

**THE PARISH OF
ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, ASHWELL**
Registered Charity number 1134776
www.stmarysashwell.org.uk

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting held in St Mary's Parish Church Room, Ashwell,
on Thursday 15 August 2024 at 7.45 pm**

1 Attendance:

Chair	The Rev'd Chris Campbell
Ex-officio	Julia Mitchell, John Chilton, Jo Adams and Mark Eaton
Elected members	Melanie Dawson-Dew, Jonathan Fisher, John Hare, Gaye Rowlands, Ruth ten Hove and Stephen ten Hove
In attendance	Bernard Allen

2 Prayers

The meeting opened with a reading from St Luke's Gospel, chapter 1, the Gospel for the Feast of the BVM. The PCC was then asked to reflect on "What does it mean for us to be St Mary's Church?"

3 Conflict of Interest

None declared.

4 Approval of the Minutes of 16 June 2024

The Minutes were approved and signed.

5 Update on Actions from the Minutes of 16 June 2024

5.1 Introducing LED lights for the tower

(ref. item 6 of Minutes 18.6.24)

JM advised there should be a test on 27 August and asked for volunteers to help assess the use.

5.2 Employment

(ref. item 10.2 of Minutes 18.6.24)

CC advised that Sheelagh Bennett had returned to work.

5.3 Finance: Parish Council Grant for the Post Office

(ref. item 9.2 of Minutes of 18.6.24)

ME advised that apart from an acknowledgement of his request for £1,000, no further reply has been received. He will chasing the Council.

6 To consider and approve the furniture the replacement of the choir stalls.

6.1 The following documents are attached to the Minutes:

- Update on St Mary's Choir re-ordering from the Music Committee;
- A letter from Treske Ltd, providing an estimate for bespoke choir furniture;

- 3 x CAD drawings of the furniture with possible layout options;
 - 1 x CAD drawing of a conductor's podium
- 6.2 RtH introduced the schedules explaining only the Choir Readers and the podium would be bought. Choir benches or Music Stand would not be bought. A Faculty will be needed for this purchase.
- 6.3 The cost will be £23,232.00 inc. VAT.
- 6.4 RtH then answered questions whether the DAC was involved, explaining the reasons for the furniture replacement; colour of the wood; and whether the design is used elsewhere?.
- 6.5 Funding for the Readers will come from the PCC, Hymnathon, Friends of St Mary's and a Donation. Sponsorship by the choir had not been considered at present but may be considered for the Choir benches.
- 6.6 It was suggested the DAC were asked about the prospects of selling the present 1970s choir stalls.
- 6.7 The following proposal was made by RtH and seconded by JF:
The PCC proposes to buy 8 Choir Readers in solid oak and special "furned" finish from Treske Limited at a cost of £23,232.00 inc. VAT. These Readers will replace the present stalls which were installed in the 1970s.

In favour	10
Against	None
Abstentions	None

The proposal was approved to apply for a Faculty from the Diocese.

7 **Rector's update**

CC advised:

- Appreciated just one meeting per week rather than every night;
- The Patronal Festival is on Sunday 17 August followed by a Bring & Share lunch;
- A Pet Service will be on Sunday 1 September;
- The Harvest Festival will be Sunday 22 September;
- The Book Fair will be taking place on 5/6 October;
- The Christmas Fair date has not yet been arranged;
- Paulet has been priested and was at Royston Parish Church last weekend;
- The Diocese had interviewed and filmed Chris and Paulet in St Mary's Church about the Mission Action Plan. The film will be used to promote the MAP in the Diocese following its success in the parish. It is possible the Diocese may use St Mary's for other filming;
- The last Holiday Drop-In will be on 16 August.

8 **Finance**

8.1 **Review of the June and July 2024 Accounts**

Copies of the reports are attached to the Minutes.

- 8.1.1 ME reported that at the end of July, the parish was showing an actual deficit of £1,699 against a budget deficit of £4,417. This is mainly due to receipts from the Ashwell at Home. Overall there was a deficit of £1,866 against a budgeted surplus of £2,286. The rent payable on 8 Swan Street is now paid monthly per calendar month.

8.1.2 The Christmas Fair will be the last fund raising event of the year for the church. JM advised that a reply from Kate Heiss was outstanding.

9 **Report on Fabric**

9.1 A copy of JC's schedule is attached to the Minutes.

9.2 JC explained that the following repairs to the church building for maintenance and safety were required:

- Structural Engineer – survey, estimate of £1,240.00 plus VAT. Inspect and report on the Tower buttress and boiler room roof.
- Tower roof and associated works – estimate £4,500.00 plus VAT
- Nave Roof – estimate £3,600.00 plus VAT
- North Aisle – estimate £1,600.00 plus VAT
- South Aisle – estimate £1,600.00 plus VAT

The total cost was estimated at £11,300.00 plus VAT, therefore £12,540.00. However, it is possible because of the fluctuating cost of materials these costs may vary.

The schedule detailed various works in each section.

9.3 JC confirmed the estimates were competitive from Steve Austwick (H Austwick Roofing Specialists, Cambridge) as he has been used for other lead work on the roof, and is one of the only local specialists. Lodges & Sons Builders Ltd had done some tile replacement when they were clearing the gutters.

9.4 VAT will be recoverable

9.5 Grants may be obtained from the Diocese or the Herts & Beds Society, although, the latter may be contacted for larger projects.

9.6 JC proposed and ME seconded for the work to be initiated :

- For 10; Against None; Abstentions None.
- The proposal was passed.

10 **Access via the South Door**

10.1 A question was raised about the progress on this project?

10.2 JC advised that although the plan appears to be simple it is complicated involving many issues. There is a feeling progress to be very slow. JC continued many ideas have been suggested and now reduced to three for further consideration.

10.3 The PCC was made aware that English Heritage, the DAC, the congregation and Preservation Societies have to be consulted. There is no "quick fix" in getting an agreement on the way forward.

11 **Correspondence**

None

12 **Any Other Business**

12.1 **Compassionate Neighbour Scheme**

RtH advised there will be a meeting on 10 September between the Ashwell and Bassingbourn Patients Group, the Garden House Hospice, the Ashwell Parish Council and the PCC to discuss a way forward.

12.2 **Hymnathon**

RtH advised this is arranged for 19 October. Plans are well advanced and a pamphlet is being prepared.

12.3 **Choir – Sheelagh Bennett**

RtH advised that Sheelagh had resigned as the Choir Librarian and a presentation to her will be made after Pat Holmes' service.

12.4 **Ashwell Show**

JA advised that the stand will cost £40.00. JA asked for any volunteers to let her know if they could help

13 **2/3 key messages from the PCC meeting**

- **Access – three options and the congregation will be advised / consulted**
- **Choir stalls**
- **Compassionate Neighbour Scheme**

14 The meeting closed at 20.55 with the grace.

15 **Dates of future meetings:**

2024	September	17	October	17
	November	19	December	No Meeting