

Minutes - St. Thomas' and St. Mary Magdalene's PCC
Registered Charity Number 1131459

Thursday 25th September – 7.00pm at St. Thomas' Church

	<p>Present: Rev Michael Ridley (MR), Katharine Emery (KE), Kirsty Gill (KG), Stuart Marley (SM), Irene Fitzgerald (IF), Sue Burke (SLB), Simon Goodchild (SG), Sarah Downes (SD), Peter Banyard (PB), Dorothy Carter (DC), Lee Marsh (LM), Elaine Smith (ES), Sheila Barton (SB), Peter Speed (PS), Jenny Corroboy (JC), Rev Ruth Gray (RG)</p>	
1	Katharine Emery opened the meeting with a prayer	
2	<p>Apologies Janice Rowland, Kris Bradshaw, Melanie Wilson, James Thornton, Dave Whalley, Dorika Roxby, Lynda Heesom.</p>	
3	<p>July 2025 Minutes Elaine Smith's name had been omitted from the list of attendees. Minutes were updated accordingly and the committee approved the minutes unanimously.</p> <p>Action Log Reviewed and updated, master held by PCC secretaries.</p> <p>Matters Arising MR summarised the financial agreement that has been proposed with Little Sunbeams: - The group will donate £300 to St Mary Magdalene's each term to cover heating & lighting costs - The group will donate a sum to a local charity each term</p> <p><i>Proposed: RG // Seconded: LM // Approved: unanimously</i></p> <p>Virtual Decisions <i>Lee Marsh Licence Renewal:</i> 15 responses, all in favour. <i>Gas provider:</i> 12 responses, all in favour of Sue's recommendation to opt for Crown with 4-year fixed term. <i>Electricity provider:</i> 11 responses received without a clear consensus; SLB therefore made the unilateral decision to select the Energy Basket 3-year fixed-period option, citing past experience that suggests this will be more economical than the quote provided</p>	<p>PS to take meters ready on 30/09</p>

	by Switch.	
4	<p>Vicar's Remarks</p> <p>MR thanked everyone who helped with the organisation for the rural dean service, (especially the bell ringers!)</p> <p>Ellesmere Road - the council has submitted a proposal to address parking issues. This includes double yellow lines down one side of Ellesmere Road, including outside the church hall which would impact funerals.</p> <p>Christchurch Reader – IBB is looking to move to a different parish, and can be licensed to our parish in order to work elsewhere within the diocese.</p> <p>General agreement to proceed.</p>	MR to submit response to council by mid-October
5	<p>Church Wardens' Remarks</p> <p>KE has received a request from St Matthew's church to borrow our scaffolding, for font servicing.</p> <p>PS explained that St Matthew's would need to transport it themselves, need to be aware that it's not industrial-standard and that St Thomas' accepts no liability.</p>	If St Matthew's wish to proceed, arrangement needs sending to their PCC secretary.
6	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>DC provided an overview of the Safeguarding Hub Agreement. As the designated Safeguarding Officer, she is the 'owner' of the associated dashboard and is authorised to provide the PCC's consent to the agreement.</p> <p><i>Proposed: LM // Seconded: PS // Accepted: unanimously</i></p> <p>Documents relating to the safeguarding hub & dashboard had been shared prior to the meeting. All present confirmed that they were aware of these and have read them.</p> <p>DC explained that she has received information suggesting that safeguarding handbooks have been removed from CofE website.,</p> <p>DC confirmed that all DBS checks are currently up to date – some</p>	DC to check status of handbooks with diocesan safeguarding team. DC to review

	<p>will need renewing in Jan.</p> <p><i>Training</i> – DC reported that some PCC members had attended safeguarding training at St Wilfrid’s on 07/08, but the consensus was that the online option is preferable as more interactive. All of PCC need to complete the following training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic safeguarding (except those that attended at St Wilfrid’s) - Foundation safeguarding - Safer Recruitment - Domestic Violence (recommended but not mandatory) <p>Training is accessible on the Chester Diocese safeguarding portal. DC to send an email to secretaries with relevant info.</p> <p><i>Safer Recruitment</i> – DC had shared templates of the safer recruitment paperwork. There was discussion as to whether this needs completing retrospectively for existing volunteers, and the difficulties some might have in obtaining a “professional” reference.</p> <p>PCC agreed it should be adopted for anyone taking on the following new roles, whether existing volunteers or not: members of sub-committees, and those on volunteer rotas where they will have level of responsibility or contact with others.</p> <p>New volunteers also need a job spec – a template was shared with PCC members.</p> <p>Safeguarding Sunday will take place on 16/11</p>	<p>which other volunteers might need DBS checks.</p> <p>DC to email PCC secretaries with details of how to access the online training.</p> <p>DC to share job spec template with group leaders.</p> <p>MR & DC to plan service for Safeguarding Sunday 16/11</p>
7	<p>Committee reports</p> <p>St Thomas’ Action Group</p> <p>Installation of new lead & socket for mic in front of piano: Makerfield have quoted £360 +VAT – only one quote has been requested due to the specialism and the fact that Makerfield installed the sound system and have a good understanding of our audio set-up; agreed to proceed.</p>	

<p><i>Proposed KE // Seconded SB // Approved unanimously</i></p> <p>Clock Servicing - WBC will only cover service costs if the work is completed by Smiths of Derby. However, STAG would like the service to be completed by Cumbria Clocks as they completed previous repair to a high standard; this work is guaranteed for 10 years if we use Cumbria for services. Agreed to proceed with Cumbria Clocks but will ask WBC if they will contribute to cost.</p> <p><i>Proposed KE // Seconded PS // Approved unanimously</i></p> <p>Remembrance Sunday - PS advised that WBC will not arrange road closures for the service at the memorial on 9 November; it will cost the church £1,200 (incl VAT) through a contractor. PS will submit a Freedom of Information request to ascertain who pays for the service at Bridge Foot cenotaph. Agreed it's worth asking the Parish Council for a donation and using social media to request donations towards the cost of road closures.</p> <p><i>Proposed PS // Seconded DC // Approved unanimously</i></p> <p>St Mary's Action Group</p> <p>Makerfield have quoted £390 +VAT for a new gooseneck mic & cabling to improve audio during services.</p> <p><i>Proposed SG // Seconded PB // Approved unanimously</i></p> <p>St MM now stream their service on first Sunday of month, not the second. PS raised the need to ensure tech team and parishioners are aware where streaming is coming from each week.</p> <p>Safeguarding - Although Julie B is the safeguarding contact at St MM's, she isn't around that much so feels it's not appropriate to be named as a contact in safeguarding posters etc as she's not readily available.</p> <p>Mel W will be a sidesperson from January, so will be requested to complete safer recruitment forms as per discussion in safeguarding item.</p>	<p>KE to contact WBC re contributing to cost of clock service</p> <p>PCC Sec to write to parish council clerk re donation. RG to create social media posts</p> <p>MR to add streaming schedule to bulletin.</p> <p>DC to review existing documentation and update where appropriate. DC & SG to coordinate completion of safer</p>
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	<p>Worship Action Group – not meeting at present</p> <p>Youth Action Group - Some of the plans from the July meeting have filtered down; a group is attending a meeting in Weaverham about children’s ministry.</p> <p>Hangout Hub restarted after the summer holidays – numbers are still low, but BYP member Lucas may be able to support and advise.</p> <p>Fundraising Action Group – see report provided by SLB prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Church Hall Action Group – haven’t met since last PCC meeting.</p> <p>Pastoral Group – Jan has taken on the coordination of the group – meeting notes were shared.</p> <p>Deanery Synod – no meetings since last PCC. The next one is on 15 October at St Wilfrid’s.</p> <p>Eco Team – SB reported that extensive paperwork is being put together as we work towards the Gold award eg Parish Environmental Policy, Land Use Policy.</p> <p>SB & Jill Elston (Diocesan Environmental adviser) attended a Carbon Literacy course. Commitment is needed from the PCC to complete this course and be involved in the pilot study; several members expressed enthusiasm & willingness. All were reminded to complete the recent eco surveys and to encourage others to support our eco projects.</p> <p>SB explained the Target 25 project which helps threatened species and habitats in the UK. Our church has adopted the hedgehog as our species and will be carrying out monitoring and practical action to help boost local hedgehog populations.</p> <p>MR expressed thanks to Sheila for all the work she’s putting into raising eco-awareness within the parish.</p>	<p>recruitment for new sidesperson.</p> <p>DC to coordinate safer recruitment process for Jan Austin (pastoral group)</p> <p>PCC members to complete carbon footprint & eco lifestyle surveys.</p>
8	<p>Curate</p> <p>RG has had her review meeting with Bishop Julie, now looking at next steps. She will be signed off from her curate role in March/April next year but can start looking for roles now - will need approval from Bishop Julie & Michael Gilbertson if she finds something before April.</p>	

9	<p>Finance</p> <p><i>SOFA: January to July 2025</i></p> <p>See Sue’s report (appendix 1). We should still have a small surplus at end of year.</p> <p>SLB reminded everyone who can gift aid to remember to do so. It’s now possible to gift aid on the card reader (although still not a huge amount comes in through this).</p> <p>We have claimed an additional £8K towards non-gift aided donations.</p> <p><i>Outward Giving for 2025 – see appendix 2</i></p> <p><i>Other decisions made:</i></p> <p>£833 remaining unallocated from previous financial year will go to DEC</p> <p>A further £500 will be added to the donations to USPG & CMS (so £2,500 to each).</p> <p>This leaves £1385 remaining for emergencies.</p> <p><i>Proposed: SLB // Seconded: LM // Approved unanimously</i></p> <p>Thanksgiving Sunday – this takes place on 19th October</p> <p>Major works: Expression of Interest has been resubmitted. SLB advised that the portal still says decision awaited, even though the process should only take up to 20 days.</p>	
10	<p>Future Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PCC dates for 2025-26 were shared with members - SMAG / STAG dates still tbc 	
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Prayer Ministry</i> – this will change to the first Sunday of month at St MM so it’s easier for Christine to participate.</p> <p>St T do it on the second Sunday but need more pray-ers. MR wants this to be lay led. MR suggested we need a prayer ministry group meeting, not just for existing team, but to encourage new people too.</p> <p>Note the above schedule works for October but may be tricky in</p>	<p>Prayer ministry group to arrange meeting to encourage new members.</p>

	<p>November due to Remembrance Sunday on the second Sunday.</p> <p><i>Worship</i> - SG reported positive feedback from a St T regular after attending StMM, with regard to reflective music after the sermon & intercessions.</p>	<p>Discuss use of music in services at next STAG.</p>
12	Date & Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 25 th November at 7pm	
	The meeting closed at 9.10pm	

Treasurers report to PCC 25th September

Please find attached the SOFA report reconciled to 31st August 2025.

Total unrestricted income is £128,813, Tax recovery (Gift Aid) has now been received for Q1&2 2025 – a total of £14,528 and expenses £101,930 giving an apparent unrestricted surplus of £26,882 – but see below.

As in my last report expenditure is skewed by Parish Share for July which was paid 1/9 and August not being collected in month due to ongoing CAF bank issues. I had been informed by Chester that they thought the issue was resolved and they would attempt to collect August by DD again but while away it seems that this has not worked, and we are to pay by BACS 'until further notice'. Hence this £26,882 needs to be reduced by £12,934 to £13,948. If PCC approves the Outward Giving proposal of £13,985 there is an actual unrestricted loss of £37 with 4 months still to the year end. This should be compared with a total surplus at this point in 2024 of £1363 but of this there was a deficit of **£1096** in the unrestricted fund.

Income – all funds

Category	2024	2025	Change
Planned Giving	58,998	63,434	£4436
Tax recovery	10,538	14,559	£4021
Donations	16,894	17,725	£831
Fund raising	5,324	4,346	£978
St T Church Hall Hire	8,950	10,617	£1667
St MM Hall Hire	5,709	4,649	£1016
Fees	6,236	3,476	£2760

Figures in red represent **reduced** income from 2024

Planned Giving

Increase of £4436 over 8 months, giving a predicted increase for the year £6650. In July I reported Promised Planned Giving increase and new pledges 2024 would give an annual figure of £8154 it looks like we will be about £1500 less with a knock on reduction in GA also.

Tax recovery is increased, had £5k donation all of which was Gift aided and we are attempting to be as tax efficient as possible and claim all we are entitled to. Again, our GASD amount for the tax year 2024/25 exceeded the £8,000 threshold we are allowed to claim in Q2/3 and 4 of 2024 so we were unable to claim any GASD in Q1 2025. Some of this is due to the Card Reader – for Q2/3/4 2024 the figure was £2,455; in Q1/2 2025 it is £1,199. We have changed the display on the PAYAZ machine to enable GA to be added to each donation but the take up of this so far is not great.

Donations are similar to 2024.

Fundraising is a little reduced but we have several things planned going forward for the remainder of 2025.

Hall hire is good at St Thomas' – lot of parties and one-off events, although we have lost one long standing hirer – Shooting Stars and regular Encore sessions (though they still use is for shows) – not for any reason we have control of. St MM HH is reduced- not very many one-off events / parties.

Fees – very few funerals/ weddings etc.

Expenses – all funds

Category	2024	2025	Change
Parish Share	50,259	38,802 (+£12934)	£1477
Church running costs	26,741	25,818	£923
Church Hall running costs	8929	11554	£2625 *
Church Hall Maintenance and repairs	-15	5174	£5189**
Worship	7044	6435	£609
Support costs	5752	4227	£1525
Vicarage costs	2607	2602	£5
St Mary's house costs	2337	1455	£882

Figures in red show an **increase** in expenditure

Parish Share is increased as we know

Church Running costs pleasingly are slightly reduced on the same period 2024 – colder months approaching though!

Church Hall running costs appear higher however *extra 1 month of Cleaner costs (paid before month end due to my holiday) gardener and gas all increased slightly and incl the urinals of £891 so actual increase of to same period 2024 more in the region of £1200- mainly gardening costs.

Church Hall Maintenance and repairs are increased -** kitchen costs of £4,767 largely account for this – cost neutral to Parish

Worship costs are slightly less than the same period 2024 – may just be a timing issue

Support costs are significantly less - our photocopying costs are a lot less this year at £609 compared to £1422 for the same period 2024 which will influence this.

Vicarage costs almost identical despite increased Council Tax

St Mary's House costs are reduced but as I explained last month this is due to us paying additional Council tax in Jan / Feb 2024 for the period of time from May 2023 when Ruth arrived and it taking WBC so long to sort it out.

Conclusion I am hopeful we will make a small surplus, as last year (£3905) considering our net income over expenditure position in 2025 compared to same period in 2024, barring unexpected events.

Cash at Bank and in hand as of 22/9/25

CAF 2	£71,957
CAF 6	£9,271
NW2	£9052
CBF	£93,606
Total	£183,886 unrestricted approx. £160,000

Sue Burke, Parish Treasurer

Outward Giving for 2025 – discussion document

Up to now the PCC has adopted the following guidelines as parish policy.

1. The PCC should give away a **minimum** of 10% of its previous year's disposable income.
2. The PCC should aim, for the parish as a whole, to allocate 40% of giving to overseas mission agencies; 10% to relief agencies; 35% to other Christian based agencies; and 15% to secular agencies.

Position from 2024 Accounts to inform the Outward Giving Proposal for 2025

Total Unrestricted Income for 2024	£220,224
Less Parish Share	£75,374
Less grants	£0
Less Fundraising costs/contras	£5005
Total 'disposable income'	£139,845

10% is £13,985

Overseas Missions – 40% = £5595

USPG (US) – we committed to supporting USPG for three years in the green school's project, finished in 2022

2024 we gave £2000

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give £2000 again

St David's previously £500

2024 £500

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to maintain the £500

Visranthi Trust

2024 £500

Standing Committee proposed an increase to £600 this year to help cover increased VT costs

CMS

2024 £2000

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give £2000 again

Total £5100 with £495 remaining to distribute

Christian Relief Agencies – policy 10% = £1398

We have not given to Christian Aid for the last three years as we support them through other things like the house to house, Present Aid 2025 £585.

Standing Committee did not feel strongly that we should change this past policy

(£1398 remaining to distribute)

Home Mission – policy 35% to Christian based agencies = £4895

Ascension Trust - Street Pastors

2024 £500

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give £500 again

Prison Fellowship -incorporates the Sycamore Tree restorative Justice programme

2024 £400

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give £400 again

Broomfield's youth project

previously £1000 - we have committed to this previously

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give £1250 in recognition of the support given to the HOH

Mission Project

request £500 – to do Christmas Bags again same as last year – we have had a grant again so should be sufficient

National Churches Trust £50 – set up £50 per year when we received grant previously, may help with

Future grants and we will be doing applications this year or early next

already paid out

WYFC we said when we did not have a YW we would support

2023 £800

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to give a small increase to £1050

Christchurch Latchford we have previously agreed to fund £500 per year

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 to continue with this

Creamfields

We have previously given £50

In 2024 we said £200 – and I have already sent this for 2025

Total £4450 we have an additional £445 to distribute if we want to increase any of these or add any new ones?

Secular charities 15% = £2097

Last year we supported St Rocco's, St Josephs and St Thomas' school.

St Joseph's 2024 £500 **SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 increase to £600**

St Roccas 2024 £750

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 increase to £850

School previously £500 –for 'distinctiveness'

SC Proposal to PCC for 2025 increase to £600

Total £2050 – we have an additional £47 to distribute.

This will leave us with £2385 not allocated out of this year's giving

NB we still have £833 to spend from last year and we agreed at PCC to spend it in year – any suggestions? SC wondered about the 'emergency fund'. We have had a donation of £500 into this and we still have several hundred in the safe at St Thomas'. (I will have an exact figure for PCC)

Sue Burke

Parish Treasurer