



**PARISH OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HIGH WYCOMBE**  
**Minutes of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting at 7.30pm on**  
**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in Church.**

**Present :** Fr. Anthony Searle (Chair of the PCC) (Fr.AS), Derek Lancaster Licensed Lay Minister, (DL), Robyn Connelly (Children and Families Minister & Safeguarding Officer) (RC), John Lord (Treasurer) (JL), Jean Johnson (JJ), Mark Johnson Church Operations Coordinator (MJ), Sue Lord (Deanery Synod Rep)(SL), Barry Titchen (Lead member of the Deanery Synod) (BT), Lynda Moorcroft Titchen (LM), Joc Lucas (JLs), Ray Levy (Deanery Synod Rep) (RL), Mike Salem (MS), Kath Dunn (KD), & Barbara Bowman (BB) Jacqui Brearley (PCC Secretary)(JB)

**Note.** The minutes have, in some instances, been re-ordered to gather items together under the headings set out in the original agenda.

**Welcome from Fr Anthony (Fr. AS)**

**The meeting began with a Evening Prayer.**

### **1. Apologies**

Revd Jackie Lock (Associate Priest) (JLk), Edgar Samuel (Deputy Honorary Churchwarden) (ES), Michelle Neudecker (MN), Sheila Doig (SD).

### **2. PCC Audit of ASHW members – Fr AS**

This exercise is based on a book by Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martins in the Fields, London, in which he describes six ideas for auditing a Church. The aim is to learn more about ASHW and identify any gaps in community and mission. There are six PCC audit groups each with a convener and two other PCC members. Questions are to be addressed individually, in the audit groups & with others in the congregation. Collected responses are to be discussed in the groups and collated by each convener by Easter 2025 & then will be presented to Fr AS, the Strategy group, SLT (SC) & PCC.

The six audit groups are :

1. Relationship with God – RC (convener) with RL & JJ
2. Relationship with self – MN (convener) with SL & KD
3. God Together – JL (convener) with JLk & LMT
4. Relationships with near neighbours – DL (convener) with SD & MS
5. Relationships with distant neighbours – JB (convener) with ES & BT
6. Relationship with Creation – JLs (convener) with MJ & BB

At the end of the process, Fr AS will take away a small team to assess the responses and work out a shared vision for the near future (the next five years) at ASHW, and how this might be implemented.

KD requested to swap into group 4 and MS has agreed to swap with her and move to group 6.

As Fr AS is not in a group, he is willing to be present to discuss the responses to questions with any of the groups. He requested that conveners should reflect on the audit sheet handed out and contact Fr AS if unsure of anything.

It was suggested that the PCC could be structured so that members are assigned different roles to form a governance structure or series of sub committees to improve working efficiency. This aligns with Fr AS's suggestion last year of creating a leadership structure within the PCC which is already being implemented and gradually evolved towards.

*Actions DL has volunteered to assimilate the six audit documents into one for ease of reference.*

### 3. Safeguarding :

RC reported that she is attending an online Parish Safeguarding induction course. Also she had copies of the pocket book version of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook which is a succinct precis; for distribution to PCC members at the meeting.

**The Code of Safer Working Practice**, must be signed by volunteers at ASHW to ensure their agreement to abide by the ASHW Safeguarding policy. It must be approved by the PCC when the wording relating to the taking of photographs on personal phones and cameras has been revised. Fr AS is in discussion with Tsungai (the Diocesan Parish Safeguarding area advisor) regarding the exact phrasing which is to be following consultation with the communications team.

#### **Actions**

- *Efforts will be made to finalise the wording of the Code of Safer Working Practice for future review by the PCC at the next meeting.*

### 4. ASHW Policies Review - MS

MS, has kindly agreed to take on the ASHW Policy remit and his intention is to compile as many of the ASHW policies as possible, share them with the PCC members and ask them to review the policies over a four-week period reporting back any issues or concerns to MS. A regular review structure for ASHW policies using electronic reminders would be an efficient way to proceed in future.

The Charity Commission insists on seven key policies being in place:

1. The Risk Management Statement – needed at ASHW income is less than £500 000.
2. The Investments and cash reserves policy.
3. Safeguarding policy for the protection of beneficiaries.
4. Conflicts of interests policy .
5. Volunteer management policy.
6. Complaints handling policy.
7. Employee integration policy.

ASHW has submitted the following policies to the Charity Commission: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 but MS needs to review these policies and check that they are accurate and up to date.

In addition to the seven above there are a few more policies that ASHW already have but need to be reviewed however they are in the form of procedures rather than policies:

8. Manual operations – relating to things such as turning off lights, locking up, etc.
9. Car parking – recently drafted by DL and requiring approval by the PCC.
10. Welcomers guide.
11. Exclusion.
12. Evacuation.
13. Data protection and GDPR.
14. Rules for hiring staff.

MS pointed out that some of the above 1-7 policies require training eg. H&S, Food hygiene, Safeguarding, and some have been filed away and may need to be found.

If any policies/procedures require to be rewritten, it was suggested that there should be drafts available from the diocese which could be adapted for ASHW needs. Additionally some of the policies/procedures are covered under Church representation rules & some under parish resources.

When updated, policies/procedures will be saved onto the ASHW one drive for easy access and a spread sheet/list recording the review date would be kept with the PCC secretary to be raised when appropriate at

meetings as agenda items. It was felt that for ease, review dates should be spread across the year and some may follow a 3 or 5 year cycle.

A vote of thanks was raised for MS's willingness to take on this large administrative task reviewing policies for ASHW.

#### **Actions**

*MS will be processing this list and sending it on to JB for distribution and review by the PCC.*

#### **5. St Francis & ASHW shared pioneer priest & curate - update.**

Very positively the first post has now been advertised and there are a couple of candidates, one of whom is in the process of applying and a second who is thinking of applying.

Joshua Harris will be starting his curacy at ASHW in June. Joshua is very enthusiastic and keen to join the ASHW family but Fr AS is conscious that settling into his curacy will be a tiring process following university and training. Initially for the first three weeks, Joshua will be living in High Wycombe but not officially working which is an ideal opportunity for the congregation to welcome him. His employment begins when he is ordained.

#### **6. Creation Care – Joc Lucas/Sue Lord.**

SL introduced the slides distributed to PCC members and explained the concept Eco Church; caring for God's Creation. The creation care group has met a few times already and begun work. eg. Organising and distributing wildflower seeds to the congregation for nurture ready for planting out next Spring in the Church yard. The Eco Church framework or audit, set up by the A Rocha UK charity specifically for the purpose of assessing how to move forward in the long term and protect God's creation has 5 key areas:

- **Worship & teaching** – how to incorporate creation/nature in this eg. Worship outside or bringing nature in. Is there any training necessary. Could we have an eco focus during Lent or Advent.
- **Buildings & energy** – working out the ASHW carbon footprint & how to reduce that, looking at use of water, waste management, consider the policy re lettings.
- **Land & nature** – encouraging biodiversity in the Churchyard.
- **Community & global engagement** – the interaction & application of this in the wider community. Eg. Litter picking or taking part in eco forums.
- **Lifestyles** - of the congregation outside the Church.

Within the diocese 237 Churches (30%) have already joined Eco Church. It involves answering questions about the progress made to reach targets, using helpful resources and there are awards to provide an incentive. Within the diocese there is:

1 Church (St Stephens, Reading) with a gold award, 38 with silver and 79 with bronze. ASHW is working towards a bronze award (which is self-assessed) and this requires creative thinking and harnessing enthusiasm.

JLs reported that all of the seeds (some donated by Chiltern seeds) offered to the congregation by Creation care to grow over the Winter had been taken. More will be distributed in the Spring and there will be a planting day with Chiltern rangers. Planting locations could be used to help stop antisocial parking in the Churchyard, along with mounds of topsoil.

There was discussion regarding how this ties in with wider plans for ASHW Churchyard started by Gareth (previous curate). Unfortunately these plans were dropped last year as the use of railings was not thought appropriate for ASHW.

**Actions**

Fr AS is keen to draw the congregation as a whole more fully into Eco Church by dedicating a Sunday worship to this theme & provide opportunities for engagement.

**7. Approval of the minutes of the PCC meeting on Wednesday 18th Sept 2024**

The minutes were proposed by SL, seconded by LM, approved, without amendment, by all who were present at the Sept. meeting and then signed by Fr AS.

**8. Matters arising from the above minutes**

- Badges for PCC members - will be sourced by Thistle and after discussion it was thought best that they should be unnamed.
- Regarding the use of the Oakley Hall as an emergency venue for the night shelter during extreme weather, ASHW have left the provision of volunteers to supervise this with the Night shelter authorities.

**9. ASHW Noticeboards**

Fr AS's cartoon, distributed to the PCC, identifies the current problems with noticeboards. He took the PCC on a tour of the current noticeboards within the Church. Those at the back near the West doors need to communicate clearly to visitors information about the community at ASHW, events, services and who's who within ASHW. Visitors are drawn in by the beauty of the building and ask questions at the mustard seed café but often are even unsure what the denomination is.

Space is limited at the West entrance and over the years what was the main entrance, the South porch, has become just a fire escape due to structural problems so signage has become fragmented.

It was noted that the external noticeboards are old and out of date and require renovation and illumination. Information needs to be grouped carefully and new temporary noticeboards are sometimes required which would provide flexibility. Consideration should be given to acquiring a pigeon hole unit to hold leaflets currently piled on the table near the WC block.

**Actions**

- Jls, RC and JJ kindly volunteered to work on a plan for the noticeboards/information within Church and identify what is missing and report back to the March PCC meeting.
- Ideas for a new pigeon hole unit should be advanced.

**10. ASHW - 1:1 Meeting Space.**

Proposed to be located next to the South Porch, in the current location of the prayer space. The latter is moving over to be near the Choir door with a new structure currently under construction by Brian Tilbury. The holy sideboard is to be moved over to the children's area where there will be a display area installed for the children's art work.

This is intended to create clear new zones within ASHW and to give people a circulation plan.

There is a need for a visible/public space for 1:1 ministry and meetings which is quiet and relatively private with three comfortable, firm seats in the South Porch location. Fr AS has identified suitable seating at the Star & Garter home/ Hughenden Village which are Goodwood lounge chairs, images of which were shared with the PCC.

Jls left the meeting at this point – 9.10pm.

## 11. Organ Restoration, Electronic organ hire & PCC M29 vote result.

A Canon rule M29 was implemented for the PCC to discuss and vote online regarding a request from Philip Wayne (PW) – (Interim Director of Music). The resolution was :

***The Parochial Church Council of All Saints Parish Church, High Wycombe accept and approve the cost of a survey of the Willis Organ of £617, which is required to obtain two further quotations for the necessary restoration work from Harrison and Harrison and a smaller firm.***

The resolution was proposed by Fr AS, seconded by JB and of the remaining 17 PCC members there were 15 votes in favour and no objections or abstentions.

A second survey was conducted on Wed. 20<sup>th</sup> Nov which will result in a total of three quotes for the Willis organ restoration work.

PW has also been in discussions with Allen Organs (a local firm in Hughenden) and Viscount Organs (in Bicester) for a three manual draw stop electronic organ for hire to cover the interim period. Although purchase is a more cost effective, this is not possible given other financial demands on ASHW. Also, the cost of hire would not be significantly more than the current maintenance charge for the Willis. It may be possible to take out a loan from the diocese.

- Allen Organs UK have quoted £85/week for a circa four-year hire, including the installation in early December and ongoing maintenance.
- Viscount Organs have quoted £170 per week plus significant installation fees (c £2000) but installation would be in the new year – possibly early February.

The new electronic console would be on a platform (costing a few hundred pounds) next to but west of the current console, whilst the speakers would be on the north side of Church (but not impeding the Dove window). The upright piano could be moved to the North side near to the children's area.

This installation would require a faculty, despite being a temporary solution, but Archdeacon's approval will suffice initially. The appearance of the electronic organ will hopefully encourage visitors and the congregation to engage with the necessary fund raising for the Willis restoration.

PW advised that PW, DL and Ollie will participate in deciding the setting of the stops to balance aesthetics with audibility (& taking the choir into consideration) and sound quality.

***At the last SLT (SC) meeting at which PW presented the above information, PW recommended the hire of a three manual draw stop electronic organ from Allens Organs UK for £85/week for a circa four year hire, including the installation in early December and ongoing maintenance, PW's proposal was seconded by DL and carried unanimously by the SLT members present.***

DL explained that as Allens have recently sold the electronic organ intended for ASHW's hire they are lending temporarily their concert/cathedral organ at no extra cost which will be installed on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. and this will be replaced in January by a slightly smaller electronic organ which is currently being shipped from the US.

MS on behalf of the other PCC members extended a huge vote of thanks to Philip Wayne for all of his hard work and commitment to the organ project so far.

## 12. SLS Project & ASHW Structural issues.

Following concern about the danger of falling flints and masonry from the South Porch and the tower the Church architect, Richard Oxley (RO) has submitted a report.

The South Porch was the more pressing area, given that it is a fire exit, and essential during events drawing in large numbers, (especially more than 660 people which arise during some of the Christmas carol services). Hence the recent installation of the scaffolding, tunnel and caging and corrugated metal

cladding extending 1.5m out and 2.5m in height from the previous exit to enable the fire exit to be maintained safely. The hire of scaffolding, tunnel and caging, for this will cost £3200 + VAT.

The idea of enhancing the appearance of the South Porch metal cladding was discussed. Perhaps it's an opportunity for signage especially to prohibit parking in the Churchyard & directing visitors to the West doors. The existing emergency exit signs should have been relocated onto the cladding but this wasn't done by the contractor. It may be that the stark appearance of the cladding highlights the Church's need to raise funds for renovation and will encourage donations.

The other area of concern is the south and west faces of the tower. It may be necessary to instal scaffolding (at a cost of more than £100K), and metal cladding to create a tunnel entrance to the great west doors if the problem deteriorates. Longer-term solutions suggested by RO are scraping and screeding which would be less expensive (£15K) than repointing the tower (£100K) but contrary to listed building control and requiring a faculty. Alternatively netting reinforcement could be installed over the crumbling stonework. Neither of these options seem likely to satisfy the DAC, English Heritage and the Victorian society. Fr AS pointed out that the miscellaneous material historically used to finish the tower in some ways make the repair of the stonework easier to than it would be with other Churches. JL is not able to take on the project management of the tower project given his other Church and onerous treasurer's commitments, so a volunteer is needed, preferably a retired person. Another conservation architect is also required & so it may be worth approaching Tony Mealing for his assistance and professional opinion.

On a positive note, regarding the major structural projects at ASHW, Ashley Humphreys, who volunteered to help ASHW write bids for funding has reported back and made some progress already. There is concern that the adverse state of the crumbling stonework raises a serious H & S issue for ASHW.

**Actions – Fr AS will :**

- approach the DAC and Tony Mealing with the RO tower report seeking guidance to find an acceptable way forward with this project.
- send the Tolbeit Curtis's South Porch report to the DAC for their response and guidance.
- contact Ecclesiastical insurance to discuss the potential H & S issues in terms of liability. A way forward will hopefully be more apparent by January.

**13. Team Reports:**

**13.1 Fr Anthony/Robyn Connelly: Christmas & Advent plans (Christingle/Crib service, Tree Festival & Epiphany)**

The services requiring extra sides people are the Advent Nine lessons & carols, Midnight mass, & Christingle.

The Mayors carol service has been cancelled this year.

The Sunday Eucharist on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025 is to be a Confirmation service

To raise funds for the ASHW Charity mission partners, it was suggested that instead of cards being distributed amongst friends at Church people would make a donation and a large card would be made instead. Perhaps the children could decorate it and it would be signed & displayed from the ASHW family to visitors to the Church over the period of the Tree festival & festive services. Alternatively, there could be a retiring collection on the Sunday before Christmas for the mission partners.

**13.2 Derek Lancaster: Churchyard update.**

The Town Committee has agreed to pay for a gate to be installed. Permission is being sought & the gate is on order. A rising bollard was not recommended by the police as easily broken/vandalized. The gate would be recessed down the path sufficiently to allow a vehicle to pull in & slightly angled with a small, cobbled path on the Oakley Hall side for pedestrians. It will require a faculty and would be fitted with a padlock with a number combination initially. In time there would be a keypad for automatic opening, but this is dependent on having an electrical supply and it would require annual maintenance.

Community payback teams have been working in the Churchyard and the rat problem is more under control.

There is a fallen tree in the far corner of the Churchyard which is the responsibility of the town committee but they are denying all responsibility so negotiations are continuing about this.

**13.3 Fr Anthony/Derek Lancaster: Pastoral Matters**

Pastoral work is continuing smoothly.

**13.4 Robyn Connelly: Children, Youth & Families**

Work continues as usual.

**13.5 John Lord: Stewardship & Finance**

As outlined in the report it would be helpful for there to be a push in the new year to organise fund raising events in 2025 and to volunteer or help to find volunteers to assist the financial team in any way possible however small. It was suggested that JL might write a job description detailing what sort of help is needed with the treasurer's work to distribute to the congregation.

The response to the ASHW gift day appeal has been good and money may still come in up to the end of January.

**13.6 John Lord: Tenancy update Castle Place - Re tenants & maintenance work**

There are arrears of £2 900 on rent from the last tenants at Great Ground, Aylesbury, some of which is being recouped gradually. The new tenants are settling well and all is progressing smoothly. It is necessary to serve six months' notice on the current tenants at Castle Place in order to be able to ask them to leave by the end of May & give sufficient time for preparation for Joshua's arrival in June. The external wall and patio needs to be replaced and quotes have been procured.

**13.7 Fr Anthony: Communications**

Nothing to report.

**13.8 Eddie Samuels: Buildings & Fabric****13.9 Eddie Samuels: Oakley Hall Report** – In Eddie's absence, an Oakley Hall report has been submitted and circulated to the PCC.**13.10 Sue Lord – Deanery Synod Report**

At the last deanery meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct the theme was 'Wellbeing Matters' tying in with concern for priests, Church wardens, PCC members and congregations, to encourage them to look after themselves and self-care. Eg. A group in Hughenden have introduced 'a time to talk' and 'walk and talk' which is directed towards men who find it hard to talk to each other and following the tragic suicide of one of their congregation. Hughenden have also run sessions on listening skills, again targeting men. Micklefield have a wellbeing café with games and jigsaws, something which ASHW

would like to introduce further. There is a booklet which may be helpful called 'Flourishing together through Church leadership' which takes the form of an audit. Also the use meditation and prayer would be beneficial.

It was reported that the parish share will be increasing by £2 500 next year to £71 816.

#### 14. Any other unplanned / urgent business

- It was mentioned that acolytes sitting up near the altar are unable to hear the sermon or announcements/notices. Adjustment may be needed to the existing speaker on the platform.
- Older members of the congregation who would like to do readings or intercession prayers during services are not able to easily step onto the lectern platform. It was suggested that the repair café might be able to come up with a clever design solution to this problem.  
In the longer term, Fr AS would like to remove the box and move the lectern nearer to the altar step and have a more fixed structure to stand on instead, but readings and intercessions can be done from anywhere in the Church so this shouldn't be seen as an impediment for those less ambulant.
- Unfortunately there have been two thefts which occurred during Sunday Eucharists when members of the congregation go up for communion and are away from their seats. It was suggested that if the camera for live streaming is zoomed out it might be possible to capture this activity but this would require a change in the policy of the live streaming camera use at ASHW, which is purely for broadcasting services. So it would be inappropriate to do this and actually a more detailed angle of view would be required by the police anyway.  
There was a recent incident involving the calming of a troubled visitor during the Sunday Eucharist. The PCC members involved who bravely, efficiently and effectively dealt with the young man in question were commended for demonstrating foresight, patience & true Christianity.

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

SLT (Standing Committee) – Wed. 8th January 2025

#### Future meeting dates:

PCC – Wed. 22nd January 2025

APCM, Meeting of Parishioners & PCC – Sun. 27th April 2025 at 11:15am

SLT (Standing Committee) – Wed. 7th May 2025

SLT (Strategy) – Wed. 14th May 2025

PCC – Wed. 21st May 2025

SLT (Standing Committee) – Wed. 16th July 2025

PCC – Wed. 30th July 2025

SLT (Standing Committee) – Wed. 3rd September 2025

SLT (Strategy) – Wed. 10th September 2025

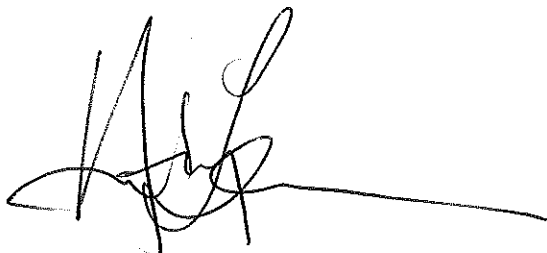
PCC – Wed. 17th September 2025

SLT (Standing Committee) – Wed. 5th November 2025

PCC – Wed. 19th November 2025

*All on Wednesday. PCC meetings commence at 7:30pm in Church and SLT Meetings at 8pm at the Vicarage.  
**Unless otherwise stated.***

**CLOSE:** The meeting concluded with Fr. Anthony Searle leading everyone in prayer and closed at 10pm.



Approved in principle by the PCC