

**MINUTES**  
**St Peters Church PCC Meeting**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025**

**Chair:** Karin Shaw

**Minute Taker:** Chris Clayton

**Attending:**

Chris Clayton, David Hipkin, Mike Davies, Sian Lockwood, Catherine Medforth, Helen Camm, Paul Harris, Richard Jackson, Karin Shaw, Alan Garrow, Kate Blake, Beverley Cooper, Hilary Paxton and Tim Robinson.

**Welcome and Prayer:**

Karin Shaw (KS) welcomed everyone to the meeting. The PCC was informed that Leigh Thompson has stepped down as PCC secretary and Chris Clayton (CC) will be taking minutes at this meeting. PCC members were asked to help in sharing the minute taking in future minutes.

KS then finished with the LYCiG prayer for growth.

**Bible Reflection:**

The Bible reflection was based on John 5 and conducted by Alan Garrow (AG). The reflection looked at the Healing at the pool in Bethesda. Overall looking at Jesus' question to paralysed man 'Do you want to be healed?' Reflecting on how he and we need both faith and action to change. Changing our attitude as a church towards money, recognising our responsibility and the reality of our current situation and been open to how God is calling us to act.

**Apologies:**

Jan Edwards, Steve Gibbin

**Co-opting Members:**

Richard Jackson was universally co-opted as a new PCC member.

Heather Swarbrick declined the invitation to join the PCC at the moment.

**Acceptance of Minutes:**

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted with one note of clarification. On page 4, the current grants group was to be made into a steering group that reports directly to the PCC.

**Matters Arising from June:**

Data Protection – Gary Payne and team have met to discuss moving forward and is looking at current policies and procedures, including working practices. The group will continue meeting and working on these issues ably lead by Gary. Karin Shaw thanked the whole team for their work on behalf of the PCC.

**Fabric:**

Sn Lockwood (SL) had not asked Carole Raw to produce the usual Fabric report.

SL & AG informed the PCC about the current dispute with FEL ventilation. No final decision has been made as we wanted to seek PCC wisdom regarding payment to FEL.

AG talked about the history of the problem.

How we have currently responded with a £6500 offer.

This was not accepted and FEL countered with a request of £8000 +£1600 Debt collector bill.

The PCC discussed, "Do we dispute his current claims and stick with £6500?, and go to court if not accepted (ideally small claims)."

The PCC discussed arrange of topics from how to work out the offer (removing loss of earnings, time effort, cost of repair of the total). The need to take into account any reputational damage for us. The need to be transparent about why we are doing what we are doing. The balance between being forgiving and turning the other cheek and not been taken advantage of.

AG thanked the PCC for their comments and will be meeting with SL and Mike Davies (MD) tomorrow to finalise the response to FEL. Thanks were also given to Carole for her excellent responses to FEL, record keeping and evidence collection. Thanks were also given to Tim Robinson who has been insightful and invaluable in his legal advice on how to conduct our responses.

MD informed the PCC about Ecclesiastical Insurance site visit. The visit went very well and we are still waiting on the final report to come back and see if there are any actions within that.

Ecclesiastical were happy with the movement towards a new bell rope warmers and away from the uninsurable oil heater in the bell tower. MD gave thanks to Andy Guthrie for all his hard work in this area. Ecclesiastical also mentioned that the bells should not be left in the UP position for long periods of times. This will need to be discussed with our bell tower team to find a way to accommodate this while supporting our really precious and loved bell ringers.

MD also mentioned that we are going to trial an infrared heater in the bell tower as a better way of heating the ringers rather than the space.

MD informed the PCC that tomorrow there will be a heating meeting to continue our efforts of making our heating system as efficient as possible.

CC informed everyone that he and Angus Turner recently had a meeting with TPSL.co.uk (IT Company based in Harrogate). This was to review our current network and look at refreshing / rebuilding the system as it is starting to age and become less reliable. The meeting went very well and we are waiting on a proposed schedule of works / quote.

AG reported to the PCC that after much deliberation live candles can not be used in highly attended services (except for Christingle as there are held, and only lit for a short time). This only impacts candles in the pews, not those on the altar. The risk of fire to hair or clothes is too great especially after last year when someone's coat was burned.

Also due to our current financial position the purchasing of LED candles is too expensive and would not happen.

The PCC supported this decision.

### **Finance:**

Finance was the main item for tonight's agenda and it started with David Hipkin (DH) giving a brief overview of the current situation, using the attached documents as reference. Below is a short summary:

*At the end of July we are showing a £90K deficit in the accounts which includes 7 months of share expenditure that we are due to pay as we account on an accruals basis not a receipts and payments basis. There are no big surprises on income or expenditure against budget.*

*On 11th September we had £97,586 of available cash so we do not have a problem paying our staff and normal expenses. The issue is that some of that money relates to restricted funds. Our duty as a PCC is to ensure we always have enough "Free" Unrestricted reserves to meet our obligations.*

*We have currently only paid 3 months of share (£58K) and do not currently have enough unrestricted free funds available to pay any more without using our designated reserve which would involve selling some of our stocks and share investments.*

*Summary: This year was always going to be a difficult year. But we are hitting the cliff edge now not at the end of the year.*

One issue that has hidden the fragility of our accounts is that we have had generous donations of money that have come in and made us look more secure than we are. There are no large gifts currently in view. We need to match our expenditure with our giving.

DH posed 4 questions for the PCC to answer this evening:

1: What do we do with regards to the payment of the Parish Share?

DH felt that we would be failing as trustees if we release our designated funds to pay share at the moment. By the end we should be able to pay 6 months of parish share without using our designated funds. 6 month payment of £116K.

AG informed us that the Diocese is aware of our situation and have responded with realism, concern and compassion. We have a date booked to see the CFO (7 October). It was said that if we only pay 50% of our share, then other churches will be paying towards our clergy.

The PCC discussed what this would mean and look like, the impact on our running and the impact on the diocese. The question was changed after comment from Hilary Paxton to the below form:

**Q: Will the PCC Pause the share payment until the end of the year and then review what can paid?**

Proposed by David Hipkin

Seconded by Mike Davies

13 in favour

1 abstention

2: The second question was about accessing the interest of approximately £13K that we have gained from our endowment fund. This is currently restricted and needs PCC approval to access the interest only. This money would be then used to start the building project, commissioning the architect to start their work. There is the hope that we can recoup this money later down the line as the project continues. The question posed to the PCC was:

**Q: Will the PCC authorise the release of the interest in our endowment fund to commission the architect for building use?**

Proposed by David Hipkin

Seconded by Sian Lockwood

Unanimous agreement

3: The third question was in relation to Breakfast Club.

The PCC discussed the appropriateness of assigning Breakfast Club funds to pay for utilities used during Breakfast Club sessions. Breakfast Club funds are currently in a healthy state.

The PCC asked DH & AG to research the figures involved. This question can then be revisited at our 4<sup>th</sup> October meeting.

4: The final question was with regards to our reserves of 115k.

The current policy is 3/6 months running cost and a 50K for urgent building, this amount should really be a total of 125K.

The question posed to the PCC was:

**Q: Will the PCC release 37k of our reserves so that we have access to liquid cash if we need it?**

We debated the wisdom of preparing to sell investments at an advantageous time – rather than in response to an emergency. The building is likely to need money spent on it – so it may be wise to have this ready in cash sooner rather than later. The PCC asked AG & DH to bring this issue up with Geoff Park (Leeds Diocesan finance Director) when they meet on 7<sup>th</sup> October, with the aim to bring his wisdom back to the PCC for further discussion.

AG will be writing to the congregation about the current situation that St Peter's finds itself. There will also be sermons, appeals for building funds etc, to help people understand the financial challenge we face and the actions that are required.

**Parish Share:**

Discussed in the Finance section.

**Safeguarding Report:**

AG gave thanks to all those involved in Safeguarding here in St Peter's especially Wendy Lewis. AG noted the ongoing pattern of improvement ably guided by Wendy Lewis. There are no current Safeguarding concerns at this moment.

**Health and Safety Officer (PCC Member):**

SL spoke about the need for a PCC member to step up and take on this role. SL spoke about what would be involved, such as being named on the policy, oversight of H&S roles in church and working alongside the team (Nigel). Tim Robinson has accepted the role.

**Eco-Church update:**

Karin on behalf of the PCC said a big thank you to Heather Swarbrick, supported by Charles Stones for doing an amazing job, and helping us achieve our Silver eco award.

St Peter's Energy suppliers were reviewed.

Richard Jackson is also going to take this current data to a friend who might be able to help find a cheaper rate. Richard will report back to SL this week as we need to action this sooner rather than later. PCC agreed to empower DH to make the decision following Richard's feedback.

**Inclusive Church update:**

MD spoke about the need for someone to new lead for this group. This group is key especially in the current world / local climate. It was noted that the lead of this group does not need to be a PCC member, but someone with a really heart and passion of inclusivity. It was also noted by AG that there is a positive atmosphere within the church with regards to being inclusive. Ideas on how we recruit was mentioned (one to one, jobs board, weekly news).

**Preparations for PCC Morning 4<sup>th</sup> October**

AG talked about the purpose of the upcoming meeting. This is to review our vision for the church and it's building in the light of the need to repair the roof.

**AOB received in advance:**

AOB was done as part of the Eco-Church Section.

KS closed the meeting with the Grace.

The PCC gave KS a round of applause as this was her first PCC as Chair which was done very well.

Next meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> November 2025**