

## St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

### Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in the Community Room

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**Present:** Revd. Claire Towns (Chair), Katie Steadman-Towns, Judy Penhaligon, Gill Tucker, Chris Jenkins, Barbara Calverley, Ann Edmonds, Michaela Cross, David Kennett, Charlie Sutton, John Samarpi, Rachel Thomas

**Apologies:** Christina Baron, Ian Ames-White and Mike Tolley

#### 1. Opening Prayer

Gill opened the meeting with prayer.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

As above.

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes be signed as a correct record.

#### 4. Matters arising

**4.1 Lone Working for Administrator** - Claire, Chris and Judy are meeting with Caroline on 02/06/2025 to discuss this and how to make Caroline feel safe.

**4.2 Chalice Assistants** - Katie, John, Barbara, Christina and Ann have volunteered to help with this. All were approved by the PCC, so Claire will arrange some training.

#### 5. Prayers for next meeting

Ann volunteered.

#### 6. Facilities Manager update

Claire reported that on 22/05/25, Adam Stewart was interviewed by Claire, Chris, Judy and Caroline. He was consequently offered the role (contingent on the necessary DBS checks) and has accepted. All processes in terms of protocol and references were duly followed. Adam will commence his role on 14/07/25 on an annualised hours contract with an average of 25 hours per week. Adam lives very locally and whilst he will be maintaining his current role for a church in Bristol, he has offered assurances that St Thomas will be his priority. The PCC agreed that Adam should be encouraged to develop his role in accordance with the demands of the church.

#### 7. Heather Shepherd legacy

It was reported that Heather left £2,000 in her will, specifically for use towards a new sound system.

#### 8. Standing Committee and other PCC teams

**8.1 Standing Committee** - Claire reported that there are still no volunteers for the Standing Committee, so offered this opportunity again and encouraged a member of the Finance Team to consider joining. John offered to join the Standing Committee.

**8.2 Other PCC teams** - Consideration was then given to various sub-teams and the following teams (with corresponding members) and functions were decided upon:

**Finance** - Ian, Charlie, Barbara and occasionally Claire or Judy (to manage finance and commerciality)

**Community** - Judy, Ann, Michaela, Mike and David (to manage community events, sustainability and social engagement and outreach)

**Facilities** - Chris, Judy, John, Rachel and possibly Adam in time (to manage the building itself and also the use of church assets which have a commercial aspect to them)

The distinctions made here are helpful and allows team members to focus more specifically on certain areas. It was agreed that the teams should evolve as our needs do, so flexibility in this is important.

Gill is currently in the Worship Team and Deanery Synod.

## 9. Financial update

**9.1 Overview of figures** - Charlie ran through April's figures and dealt with queries as much as was possible. Judy asked what the below entries related to:

Events & Hospitality - £395

Other, Outreach & Children's Activities - £375

Charlie will find out and report back.

Other points to note were:

- CCL interest is paid quarterly so we should see an additional amount in June.
- Church Hire not separated or missing so Ian will follow that up with Fiona unless there weren't any booking payments in April.
- Salary for office Administrator is higher than normal due to addition of living wage back pay.
- Winter Gas Bill is in.

**9.2 Overview of process** - The general consensus of the discussion which followed was that ideally, the PCC needed to have the figures at least one week before a PCC meeting to allow sufficient time for review, questions etc. The categories used in the information presented still have some ambiguity and it was agreed that either (a) someone with requisite knowledge needs to be at the PCC meetings to explain any anomalies OR (b) there should be more exhaustive notes accompanying the figures which are presented. John stressed the importance of transparent accounting, especially given the funds the church has now received.

**9.3 Fiona's role** - Fiona is happy to stay on as Bookkeeper at no charge. She sees it as part of her giving. This will mean that Fiona will continue reporting all the Income & Payments and inputting that into the Church accounting software. Fiona will also do the accounting bits for the Diocese & the Charity Commission. Fiona doesn't want to be on the PCC or attend the meetings, so Ian will continue providing the simplified monthly report and banking figures. Gill reported that Fiona is very efficient at paying invoices, which must continue to be appreciated.

**9.4 PCC Treasurer** - The role of PCC Treasurer was discussed in detail. Despite efforts to recruit a volunteer for this role, nobody has been forthcoming. It was agreed that appointing a remunerated Treasurer is the best option going forward, to ensure more efficiency and transparency of accounts. The Finance Team will look into this and report back to the PCC at July's meeting.

**9.5 Signatories for Natwest accounts** - It was unanimously agreed that these should be Claire, Chris, Judy and Ian and that dual approval should apply to all payments made over a certain figure (so that nominal payments are not held up). This exact figure will be agreed at a later date.

**9.6 Telephone** - The telephone contract ends in January 2029. Chris explained there are exit charges of c£700, but we would soon recoup that figure once we changed our tariff. Chris will continue looking into this.

## 10. Safeguarding update

Mike reported (via email) that:

- All St Thomas PCC members now have their DBS or are waiting on Mike for their document check. Dinder will be next.
- Most Crafty Church and ABC2 volunteers have their Basic DBS. The rest should be done in the next couple of weeks.
- Prayer Ministry are done, Coffee Stop volunteers not covered by their other roles should be done by end of June.
- The next Safeguarding task will be to take all those in the aforementioned groups through 'Foundations' training. Joanna, Michaela and Mike will be meeting soon to arrange the sessions and send the invites.

The PCC would like to thank Mike again for all he contributes to this.

## 11. Feedback from Community Team

- 11.1 Funeral Refreshments** - it was unanimously agreed that the charges for use of the servery itself would remain at £10 per funeral (no refreshments provided by the church), but rise to £50 per funeral for the hire of the servery *and* serving (by volunteers from church) to include the provision of tea, coffee and biscuits for up to 50 people. Any additional refreshments are to be provided by the family. This must be communicated clearly to the family and volunteers involved.
- 11.2 July 19th Garden Party** - plans are going well. It was unanimously agreed that we should purchase a licence for £12 to offer a simple bar at this event. Volunteers will operate the bar.
- 11.3 Dutch Choir visit** - 21st September 2025. Lunch will be provided in the church hall after the service. Charlie will manage this.
- 11.4 Christian Aid Gig** - 27th September 2025. Michaela will contact Steve Abbot to discuss arrangements and the bar required for this event.
- 11.5 Harvest Supper** - 4th October 2025. There will be a 'beer and hymns' theme, where you bring your own drinks. Barbara agreed to organise the food side of this event.

## 12. Legacy spend update

It was reported that:

- Facilities Manager has now been hired (see point 6 above).
- Chris is meeting with a surveyor soon to survey the church hall before deciding what to do.
- Chris is also meeting with someone to discuss a sound system and projector for the church.
- New shed has been ordered.
- Claire read a letter from someone in the parish suggesting that some of the legacy should be put towards The Brit, but this has previously been discussed and rejected.
- Michaela suggested updating the community on the legacy spend to avoid any confusion. Claire's concern is that the community response to questionnaire was updating church hall. Rachel suggested announcing the update as being phased. Phase 1 consists of completing smaller projects to the building and Phase 2 will involve a larger project, which is still being discussed. This will be given further consideration.
- Charlie suggested appointing a Project Manager when the PCC is ready to take on a larger project. Claire acknowledged that this is a good idea.

**13 For information and suggestions for next PCC meeting**

Michaela, Claire and Katie will be absent at this meeting. Judy will take the minutes.

**14 Dates of future meetings:**

**PCC:** 25<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Standing Committee:** TBC

**APCM:** Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

The meeting closed at 9.00pm with the Grace.