

St Thomas, Wells with the Horringtons

Minutes of the meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on

Wednesday 24th September 2025 in the Community Room

Present: Katie Steadman-Towns, Judy Penhaligon, Gill Tucker, Joanna Birkett, Chris Jenkins (Chair), Ann Edmonds, Michaela Cross, Charlie Sutton, Mike Tolley, Rachel Thomas, Barbara Calverley

Apologies: Revd. Claire Towns, David Kennett, Ian Ames-White, John Samarpi, Christina Baron

1. Opening Prayer

Gill opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Apologies for Absence

As above.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30th July 2025

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

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Minutes availability – Barbara asked for these to be made available more quickly, especially for the benefit of those not present. Katie agreed to share this with Claire.

4.2 Assistant Organist – Arnold Wills is interested. Claire and Gill are hoping to meet with him in early October. They will discuss remuneration, terms of service etc. with Arnold. He seems very keen and is known to Gill, so could be a positive addition to the team. Gill will thank Derek for his assistance over the years. Barbara suggested getting a gift of gratitude for Derek.

4.3 Premises Manager – Judy reported that Adam has now started and is doing really well. Adam can be contacted via bookings@stthomaswells.co.uk Judy asked that people contact Adam in the future if something is running low in terms of stock or any issues regarding the hired spaces. Adam's day off is on a Thursday. Barbara suggested putting Adam's contact details on the notice sheets.

4.4 Vacancy – for the record, there is no longer a vacancy as Claire is not leaving.

4.5 Joanna – Chris welcomed Joanna to the PCC as ex-officio given her new role as a licensed Reader.

5. Prayers for next meeting

Joanna volunteered.

6. Financial Update

6.1 Financial summary - from Ian, via email (in blue):

You may have some additional updates or points to raise but those that jump out to me are:

Still running fairly consistently at the £3k-£3.5k per month.

As we start to use some of the legacy monies we will see a bigger deficit per month but will break that out to show the amounts coming from legacy spend (extraordinary spend) against normal business as usual spend.

'Other' contains things like toilet rolls, coffee, etc. Full list of bank transactions are available in the office.

We should have another injection of interest in either next month or early in the month after.

Telephone billing issues are still, from what I can see, ongoing. Might be worth checking with Chris?

Don't know if there is a report back from the Church Hall survey yet – and if that has any financial implications? Chris again.

Regarding the 'Team' working on capital projects. Make the points you have about involvement, etc. from our last discussions.

As an aside – we had the Brit AGM at the back of the Church on Monday – Charlie was there. The lighting, to enable clear reading of any documents, was awful.

6.2 Survey of Church Hall – Chris reported that this has now been completed, but we are still waiting for the report. This will inform how we move forward with any plans for the Hall. Judy added that we did purchase some new tablecloths this month (September) to use for the Hall.

6.3 ‘Events and Hospitality’ in accounts – this was queried by the Finance Team as there was an entry of c£800 during August. Judy suggested it might be the new sofas. Joanna suggested the Finance Team might be asked to clarify this. Chris echoed the usual sentiment of the accounts not being clear enough in terms of details due to the software used etc.

6.4 Church bungalow - Barbara queried whether the bungalow rent needs to be reviewed? Chris suggested we make a note to review this once we have had the Church Hall survey.

6.5 Access to bank account – Chris queried whether access had been granted to the bank account (for the elected individuals) as discussed at the last PCC meeting? The Finance Team will ask Ian for an update on this.

6.6 Regularity of accounts - Rachel suggested producing quarterly accounts as well as monthly accounts, and also expressed concern over keeping track of what is being spent from the legacy to cover the deficit. Chris confirmed that £36,000 has been transferred from the legacy account into the current account, so that we can keep a track of what legacy we use to cover the deficit. All agreed it is important to keep an audit trail of legacy spend for transparency purposes. At the moment, the interest earned from the legacy is enough to cover the monthly deficit.

7. Churchwardens Report

7.1 Lone Working – to make Caroline feel safer, a camera has been fitted outside the church office for her to use. Will consider a bell.

7.2 Doors to servery and chair cupboard – both have been replaced successfully.

7.3 Lightning conductor – has now been checked.

7.4 Boiler – service booked.

7.5 Noticeboards – no update, this is still progressing. Chris mentioned the ‘Church Noticeboard Company’ so is looking into this.

7.6 Fire extinguishers – been serviced and all replaced/safety checked.

7.7 Hygiene training course - coffee, cake, biscuits and other refreshments are now being offered at several functions. Concern was expressed over those who volunteer not maintaining hygiene standards, so thought must be given in terms of offering suitable training. Jane Flinders has volunteered to undertake this training, which can be completed online.

7.8 First Aid and defibrillator – Val Brean will offer a basic First Aid course, hopefully in November. Gill queried who is responsible for maintenance of the defibrillator (located in the Church Hall car park). Chris confirmed that the Rotary are and that this maintenance is undertaken regularly. Michaela suggested that Adam is made aware of this.

8. Legacy Projects Team

8.1 Overview - Rachel reported that she is happy to lead and govern this team and has already met with Claire to discuss it. The team will act like a project management team and identify the best way of measuring outcomes. Rachel has reached out to the other 5 members (6 in total) and will arrange a meeting before the next PCC. She is hoping to co-opt Claire, Chris, David, Barbara and Michaela to the team. Consideration may also be given to non-PCC members who may have relevant experience to offer.

8.2 See Confidential Minute

8.3 Vicar’s Discretionary Fund - Rachel queried the extent of this. Chris explained that Claire has the discretion to use this as she sees appropriate.

9. Safeguarding Update

Mike reported not much activity over the summer. There are 3 forums coming up soon which are internal courses from the Diocese. These are Design a Safeguarding Strategy, AI and Safeguarding and Dementia and Domestic Abuse.

Mike will continue to progress the dashboard. He cites the biggest challenge as the next level of training (Foundation Training) which has to be done retrospectively. Sensitivity and consideration needs to be given to certain areas, e.g. domestic abuse. Mike suggested aiming for Christmas to complete all Foundation Training.

10. Joanna's Reader Licensing and Ministry

Joanna's licensing on 4th October at 2.00pm at Wells Cathedral. Lindy is Joanna's lay sponsor. Refreshments afterwards at Wells Museum.

We have purchased a reader scarf for Joanna as a gift for her licensing.

11. Gift for The Revd. Peter Farrell and Sam Denyer

11.1 The Revd. Peter Farrell – at the service on 28th September which celebrates Revd. Peter Farrell's 50 years since ordination, Peter himself is presiding. Revd. Steven Bould is preaching and Claire is acting Deacon. We have purchased a £50 book voucher for Peter and flowers for Penny on behalf of the PCC and congregation.

11.2 Sam Denyer (Area Dean) – Sam leaves in October, so Claire suggested purchasing him a £25 voucher for him as gift. All agreed with this.

12. Events

12.1 Dutch Choir Visit – Gill reported that Carol has thanked us for our hospitality. Charlie reported the lunch was a success.

12.2 Christian Aid gig – Michaela reported that the Community Team have worked together well to sell 17 tickets so far. Michaela is hopeful it will be a good outreach project. The event starts at 7.30pm and we have a licensed bar. Adam will be present and Chris is the licensee. Chris reminded the PCC that this is an experiment for us, so it might inform us what we do going forward. Chris thanked Michaela for her hard work.

12.3 Harvest Supper – Friday 24th October – Standing Committee decided to postpone this and have an event of some kind in the New Year instead.

13. For information and suggestions for next PCC meeting

13.1 - Thursday 16th October, Sustainability event during Sustainability Week - using old curtains to make cushions for the pews – 16th October in Community Room, led by Jane Mackenzie. Open to all and happy to be participating. Charlie will circulate the details of the week.

13.2 Recycled Candles for Somerset Aid in Ukraine – still accepting donations. Judy suggested this charity is the nominated one for Harvest and all agreed. Claire and Judy will make a list of what the charities need and circulate to all. The charity will collect from church. Mike expressed that local food banks seem to have reasonable stocks so looking further afield for a charity is a good idea.

15 Dates of future meetings:

PCC: 29th October, 26th November, 28th January 2026 and 25th February 2026

Standing Committee: TBC

APCM: Wednesday 25th March 2026

The meeting closed at 8.30pm with the Grace.