



Howard
15/July/2025

The Parish of Medstead and Four Marks

Minutes of the PCC Meeting

**Tuesday 10th June 2025,
7.30pm at St Andrew's Church Hall**

1. Welcome and Apologies

Howard welcomed everyone to the 4th PM&FM PCC meeting of 2025.

Apologies were received from Debby Barnes, John Lofthouse, Bob Meekums, Ian Trotter

2. Worship and Prayer

We read together Psalm 135 – "...Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good...", and sung the Pentecost hymn "Breathe on me, breath of God". Howard led in prayer and we continue in quiet prayer and meditation for a short period.

3. Declarations of (Financial) Interest

Nothing new to declare.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

- PCC Meeting of 18th March 2025
 - i. Approval of Minutes - *PCC Minutes 25-03-18.pdf* were approved *nem con* and signed as a true record.
 - ii. Matters arising
 - None
- Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 27th May 2025
 - i. Approval of Minutes - *PM&FM APCM 2025.pdf*. Jeremy had drafted an additional paragraph recording a question about differences in reported 2024 end-of-year deficit/surplus in the financial accounts. With the agreed inclusion of this paragraph, the APCM minutes were approved and signed as a true record
 - ii. Matters arising
 - No further matters

5. Report on PCC "Away-Day", Saturday 31st May

Notes of the day had been circulated: *2025 Leaders Day - Notes.pdf*.

Unfortunately because of inevitable changes to the date, several PCC members could not attend.

The day's discussion had revolved around the following headings:

- Celebrate; Mourn; Hope
- In the areas of responsibility/ministry: Pastoral; Mission; Discipleship; Prayer; Worship.

PCC noted particular issues:

- Communication between the six congregations across the parish.
- Getting information to those who cannot attend key events.
- The difficulty for some members not in leadership of knowing, even recognising, those Staff and PCC whom they can approach.
- Encouraging people to use the weekly parish newsletter and Four Marks News.
- People had given positive feedback on the things that Jane and Virginia had shared, so would appreciate more regular updates on ministry.

Finance issues have dominated recent discussion. As a leadership we need to be more about discovering afresh and confirming what are the vision and ministries of our Parish.

6. Finance

- Meeting with Georgi Thompson Leask (Diocesan Faith and Generosity Adviser), 8th April 2025. Meeting recorded in *2025 Finance-Action Plan Discussion - 08 04 2025.pdf*.

Georgi came to COGS 9.30am service and to St Andrew's 11am Café Church. It had been hoped that she would introduce the idea of being generous with time, talents, abilities and finance, and then provoke discuss within the congregations. Somehow the interactive process and financial aspects got lost – a missed opportunity to address principles and practice of giving. People recalled how effective Jane and Virginia's presentation at APCM had been as a motivational event.

Georgi runs discipleship courses which include among other topics the matter of all sorts of giving. It had been hoped that these might be offered, providing some kind of curriculum that would benefit Café Church and other, but they were not mentioned.

Overall feeling within PCC was that we were hoping for and expecting more from a Diocesan Advisor than was brought to the two services. However, we would value more input to finding strategies to encourage good stewardship. It might come through a small group, and Alistair Baron was mentioned as someone who might be invited to contribute.

- Considering the discrepancies in 2024 End-of-Year (EoY) figures for final surplus/deficit, it had been found that in the process of merging historic accounts for the new parish, St Andrew's Church Hall had been brought in under income rather than as a capital asset. Apparently, this was the opinion of the Independent Examiner.

So, the hall should be listed as a source of revenue, while its intrinsic value is as an asset. This assumes that the Parish owns St Andrew's Church Hall. (note to minutes: Chris has provided a statement of the current position for charities - see Appendix 1)

Discussions with Andrew Burton-Thorne led to a final EoY figure of a deficit of approximately £2,000.

- Treasurer
 - i. Chris spoke to the Financial Statement as of April 2025
PM&FM Financial Statement - April 2025.xlsx
In April, an underspend on the purchase and installation of the COGS solar panels had contributed to an overall improvement to our situation.
Furthermore in May, income had exceeded the budgeted figure by about £1,000, but expenditure was almost £7,000 less than budgeted. Overall, he described the financial situation as stable.
With the introduction of solar panels, he had expected our monthly direct debit figure to have decrease from the regular budgeted £658pcm. He will find out if we have overpaid under this heading.
 - ii. It was noted that the sums allocated for COGS Kitchen and COGS solar panels listed as Designated should properly be shown as Restricted.
 - iii. Howard reminded the meeting that we still need to determine how much of the total amounts represent historical funds given to the pre-merger parishes, which should be designated for their original congregations. The necessary 'forensic accounting' has still to be done. Members of both of the old parishes are keen to discover whether or not they are 'paying their way' in the new parish – it is likely that neither is at present. One example of the difficulty of working this out is over insurance. We insure three buildings – two churches and one church hall, each costing the same. So, St Andrew's appears to be paying twice as much as COGS under this heading.
 - iv. The outstanding Gift Aid has been applied for, so appears in the accounts as an 'asset' waiting to be delivered, replaced by 'income' when it arrives.
 - v. Jeremy observed with concern that the April budget column shows a planned deficit of £4,233. How is that to be addressed before the end of the year? Frank

per month,

reminded the meeting that when the budget was set, income was estimated pessimistically, while expenditure was estimated optimistically. Figures presented that at this point they are going in the right direction, with income above forecast and expenditure below. Chris suggested that his proposed Reserve Strategy (see below) would give sufficient protection against a possible worsening deficit position in the current financial year.

- vi. There was a brief discussion about the item 'Medstead Flower Fund' in the accounts as a Designated Fund. Jackie explained the history of the fund. It was agreed that an appropriate use of the fund might include paying for flower displays at the 800th Anniversary celebrations.

- 1st review of progress against Financial Plan/Budget
(as agreed at extra PCC meeting, Feb 2025)

- i. Proposals 3 & 4, Fund-raising.

Howard said that until we have complete clarity on our financial position, after the confusion at the APCM, he is not willing to appeal to either COGS or St Andrew's for further funds while there might already be cash in the bank. He is confident that once we can present an accurate statement to our congregations, we can bring the vision we have and what resources are needed to put it into practice. Proposals 3 and 4 of the *DRAFT 2025 Finance Plan v2* agreed at the March PCC are tentatively being actioned: for example, at Toddler Group where there is no charge for coming, people have chosen to make donations through the card-machine. St Andrew's already has a great track record of social and missional activities that raise funds.

There followed a discussion of other ways that people give, e.g. by not claiming for things they buy for church use, or even by claiming and then giving back Gift Aided (tax-efficient?). We might point out a need, e.g. a leaking roof – someone might choose to make an extra contribution for that.

- ii. Proposal 5, Review of income and expenditure, 'free cash' and reserves.

Howard suggested that we are not yet having to reduce our CMF contribution, and that with present level of giving and proper use of historic funds we should not need to make emergency appeals.

- iii. Proposal 6, We will review again in September if expenditure continues to exceed income, and if necessary, review options for 2026.

- Agree reserves policy

Chris presented his recommendation for a new Reserves Policy for the Parish. He asked us to consider at what point is it sensible to trigger an alarm to activate use of reserves. Legal obligations to staff are contained within the statutory redundancy and notice period employment law.

He estimates that we would need £27,643 to cover these if such drastic action were required. Other operating (non-staff) costs would be in the region of £27,849. Total amount, £55,492. He suggested that a sensible alert should appear if we get down within 5% of that figure, i.e. £58,267. In practice it is expected that we would recognise a problem well before we needed to act on this policy.

In practice the operating costs might be spread over a longer period, and we would expect to be aware of the problem well before the trigger amount was reached.

Howard thanked Chris for his recommendation. He **proposed** that we accept Chris's Reserve Policy. Pam Maloney **seconded** the proposal. It was **agreed unanimously**. A copy of the policy is attached as Appendix 2.

- Jackie spoke about the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) which a number of St Andrew's congregation use. She had attempted to transfer giving formerly made to the old Medstead parish account to the new Benefice account. However, the new account is

not yet registered with PGS. Jackie commended the helpfulness of PGS telephone staff and encouraged PM&FM to register by phone.

- Update on opening the new Parish Bank Account

- i. After one failed attempt by Howard and Tori to get online access to the new account, it was decided to include all members of the Standing Team for the next attempt. We await developments.

(Note after the meeting: because not all Standing Team members had been included in the original mandate, there was a further delay while we resubmitted details of all signatories – Standing Team including Chris + Tori.) NatWest have issued a debit card and a cheque book, neither of which did we ask for.

- ii. Howard formally **proposed** and Jackie **seconded** that Chris Nunn be added to the new bank account:

We the trustees of the PCC of the Ecclesiastical Benefice of Medstead and Four Marks at our full meeting on Tuesday 10th June approved that Mr Christopher Nunn be added as a signatory to our NatWest account 51204975 – 60-01-13.

Proposed by: Rev Howard Wright

Seconded by: Mrs Jacqueline Jurd

Vote: **Unanimous**

- Confirm recommended deposit accounts for some assets.

Chris recommended to PCC two accounts, one suitable for 1-year deposit and one for more rapid access (details emailed to Trustees from Church Office, 22nd May).

Signatories to these accounts should be Standing Team including Chris and Tori. Frank **proposed** that we accept the recommendations. Howard **seconded**. Chris is asked to move ahead with opening of the accounts, perhaps firstly with nominal amounts. The proposal was agreed **unanimously**.

Formal proposals are to be drafted by the Secretary, Chris and Howard for inclusion in the record of the meeting – see Appendix 3.

- Personnel Team matters

- i. Frank observed that the present Personnel Team - Timothy James, Bob Meekums, Pam Maloney, Jill Williams and Howard Wright – is made up wholly of COGS members. We recognise that in the early days after the parish merger it was necessary for the Team to be people the staff members already knew well. We expect that with greater involvement of staff across the new Benefice that PCC members from both ends of the Parish can be included in this Team.

- ii. Personnel Team have recommended to PCC increases in Staff salaries of 4%, to be backdated to April 2025

Proposals for Staff Salary Increase and Virginias Health Surcharge.docx

Howard formally **proposed** the increase, with Timothy **seconding**. Jeremy abstained, recognising the remaining uncertainties about finance. There were no objections. The proposal was **agreed nem con**.

- iii. An unforeseen consequence of employing Virginia is that, as an overseas national, she must pay up front an Immigrant Health Surcharge (IHS) at £1035pa as a precondition of obtaining her 3-year work visa. The document from Personnel Team sets out three options for PCC to consider and recommends the second option. That is, that Virginia covers the cost, but we make her a loan to enable her to pay it. Document *IHS loan.docx* sets out a proposed contract if that option is taken. On a query as to whether this practice would be legal, Timothy confirmed that he and Chris had established that it

would be a legally correct procedure. A member pointed out that one or more individuals could still make a gift directly to Virginia towards this expense. Such a gift would not be taxable. It would be taxable if given through the Parish. Howard **proposed**, with Jill **seconding**, that we go with Personnel Team's recommendation to offer Virginia an interest-free loan of £3,105 to enable her to pay the IHS. Jeremy abstained citing the current financial uncertainties. There was no objection. The proposal was therefore **accepted nem con**.

7. Local Church Groups – meeting notes

- St Andrew's

- i. Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 6th May
Medstead LCG Minutes - 6th May 2025.pdf
- ii. Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 3rd June
LCG - 3rd June 2025 - MINUTES.docx

Both documents were received and noted.

Jackie asked if it were possible for donations to the Parish to be designated for a special purpose. Howard explained that such intentions should show as Restriction rather than Designation. Such Restriction might be appropriate for new purposes, though just adding accounting complications if intended for existing expenditure headings.

PCC was reminded of forthcoming celebrations of 800 years of continuous worship and ministry through named priests/rectors/vicars/curates. On Saturday and on Sunday afternoon in the church there are to be displays of history of Medstead and local organisations. The hall will display local artists' work. Refreshments will be available, proceeds to church funds. On Sunday evening at 6 there will be a "Songs of Praise" service. Frank raised the possibility of recording the 11am service to capture the contributions of longstanding members for those who couldn't be there in person.

- iii. St Andrew's is exploring acquiring a defibrillator from British Heart Foundation. The local Emergency Response Guide has offered training on its use.

- COGS

Two documents had been circulated:

Proposed renewal of the flat roof covering (COGS).pdf

Quotations for the flat roof at COGS 14Apr.pdf

The leaking roof at COGS must be repaired. The proposal is for PCC to authorise the necessary spend. Because the new material is not "like for like", it is necessary to apply to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for permission to make the repair.

David Duffin **proposed**, and Andy Walters **seconded**, that PCC authorise the spending of £13,500+VAT on the repair. We will ask DAC for a quick response so that work can be carried out before winter and before ingress of rain causes further damage. The proposal was **agreed unanimously**.

8. Safeguarding

Nothing to report

9. GDPR

Nothing to report

10. Health and Safety

Frank presented his latest Health and Safety report:

25.06.09 Health and Safety Rpt.docx

Ian Trotter had sent updates on recent safety inspection of St Andrew's Church Hall electrical and safety systems – all compliant.

Comments from IanT.docx

The information was noted with thanks to Frank and Ian.

11. Any Other Business (to be notified before the meeting)

Pam drew attention of PCC to the Minutes of Deanery Synod:

Deanery Synod Meeting minutes 040625 - Alresford and Alton.docx (circulated 10th June)

The presentations from the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager, Jackie Rowlands, and the Aldershot Army Chaplain, Major Andrew Latifa, were both salutary reminders of the national and global conditions within which we work. In particular they emphasised that in a time of diminishing provision of services by secular authorities, the Church is taking on roles in protecting and supporting youth and helping them to reconnect with society and build their resilience.

Major Latifa also remarked that it is policy to reject potential recruits to the armed forces who display reckless aggressiveness. "Most soldiers would rather keep the peace than fight a war."

12. Date of Next Meeting

PCC: Tuesday 15th July, 7.30pm at Good Shepherd Church Hall

In UK charity accounting, buildings and other assets are included as part of a charity's **funds** because they represent **resources available to the charity**—even if they're not liquid (i.e., easily turned into cash). Here's a breakdown of why this is done:

1. True and Fair View of Financial Position

Charities are required to present a **true and fair view** of their financial position. Including assets like buildings ensures that the accounts reflect the **full value of what the charity owns**, not just its cash or income.

2. Charity Commission and SORP Requirements

UK charities must follow the **Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)**. Under SORP:

- **Fixed assets** (like buildings) must be capitalised and shown on the balance sheet.
- These assets are often funded by donations or grants, so they are part of the charity's **restricted or unrestricted funds**, depending on the donor's intent.

PMFM Church Reserves Policy

1. Purpose of Reserves

The purpose of holding reserves is to ensure the financial stability and continuity of the church's ministry. Reserves are held to cover operational costs during income shortfalls, fund planned future projects or maintenance, respond to emergencies or unexpected expenses, and ensure overall financial stability.

2. Types of Reserves

Reserves are categorised into two types:

- Allocated (Designated) Reserves: These are set aside for specific purposes such as building repairs or mission projects.
- Unallocated (Free) Reserves: These are available for general use and emergencies.

3. Target Reserve Level

The church seeks to maintain free reserves equivalent to two-months of average operating costs (excluding staff costs) along with the [statutory redundancy](#) and [notice period](#) costs as specified below. When resources drop to within 5% of this level, defined below as the 'reserve trigger' the Bookkeeper, Treasurer, or their deputies must inform the PCC immediately. The PCC is then responsible for activating contingencies:

Operating costs (Excluding staff costs): £27,849

Staff Redundancy Costs*: £27,643

Total Reserve: £55,492

Reserve Trigger: £58,267

While it is expected that the PCC will regularly review the accounts, the Treasurer must immediately inform the PCC if reserve funds fall 20% below budget or if the financial position deteriorates without a PCC-authorised expenditure. For example, this may occur if there is a sharp decline in Gift Aid giving

4. Investment and Liquidity Policy

Reserves will be held in liquid, low-risk accounts such as savings accounts. The funds should be accessible within a defined period, typically 12 months. Ethical investment considerations will be considered where applicable.

5. Monitoring and Review

The reserves policy will be reviewed annually by the treasurer and trustees and updated with the latest figures, these include increased staff service levels which increase the redundancy and notice payments. It will also be reviewed in response to significant changes in income, expenditure, or risk.

5. Governance and Reporting

The reserves policy must be approved by the trustees and included in the church's annual report as the church is a registered charity. Transparency with the congregation will be ensured.

*Based on <https://www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk/about-us/meet-the-team/>

[Calculator link](#) – Treasurer access.

Note: Numbers from April 2025 accounts and used current employment legislation.

Medstead and Four Marks PCC

Proposal re: Opening of a 1-year fixed rate business bond account.

We the trustees of the PCC of the Ecclesiastical Benefice of Medstead and Four Marks at our full meeting on Tuesday 10th June approve that the following business bond account be opened in the name of the Benefice.

Cambridge and Counties Bank
Reference Number: 755924
1-year fixed rate business bond
4.25% - annual interest

Proposed by: Mr Frank Maloney
Seconded by: Rev Howard Wright
Vote: Unanimous

Medstead and Four Marks PCC

Proposal re: Opening of a 1-year fixed rate business bond account.

We the trustees of the PCC of the Ecclesiastical Benefice of Medstead and Four Marks at our full meeting on Tuesday 10th June approve that the following online savings account be opened in the name of the Benefice.

United Trust Bank
Reference Number: 204463
Charity Savings Account
3.60% Gross/AER

Proposed by: Mr Frank Maloney
Seconded by: Rev Howard Wright
Vote: Unanimous