hall. It would be important to check with the insurance company, and a risk assessment would be necessary.

1318 Use of the hall for yoga class

A lady who does children's yoga at Worsley Bridge School had asked about the possibility of starting an after-school club at St Paul's. In the past St Paul's had declined to have such a booking. Members agreed that, due to the lack of availability, it would not be possible to have an after-school club at St Paul's.

1319 Plaque in the Garden of Remembrance

A local resident had asked the vicar if it would be possible to have a memorial plaque in the church garden, but without ashes being interred as the deceased had already been buried elsewhere. The person visits the garden but does not attend the church. The PCC agreed that there could be a plaque in the church garden.

1320 Bench in the church garden

The vicar had been asked by someone in the Parish if they could have a bench in memory of the person's husband in the church garden. The vicar felt priority should be given to members of the congregation. Concern had been expressed in the past regarding how many benches there should be in the church garden. It was suggested that there might be a bench on which several people could put memorial plaques. The vicar agreed to speak to the Gardening Team for their thoughts on how many benches there should be in the church garden.

11321 Items for Your PCC Matters

Welcome to Penny Power; thanks to Rosemary Dear and Tim Harrington for their work in providing information about the church finances; help desk for PGS at Connect Café on 28th February; heating update and prayers for right solution and funding, and for working party meeting on 8th January; problems with live streaming.

The PCC had a time of prayer.

There being no more items, the vicar closed the meeting with the Grace at 9.30 pm.