

MINUTES of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's New Beckenham, held in the Church Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**2025 / 2026 No. 5**

**Present:** Rev'd Rachel Winn (in the chair), Maria Adu, Sarah Butler, David Charlesworth, Wesley Guy (for minutes 1281 – 11302), Sandra Horner, Anne Howick, Keith Howick, Anthea Prendergast.

Apologies for absence had been received from Andrew Griffiths, Anne Harkness, Clari Harrington, Ian Johnson, Paul Lashmar, Penny Power and Roger Wells.

Sarah Butler opened the meeting in prayer.

**11278 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. Rev'd Rachel Winn declared a Conflict of Interest with respect to her connection with Hope Into Action.

**1279 Appointment of leader for *Your PCC Matters***

Sarah Butler offered to prepare a report on the meeting for the notice sheet.

**1280 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025 had been received. Rev'd Rachel Winn proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that the minutes of the PCC meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025 be received as an accurate record of the meeting.

**Agreed, with one abstention.**

**1281 Matters arising**

(i) Minute 1260(i), South porch sticker. It would be important to check if there was a new Smartwater sticker on the outside door.

(ii) Minute 1260(ii), Removal of two front pews. The vicar would be applying for a temporary Faculty in January 2026.

(iii) Minute 1260(iii), Parish Giving Scheme. See Finance Team report, minute ASDF.

(iv) Minute 1260(v), Servicing of the clock. It was reported that the Church Administrator was in touch with Smith of Derby regarding setting up the contract.

(v) Minute 1260(vii), Electoral Roll and Directory. Members thought the Directory looked really good and was an excellent production. They recorded their thanks to Anne Harkness for her work. Members of the congregation had been thrilled to have a copy.

(vi) Minute 1260(viii), Hearing God's Word course. Five members of St Paul's had been attending the course, which would be finishing on 9<sup>th</sup> December. There had been 9 – 11 attendees and two vicars and a curate.

(vii) Minute 1262, Safeguarding and inclusion. Sandra Horner thought that the e-manual was still a work in progress. Keith Howick reported that at the Diocesan Synod meeting recently members had commented that the Deanery should be advised that it was not a helpful way of presenting things which are important. Sandra Horner commented that others had said it was not very useful.

(viii) Minute 1266, Internal, portable noticeboards. These noticeboards had not yet been revamped. Rev'd Rachel suggested that someone needs to 'champion' looking at new (red) noticeboards for the Mission team, Climate & Ecology team and Pastoral Care team. Marie Read is going ahead with renovating the Mission board in the meantime as this is inexpensive and essential as the existing board no longer holds items on it.

(ix) Minute 1264, Church cleaning. Tony and Shiona Pilgrim were now cleaning the church regularly. They had improved the church hall floor, were working on cleaning a different area each week, and had also taken on putting the bins out.

(x) Minute 1269, AV desk. The vicar had spoken to Ann Vice regarding the new AV desk. Their son had said he would like to have the old desk, which Jim Vice had made originally, when it was available.

(xi) Minute 1274, Interfaith Evening, 10<sup>th</sup> November. There had been good feedback on the evening at St George's Church. Liam Conlon MP had thanked all the speakers for their contributions.

(xii) Minute 1275, Confirmation Service, 16<sup>th</sup> November. The vicar thanked everyone for their help on the day. She hoped to have a thank you evening in the new year.

### **1282** Standing Committee report

Two additional heaters had been hired for services in November and December. Four had been hired but only two poles had been provided. Herschel were only charging for two heaters on a rolling month contract.

With regard to fixing the probe, Cleanheat had quoted £954.74 inc vat for extracting the probe, arranging the fabrication and replacing it in the burner, so the total cost might be up to £2,000. The Standing Committee had agreed this quote. The Church Administrator had been asked to contact Cleanheat.

It had been suggested that a Working Group, consisting of Rev'd Rachel Winn, Keith Howick, Tim Harrington, Anne Harkness, Penny Power and Martin Steele should be set up to look at the Energy Audit and to take things forward. David Charlesworth proposed, seconded Maria Adu, that the Working Group should be set up. **Agreed.**

### **1283** Energy Audit

This would be a long term project renewing in three to five years. It would not be possible to instal solar panels. The Zero Carbon advisers at the Diocese had been very supportive. It was noted that Martin Steele knows the Advisers. It was hoped one of the Advisers would be able to meet with the Working Group and the Climate & Ecology Team to talk through the energy audit. The Climate & Ecology Team had seen the Energy Audit and copies would be circulated to the PCC and the Working Group.

### **1284** Action Sheet

(i) Minute 994, Church heater. The Working Group to meet before Christmas. In January the Working Group to meet with the Zero Carbon adviser.

(ii) Minute 1242, Preparation for prayer meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November. The vicar thanked Sarah Butler and Clari Harrington for their work.

(iii) Minute 1244, House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Practice. All members of the PCC to familiarise themselves with the document. There was discussion regarding various areas of concern, e.g. giving a child a lift, asking permission to give a hug, being aware of when vulnerable adults can feel offended and upset. Everyone should be aware of Safer working situations and be sensible. If necessary people should share concerns with the vicar and Parish Safeguarding Officer, and were encouraged to write a note of discussions.

**1285** Safeguarding and Inclusion

Sandra Horner reported regarding the Safeguarding Dashboard. She highlighted some of the areas where St Paul's needs to improve.

- (i) Policy regarding recruitment of ex-offenders.
- (ii) Procedure for responding to concerns or allegations, is it an emergency, risk of harm
- (iii) Safer working practice
- (iv) Safer recruitment and role descriptions
- (v) Induction and settling in period.
- (vi) All PCC to take safeguarding training
- (vii) Training for Sunday Squad

With regard to safeguarding training, there would be two in person training sessions, on 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January, which the vicar and Parish Safeguarding Officer would be running.

It would be important to review the list of church activities, so the list on the dashboard was up to date, e.g. Friendship group, Babies & Toddlers, Knit & Natter, BBQs, Connect Café, Community carols, Home Groups, Experience Christmas and Easter, Youth Group, Sunday Squad, Home Communion visits. Sandra Horner reported on a course she had recently attended in Paddock Wood.

**1286** Christmas Services 2025

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30 am – Dress-Up Nativity.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December, 6.00 pm Outdoor Community Carols. 7.15 pm Carol Service.

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December, 4.00 pm Christingle Service, 11.30 pm Midnight Communion

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December, 8.00 am Christmas Day Communion, 10.30 am Christmas Day celebration

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January, 10.30 am Epiphany Service

**1287** Parochial Church fees 2026

A report regarding the revised Church of England Statutory fees payable by law with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 had been received. A report had also been received regarding the fees set by St Paul's Church for those involved in weddings and funerals. Members were reminded that those on the Sound desk at weddings and funerals receive a fee of £40.

Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that the fees in 2026 for the organist, vergers, utility fee, for streamed services, and the sound desk should remain the same as in 2025.

**Agreed, with one abstention.**

**1288** Appointment of Independent Examiner

The PCC Secretary was asked to check with Rosemary Dear whether the current Independent Examiner, Ernest Kabera, would be willing to continue.

**1289** Christmas gifts – Confidential minute on page 8.**1290** Legacy Policy

It was agreed to defer discussion of this item until the PCC meeting in January 2026.

**1291** Buildings Team

A report had been received from the Buildings Team regarding its work from 26<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

(i) Guttering and downpipes. Due to blocked downpipes Adam Winn had been cutting away the top of the plastic section and clearing out the blocked plastic down pipes and replacing pipe brackets.

(ii) Water butts. There was a discussion regarding whether water butts were needed, and if a Faculty would be required. Members were concerned about the possible waste of water. The Gardening team had been discussing whether we should get a butt. Following discussion the vicar agreed to ask Adam Winn to get a quote for a butt, and the Climate and Ecology Team would be asked to speak to the Gardening team.

The vicar thanked Anne Harkness and the Buildings Team for all the work they had done in the last six months as they had completed a large number of building repairs and practical initiatives to help improve and maintain the church buildings.

#### **1292** Climate & Ecology Team

A report of a meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 had been received.

(i) Autumn Fair. £1,400 had been raised for St Paul's and Hope into Action Bromley. It was appreciated that this had been a successful event, with the Café and Autumn Fair running parallel. Comments regarding some of the stalls were noted and it was recommended that next year music is played to create a welcoming ambience. It would be important to agree the date of the next Autumn Fair well in advance so that the church and church hall were both available.

(ii) Energy Audit. The Energy Audit had been received. A working group had been set up to look at the audit. Members of the group were Keith Howick, Tim Harrington, Martin Steele, Anne Harkness, Rev'd Rachel and Penny Power. Two members of the Diocese hoped to come to talk to the group.

It would be important to keep the congregation updated on progress regarding the current boiler. Rev'd Rachel would be giving an update on 7<sup>th</sup> December and this would also be in the newsletter. Members had commented that it would be good to draught-proof the South Porch in future. The Buildings Team was asked to look at ways of draught-proofing the South Porch.

Liam Conlon MP would be holding an Environment Evening on 11<sup>th</sup> December at Neighbourhood Church. There had been a meeting of Parliamentarians, scientists and environmental experts on 27<sup>th</sup> November to discuss a National Emergency Briefing for the public on the climate and nature crisis.

The team had decided to leave the fallen leaves on the grass in the wild corner to see what effect this would have.

#### **1293** Communications Team

A report of a meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025 had been received.

(i) Church lobby. The vicar and Martin Steele would be meeting to review the welcome space. The possibility of having automated glass doors/disabled accessible doors, with a fixed overhead glass panel, was suggested. A different storage area for the Foodbank collections was considered. The vicar hoped there could be different noticeboards and a TV screen advertising our services and activities, and when people entered the foyer they would have a better clarity of what the church looks like inside.

#### **1294** Finance Team

A report of a meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December had been received.

(i) Payment approvals. It was noted that the current limit for a payment to be approved by one Churchwarden is £100. Keith Howick proposed, seconded David Charlesworth, that, with immediate effect, £500 should be the figure above which two Churchwardens need to approve a payment. **Agreed.**

(ii) CAF Bank Account. Anne Harkness, John Dore, Anne Howick and Rosemary Dear are currently those who can authorise CAF Bank payments. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Wesley Guy, that Maria Adu and Tim Harrington should be added to the list of those authorised on the CAF Bank account with immediate effect. **Agreed, with one abstention.**

(iii) Financial reporting. Following feedback from the PCC, the Finance Team had concluded that the PCC should receive a spreadsheet every quarter in future. Rosemary Dear's concerns were noted regarding the first quarter because of preparation of the accounts for the previous year. It was hoped that figures for the first six months of the year could be available before the summer break. It was acknowledged and appreciated that Rosemary does a lot of finance work for the church and had given a lot of time this year to set up the Expense Plus system. It was hoped Expense Plus would be able to do a spreadsheet in future.

(iv) Budget. Tim Harrington had prepared a forecast for the remainder of 2025 which had been received. It was estimated that the total costs for the year would be more than the total income, but St Paul's had received some sizeable legacies which would put the budget into net surplus.

(v) Parish Offer. The Indicative Offer for 2026 had been received from the Diocese. Following discussion Keith Howick proposed, seconded Wesley Guy, that, subject to agreeing a figure for Unrestricted Gross Income with the Diocese, the PCC approves the Indicative Offer for 2026 of £78,412. **Agreed.** Keith Howick was asked to check that the amounts we had received were correct.

(vi) Parish Giving Scheme update. The response had been disappointing but the total monthly giving had increased by about £700. The vicar was asked in future to remind members on a Sunday about the new Parish Giving Scheme. There had been difficulties accessing the PGS website, and it would be important to check it was working before encouraging people to sign up to the PGS again.

(vii) Parochial Church Fees 2026 – see minute 1287 above.

(viii) 3 Ashford House and garage. The renter of the garage had offered to increase the rent to £100 pm. Keith Howick proposed, seconded David Charlesworth, that the PCC accept the increase of rent to £100 per month with immediate effect. **Agreed.** It was noted that the current rent for 3 Ashford House is £1,050 per month, and the Finance Team had recommended raising it to £1,150 per month. Keith Howick proposed, seconded Anthea Prendergast, that the rent for 3 Ashford House should be increased to £1,150 per month with effect from January 2026. **Agreed.** It was agreed that Anthea Prendergast should write on behalf of the church to inform the tenant.

(ix) Halls income. It was noted that the arrangement for hire of the halls with St Paul's Pre-School was an informal one. It would be important to look at a more formal business arrangement in future. The Finance Team was asked to check with other churches regarding how much they charge for the rent of their halls to pre-schools. It was noted that the Pre-School committee would be meeting in December and it was suggested that a new hire of the halls arrangement should be in place at the start of the new academic year.

(x) Confirmation Service. £380 had been sent to the Rochester Diocesan Board of Finance following the Confirmation service.

**1295** Mission Team

A report of a meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November had been received.

(i) Welcare in Bromley. The Team had requested that a speaker be invited to St Paul's in November or December 2026. The vicar requested that the speaker should come in early November 2026.

(ii) Julia Birkett had explained that she would not be needing support from St Paul's in 2026 for OMF. The vicar was asked to write to Julia to thank her as our personal contact with Overseas Missionary Society. Members also prayed for Julia and her mother following recent news.

(iii) New Mission. David Charlesworth proposed, seconded Keith Howick, that St Paul's should support Hope into Action, Bromley in 2026. **Agreed.** Rev'd Rachel abstained as she had a conflict of interest.

(iv) Mission display board. The Mission Team had enquired about having a new board for their Mission of the Month displays. Tony Pilgrim was asked to repair the surface of the present board as an interim measure until new boards have been purchased.

(v) Cards/Notelets. Katy Ray had produced some notelets which would be useful as presents. The PCC agreed that information and the link should be included in the notice sheet.

(vi) Christmas tree tags. The vicar proposed, seconded Maria Adu, that the donations should go to "Open Doors with Brother Andrew" to support Christians in the Persecuted Church. **Agreed.**

**1296** Lay Assistants at Holy Communion 2026

A report had been received from the PCC Secretary regarding those who would be willing to serve as Lay assistants at Holy Communion for the year 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2026. It was noted that Richard Bradley, Liz Dore, Suzanne Guy and Clari Harrington did not wish to continue as Lay Assistants at Holy Communion. Members felt it would be important to find some new people to assist at the 10.30 am services.

The vicar proposed, seconded Sarah Butler, that the following should be authorised to assist in the administration of Holy Communion during the coming year:

Ann Birkett, Cherry Duffield (8.00 am service only), Wesley Guy, Anne Harkness (as churchwarden in case of a shortage at the 10.30 am service), Anne Howick (as an authorised Pastoral Assistant she is also authorised to take the Sacrament to the sick and housebound), Keith Howick, Jane McCartney (8.00 am service only), Nomsa Moldovan, Anthea Prendergast (also as churchwarden, in case of a shortage at the 10.30 am service), Caroline Studd (8.00 am service only), Arun Thomas (8.00 am service only), Ann Vice (8.00 am service only), Roger Wells and Brian Woolmer.

**1297** Wine at Holy Communion

Maria Adu asked if it was possible to serve non-alcoholic wine at Holy Communion. The vicar said it would be possible to have a separate chalice and people would be advised that both alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine would be available at the altar and at the separate table by the pulpit; this would be available from 7<sup>th</sup> December.

**1298** Sunday space for youth group

It was agreed to defer this item to the next PCC meeting.

**1299** Appointment of new part time Church Administrator

A draft role description and person specification, and advert, had been circulated to the PCC. The additional administrator would be paid at the London Living Wage of £14.80 per hour. This person would be working in the office, alongside our current administrator, Stephanie Fox. Concerns were expressed regarding the hours that Stephanie currently works, and the number of times people interrupt her, particularly on a Thursday. Her workload had increased hugely. Members were concerned about the potential increased costs to St Paul's, and whether the church could afford to pay for an extra person. It was suggested that the Finance Team should consider how to encourage fund raising and should check whether there are any grants. Some changes to the wording of the role description were suggested. Following discussion Anthea Prendergast proposed, seconded Anne Howick, that St Paul's put an advertisement out and make some amendments to the role description. **Agreed.**

**1300** Electoral Roll

Cornelia Apotheke, Jane McCartney and Mili Tharakan were welcomed on to the Electoral Roll.

**1301** Dates of next meetings

A report had been received regarding proposed dates for meetings of the PCC during the first part of 2026. These would be taking place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting would be taking place on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May.

**(post meeting amendment – the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026).**

**11302** Items for Your PCC Matters

Heating, Advertisement for new part time Church Administrator, Non-alcoholic wine at Holy Communion.

There being no more items, the vicar closed the meeting in prayer and with the Grace at 10.25pm.