

Handwritten signature and date: 17/5/26

**Minutes of the PCC Meeting**  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026,  
8pm in the COGS Church Hall



**Present:** Howard Wright (Chair), Debby Barnes, David Duffin, Jeremy Griggs, Timothy James, Jackie Jurd, Frank Maloney, Pam Maloney, Bob Meekums, Ian Trotter, Andrew Walters, Jill Williams, David Williams (Secretary). In attendance: Chris Nunn (Treasurer)

<p><b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b> Howard welcomed everyone to the second PCC meeting of 2026. Apologies were received from John Lofthouse</p>
<p><b>2. Worship and Prayer</b> Howard led corporate worship with singing of the Easter song "I cast my mind to Calvary", and in prayer.</p>
<p><b>3. Declarations of (Financial) Interest</b> None</p>
<p><b>4. PCC – Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Approval of Minutes (circulated 26<sup>th</sup> January)</li> <li>b. Matters arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. GDPR Training – see item 13a</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Deanery Synod</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February Doc: <i>Notes from Deanery Synod Feb 2026.docx</i> (circulated 24<sup>th</sup> March) Pam briefed PCC on the meeting, which had discussed how the church can meet needs of the rural population, many of whom work in isolation in modern agriculture and struggle with related stress. Our support of Community Cupboard was recognised as a useful contribution to the meeting of social need in our area. The Karamoja Support Group reported on the tragic accidental death of the Archdeacon of Abun on Christmas Day 2025. Good progress is now being made on the building of a house for the Principal of the Diocesan Training College, possible through fundraising by the Alton Deanery. We support the DTC with £100pcm and special offerings. Through Compassion, members of our Parish now sponsor children in Karamoja. Bishop Kelly met the Deanery reps. She is keen to be invited to visit our Parish soon.</li> <li>b. Fresh election of reps required in 2026 (dealt with under item 9: APCM)</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Letter to Bishop Kelly</b> Doc: <i>5th Feb 2026 The Parish of Medstead and Four Marks.letter to Bishop.docx</i> (circulated 9<sup>th</sup> February) Doc: <i>Bishop Kelly's letter 6th March 2026.pdf</i> (Appendix 1)</p>

Doc: *Ian's reply to Bishop Kelly following her letter of 6th March.pdf* (Appendix 2)

As PCC had not seen Bishop Kelly's reply or Ian's subsequent letter, he read both to the meeting. There followed extensive discussion around several issues raised in the correspondence:

- The importance of discerning and encouraging lay-gifting in ministry
- The 'pinch point' in the Anglican polity of the restriction of Eucharistic ministry to ordained ministers - of whom there are fewer with time - alongside the desire in every congregation for that ministry to be exercised regularly and frequently.
- Consequences if Howard were to take his long-overdue Study Leave (formerly 'sabbatical).
- The possibility of allowing a level of ordination – 'limited duty ordinands' – for those who could administer communion ('Bishop's Permission to Preside'?). Some dioceses permit this but others do not, which may create a difficulty if such an ordinand moves between dioceses that take differing views.
- The issue of accountability of someone locally appointed for this purpose, particularly over safeguarding and other pastoral matters.
- Encouraging the congregation to think about the contributions they make, what additional help they could offer.
- Sharing the encouragement of those who are already stepping forward for training, provoking every member to review their own commitment and contribution.
- Inviting Bishop Kelly to review how we respond to her call to look within our existing giftings.

PCC **agreed** that this broad issue of Ministry should be on the agenda at the next meeting.

## 7. **Easter**

- There was an Easter service on 24<sup>th</sup> March at Belford House, the nursing home in the village.
- There would be school Easter services the same week. Medstead School's would be in the village hall. Although we'd really like to have held it in the church, we can't get the children and their parents in at the same time. The village hall has a limit of under 200, which means that we have to do half the school with half the parents and then the same with the other half. That means two Easter services back-to-back. Having the parents coming as well gives an opportunity to build relationships with the parents as well as the children. It is hoped that more families will then be drawn to Medstead Family Church. Four Marks School's Easter service would be at COGS.
- Palm Sunday – 8am Communion and 9.30am All-age Family Service at COGS,  
11am Communion at St Andrew's; Easter Tea and Praise 3pm at COGS
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday – Compline, 7pm at St Andrew's
- Maundy Thursday – Communion, 7pm at St Andrew's
- Good Friday – Family Easter Trail, 9.30-12 at COGS;  
Reflection, 2pm at St Andrew's; Meditation, 7pm at COGS
- Easter Sunday - 8am Communion and 9.30am All-age Family Service at COGS,  
11am Communion at St Andrew's

## 8. Finance

### a. Financial Statement to end of February 2026

Doc: *PM&FM financial stmt Month End - February 2026.xlsx* (circulated 23<sup>rd</sup> March)

Chris reported that because of significant problems with use of the accounting software, Tori had only been able to send the results the day before the meeting. He presented his analysis of the current situation, subject to the limitations noted above (Appendix 3).

Close inspection had revealed that the Parish CMF payment in February had not been included (~£9k), which might as a regular payment have been sent automatically by the accounting system. Plate giving was not counted under income. There remains some income recorded in 2026 that properly should be included in the closing account for 2025.

HMRC had withheld payment of Gift Aid while we waited for the new Parish bank account to be set up under the new name. Chris was asked to check whether that payment (of the order of £50k) had now been received or if we were just accounting for it as if received.

We note that the Parish is receiving Employment Allowance of £800pcm which is very welcome.

Frank asked about recovery of VAT. While it is known that repair work on the St Andrew's Church Hall is eligible for VAT recovery, he said that because the church is a listed building it should also be VAT-exempt.

### b. Review of Budget and forecast for 2026

While there needs to be further review of the accounts to correct some anomalies, Chris suggested that at least for January 2026 the finances are generally in line with the Budget.

The Finance Team in setting the budget for 2026 had proposed raising Staff salaries by 4% in line with the going rate of inflation.

#### i. Personnel team proposed a rise of 5% to our staff salary, and asked PCC to confirm that decision.

1. This is 1% above budget and would create approximately £1,000 impact on budget.

2. Rationale: attempts to get us closer to a comparative teacher range.

PCC had agreed a deficit budget (-£37k, broadly in line with the previous year's -£50k) on the expectation that we trust God for that deficit to be made good – actual deficit for 2025 was less than £10k, and first indications from January 2026 were encouraging.

Jeremy asked PCC to consider that it might be incompatible with our duty as trustees to go above inflation, given that we have already set a deficit budget.

Ian supported Jeremy's objection to the increase. He questioned whether we should make that decision while we are presently facing uncertainty about this year's finances because of the problems with, among other things, the accounting software. Timothy observed that the proposal entailed an ongoing additional commitment which might deplete our reserves more quickly.

Howard asked PCC to consider how that, historically, charities in general and the church in particular had appeared to take advantage of the commitment of staff to their cause by paying them less than salaries they might command elsewhere, even at other churches that are offering more. He also pointed to the special contribution that our staff make to the missional work of the Parish – there would be several things we would simply have to stop doing without our staff.

After further discussion, **Howard** formally **proposed** and **Bob** **seconded** that we would give our staff a 5% increment in 2026. The proposal was **agreed by 10** members, with **2 against** and **1 abstention**.

PCC was delighted to learn that Virginia has passed her driving test.

- ii. Proposed increase from 4 to 5 weeks annual leave.

n.b. this item was inadvertently overlooked. PCC was consulted by email about Howard's proposal over the following week. It was **agreed by 12** members, with **1 against** and **1 no-reply**.

- c. Raising additional income

- i. Chris mentioned the additional source of energy when Balcony Solar systems become available.
- ii. Howard asked Chris, Bob and Ian if they might want to suggest ideas or propose activities that could raise funds.
- iii. Further advice and guidance from the Diocese Stewardship Advisory Team to be sought.

- d. Activity through old and new bank accounts

- i. Additional signatories to old accounts to facilitate transition. Proposals for these have been accepted at previous PCC meetings. It is particularly important for Tori to be added to the old St Andrew's bank account, as at present she does not have a current overall view of the Parish finances. The Finance Team was asked to help Sharon with the process of adding the additional signatories and giving online access to the old St Andrew's account. That account is still very active while the old COGS account is increasingly redundant. Ian agreed to talk through the process with Sharon.

- e. Parish Giving Scheme registration

Still to be actioned.

- f. Deposit accounts

Because of current volatility in investment interest, this has still to be actioned (note proposals at PCC, June 2025).

## 9. APCM

- a. Annual Report including the Accounts

Howard reminded PCC that the prime reason for the Annual Report is to present to the Charity Commission what we are doing and how we are managing the finances to support our activities. It must in the first place be submitted to the 'Independent Examiner' who will comment on the quality of the accounts without going as far as a full audit, and will also give an opinion on how the accounts relate to aims and objectives of the charity, i.e. the Parish. Jeremy observed that it seemed more COGS oriented than towards St Andrew's and needed to be more representative of the whole Parish. Howard invited further input that might redress the balance.

Timothy suggested that in a future submission we might separate out the legal minimum report required by the Charity Commission from the full and rich report we are accustomed to give. He agreed to help in that process.

- b. Vacancies

This year, there has to be an election for every post on Alton Deanery Synod. At our APCM, Jackie, Frank, Pam and David must all stand down. They have an option to stand again, but there will only be 3 spaces because we now have fewer than 200 people on our electoral roll. Frank indicated that he was not intending to stand for re-election. Members agreed with Jackie that there should be representation on Deanery Synod from both of our congregations.

John Lofthouse and Jill Williams both retire from PCC this APCM, and there is also one vacancy. Howard encouraged everyone to think about re-electing present members and also to look for others who might bring fresh insights to PCC.

c. Electoral Roll update

In progress. Howard saw entry on the Electoral Roll as a sign of commitment to the Parish and its ministry.

## 10. Local Church Group – meeting notes

a. St Andrew's

i. Minutes of LCG meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> March (circulated with the agenda)

Minutes noted

ii. Reordering

Bob asked about the overall figure presented for the cost of the reordering. He was advised to contact Ian Jurd for clarification.

iii. Tower repairs

Noted item in LCG minutes

iv. Lent lunches

Sharon had reported that the total raised by the series of four Lent Lunches at St Andrew's was £1458. The events raised funds for

- Alton Cardiac Health
- St Michael's Hospice
- MIND
- Hampshire and IoW Air Ambulance

They represented an important opportunity for outreach as many of the guests came from outside the usual group of church attendees, notably over 80 at the event on behalf of MIND. She asked if the PCC would be willing to make the total up to £1600. The four charities can each then receive a donation of £400. **Howard formally proposed with Andy seconding** that we make up the total as requested. The proposal was **agreed unanimously**.

b. COGS

i. Church Roof

Discussion deferred

ii. Kitchen

Discussion deferred

iii. Upper Room decoration

Discussion deferred

## 11. Safeguarding

Members were reminded that Safeguarding is a responsibility of all of us.

## 12. Health and Safety

Doc: 26.03.24 Health & Safety Rpt.docx (circulated 23<sup>rd</sup> March)

Howard asked that LCG members take all relevant material from this document to their next meetings.

**13. GDPR**

- a. Training at the next meeting.

Matt (GDPR officer) has agreed to undertake appropriate training, and then to lead PCC through relevant material at our May meeting.

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

Frank introduced ABCD. It is **Asset-Based Community Development** and EHDC initiative with four marks and as the parish councils.

**15. Dates of Next Meetings**

APCM: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April at Church of the Good Shepherd.

PCC Away-Day: Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 8am (Breakfast) – 1pm

at the Wickham Institute, Church St, Binsted, GU34 4PB

PCC: Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May at St Andrew's Church Hall