

Minutes of the 2025 Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday, 18 May 2025 at 11.30am in St Peter's Church, Brackley

Introduction

1. Welcome

The Rev'd Rich Duncan (Chair) welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Appointment of a Secretary (for both meetings)

RD proposed Denise Johnson as secretary, all agreed.

3. Apologies for absence

Karen and Steve Gees, Joan Lewis, Jean Teague, Joan Peckover, Tony and Jacinta Holden, Lynne and Terry, Ann and John Mellor, Martin Ayres, Naomi Brown, Jacky Adams.

Vestry Meeting

1. Approval of minutes of previous Vestry Meeting held on 21 April 2024

RD asked those present if there were any comments, none received, the minutes were therefore accepted as a true record, proposed by Lucy Mullins and seconded by Caroline Dunning.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Standing for election for 1 year

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Les Edge	John Carter	Val Lynam
Bev Lazenby	Jackie Mortimer	Rosemary Leeper

No one else has come forward. BL and LE are therefore appointed by default.

RD expressed his grateful thanks to Bev and Les for doing everything with dedication and constant cheerfulness. RD prayed for the Churchwardens.

RD confirmed that Caroline Dunning and Kath Bell will continue in their capacity of Assistant Churchwardens for the next year. Assistant Wardens do not have the legal responsibilities of a CW and therefore do not have to be elected. RD extended his thanks to CD and KB and prayed.

This meeting closed at 11.40am

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Approval of minutes of previous APCM held on Sunday, 21 April 2024

RD asked those present if there were any comments, none received, the minutes were therefore accepted as a true record, proposed by Helen Price and seconded by Chris Bazeley.

2. Matters Arising

Last year it was suggested that we need more screens for the north and south aisles. RD reported that sign off had been received from the diocese for the screen for the north aisle which he hopes will be installed by the last quarter of the year. In time, an additional screen for the south aisle will be considered.

RD reported that the time of the service was changed last June from 9.30 am to 10.00 am and acknowledged that although not everyone was supportive of this change, the transition seems to have gone smoothly.

3. Presentation of Electoral Roll

Denise Johnson, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that the updated electoral roll has been displayed in the church as legally required.

DJ reported that 2025 was the 6 year period when the electoral roll had to be completely re-written. There were 160 people on the roll at the APCM last year, 4 joined in May 2024 making a total of 164. As a result of the re-write 52 left the register and 30 joined. The roll closed on 25th March 2025 with 142 names. The Electoral is now open and we can now add anyone who wishes to join.

The members of the congregation who died this year were: Elsie Freeman, Peter Swift, Malcolm Taylor, Grace Cockshott, Marian Frost, Barbara Wilkins and Maggie Wright.

RD gave thanks for lives of those who have died and prayed for those who have joined the church.

4. Elections and appointments

The PCC

The following are nominated for 3 years

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Robert Geary	Melissa Probert	Chris Bazeley
Denise Johnson	Naomi Brown	Caroline Dunning

The following are nominated for 1 year

Nominee	Proposer	Seconded
Uli Ashley	Bev Lazenby	Naomi Brown

As this does not exceed the number of elected PCC members allowed, all those standing are automatically elected without a vote.

From April 2024 to March 2025 the PCC held 9 meetings with average attendance of 12 people per meeting.

RD proposed that people could be co-opted onto the PCC during the course of the year as needed, up to the maximum number of elected members allowed. All agreed.

PCC Members standing down since last April

DJ reported that Rosemary Leeper's and Liz Goddard's terms on the PCC have come to an end: there was a round of applause in appreciation for all the work they have done. RD expressed his heartfelt thanks to them and to all who have served on PCC this past year.

Nomination for election to the Deanery Synod

DJ reported that the Deanery Synod Reps until 2026 are Tony Holden, John MacMahon and Helen Price. There are no new nominees this year. RD explained that the Deanery Synod reps represent our PCC to Deanery Synod and vice versa.

Appointment of Sides Persons (Welcome Team) for the coming year

DJ reported that there have been no leavers or joiners to the Welcome Team during the past year. Therefore, the Sides Persons (Welcome Team) for the coming year are as follows: Joan Lewis, Joan Peckover, Dave Withers, Louie Withers, Anne Mellor, Sue Robinson, Christine Watts, Mary Bazeley, Caroline Dunning, Roger Hiley, Lucy Mullins, Angela Geary, John MacMahon, John Gibbins, Martin Ayers.

RD proposed that those present should vote for the PCC to be able to co-opt people onto the Welcome Team as required during the year. All agreed.

RD prayed for the PCC members, Deanery Synod Reps and Sides Persons (Welcome Team).

5. Financial Report for 2024

RD reported that the accounts have been moved to QuickBooks software. This has been a huge task and RD thanked John Carter who has been so generous with his time in helping to move from paper to electronic accounting. RD also thanked Oliver Jones and Alison Scobie for their help with the accounts and cashiering respectively, as well as John Carter for his ongoing help with the transition. RD announced that Oliver Jones had accepted the role of Treasurer, there was an appreciative round of applause for OJ and AS.

RD referred those present to pages 10-16 of the Annual Report for a comprehensive financial report of the year. RD reported that one of the key things to note is that we have drained one of our reserve accounts and brought it into one of our current accounts resulting in our net income looking positive. One of our priorities last year was to ensure that people were warm and dry. To enable this, £90,000 was set aside for the renewal of the old, inefficient heating system which was becoming unsafe. Most of this has now been paid. Roofing works are also taking place and the overall cost of repairs remains quite high.

RD reported that the day to day running of the church was enabled and supported by so many people and this has been acknowledged on page 9 of the Annual Report.

6. Presentation of the Annual Report & Accounts, Appointment of the Examiner

RD reported that the accounts have been signed off by Blencowes and proposed that we once again use Blencowes as our independent examiner for this calendar year. Proposed and seconded. All voted in favour.

7. Fabrics, Goods and Ornaments for 2024

RD took the relevant section of the Annual Report [page 6] as read. RD extended his thanks to John MacMahon and the Buildings (BDM) committee who have worked so hard. A round of applause took place in appreciation of the team's work. RD said that a few more members are needed for the Buildings committee and anyone interested should speak to either RD or JM. RD also extended his thanks to Rachel Harris-Kervin for her hours of work on Health and Safety.

8. Safeguarding

RD presented on Tony Holden's behalf. RD explained that the protection of our children and vulnerable adults is taken very seriously; RD added that the church should be the safest place anyone goes as people go to church to be healed, but sadly this isn't always the case. RD said that TH does a tremendous job of the paperwork and keeping on top of training etc and that Caroline Jones has stepped into the role of Deputy Safeguarding Officer. RD reported that as a church we are trying to make it as straightforward as possible to report any concerns and requested that people do not stay silent. RD, TH, CJ and Helen Price now meet regularly in order to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks.

9. Children and Families Worker Report

RD wished Helen and Dan well for their wedding and asked everyone to welcome Dan as he moves to Brackley.

HP reported that the main vision for children's groups is to help them know and love Jesus, by providing age-appropriate Bible teaching in a safe and fun environment. The increase in the number of children attending church in the last year has resulted in 3 groups being created: Tots, Scramblers and Climbers. HP said this was only possible because of the amazing team of volunteers and thanked everyone who helped. The Explorers after school club (aimed at 9-13 year olds) started in September 2024 and meets on alternate Tuesdays, its aim being to give older children an opportunity to delve into faith a bit deeper and create a strong network of Christian friends. First Steps continues to be a place of support and community for young families and HP thanked Karen and Steve Gees and Val Lynam for their support. A new initiative set up this year was Inspire Evenings for Parents. So far there have been two evenings, the aim being to partner with parents in encouraging faith at home. HP reported that our relationships with local schools have continued to grow and she attends assemblies regularly in 4 local schools and the schools also bring children into church.

10. Vicar's Report

RD recommended that everyone reads page 5 of the Annual Report for an overview of 2024. One encouraging highlight of the year was the expansion of the children's groups; another was the building works. The new heating system is now functional and the roofing work has been started. RD reported that, during 2026, Rob Wood will be moving on as his curacy comes to an end, anywhere between Easter and Christmas. RD announced that he would be on sabbatical probably during January, February and March 2026 and asked that everyone supports RW during this period.

RD then presented a 'daring proposal':

RD shared the results of the Bible Society's 'Quiet Revival' research. Their recent YouGov survey of 13,000 UK adults yielded some surprisingly encouraging trends. For instance: since 2018, monthly church attendance has increased

from 8% to 12% of the adult population in Britain (a 50% increase in the past 6 years, and 2.1 million more adults saying they attend a church every month). The biggest jump (of 400%) was recorded in the 16-24 age group. These were average figures across all denominations, not just C of E. Furthermore, Bible reading has also doubled and 45% of 18-24 years believe there is definitely a God.

RD made the point that this is contrary to the common narrative of 'inevitable secularisation' espoused in the media in recent years. There is more and more evidence of church attendance rising and it seems to be a movement of the Spirit. Although it may be premature to describe it as a revival at this stage, people seem to be seeking God in greater numbers.

RD said we continue to see our numbers gradually rise and, as RW's curacy finishes next year, RD wants to explore the possibility of fundraising for another staff member on a full-time basis. The pipeline of future curates is not what it used to be. RD felt that this meeting was the right context to share this idea. RD acknowledged that it will take work to cost the plan and time to discuss it with the diocese. We would need to ask God for guidance and it would also take time to recruit the right person. But if growth continues it will be very difficult to maintain the current level of ministry provided for and enabled by the staff team. RD asked for the prayers of the congregation and confirmed that this plan would be further discussed at PCC meetings.

11. AOB

No other business received.

12. Q&A

Q: Louise Jordan referred to the statistics and the age of the people returning to church and wondered what we might offer that group.

A: RD responded that he has met the Head of Magdalen College and proposed 8 things we could offer, the Head was open to all of them. However, despite being very receptive, the Head hasn't yet acted on it. RD asked everyone to pray for this. HP agreed we would love to do more for the 14-18 age group and, although they will sit in the church service and not require a Sunday morning group, eventually setting up a youth group is on our agenda.

RL has noticed that church and sport clash on a Sunday and older children can't attend, is it possible to have an evening church service for younger people?

RD responded that we are open to this and we will continue to consider it, especially as we grow in number, but we would have to look at staffing.

Lucy Mullins asked a question about asking people to give on a Sunday

RD thanked LM for the question and suggested this may be taken to the PCC for discussion. There is the principle and the practicality, churches with a big staff team don't always do a collection. Christine Watts said that some people prefer to use the plate. Dave Bell said often people want to give and expect to. Caroline Dunning said that a QR code may be another opportunity.

Robin Morello referring to RD's plan asked if we are seeking an ordained minister to fill this gap and how much money we would be looking for?

RD responded that ideally, we would recruit an ordained associate minister. RD said he and RW were extremely grateful to Reverends Sylvia, Dave and James for their help and he would have to lean on them even more when RW leaves. RD has done some research with regard to salary but it hasn't been particularly helpful and he feels that circa £40,000 pa might be required for a full time post. This would be 100 people paying £33.00 per month, this could be new people starting to give, or existing congregation increasing their giving.

CB asked about RW applying. RD said that he could but as he is studying it would reduce the amount of time he could spend in the post and ideally, we need someone full time.

13. Closing Prayer

RD read from Galatians and we prayed together.

Les Edge thanked the leadership team for all they do; this vote of thanks was supported by all those present.

The meeting closed in prayer and The Grace at 12.34pm.