

Minutes of a Meeting of the Combined PCCs of St Matthew's Harwell with All Saints' Chilton held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 7.30 pm

Present

(J) Denotes Joint PCC member. There were thus 9 voting members at this meeting - all resolutions refer to Joint PCC votes

Adrian Bollon	Stephen Manning*	Tim Roberts (J)
Hazel Benton (J)	Liz Morris	Pam Rolls (J)
Elizabeth Clarke (J)	Patrick Moseley	Judith Russell (J)
Peter Cox (Secretary)	John Pigott	Jane Woolley (J)
Tony Hughes (J)	Jan Radford (J)	The Rector (Chair, J)**
Phill Johnston	Alex Reich	
Rebecca Lewis	Liz Roberts	

* Until middle of item C 6.2. ** Until end of item C 6.1

By Invitation:

Sue Greatbanks Safeguarding Officer – until end of item C3.
Judy Gold Safeguarding Officer – until end of item C3.

The items were taken in the following order: A1-A6, C3, B1-5, C1-C2, C4-C6.

A Preliminaries

A 1 Opening & Prayer

The Rector led the meeting in prayer.

A 2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Helen Brook, Naomi Gibson (J) Stuart Gibson (J) Adrian Rance-McGregor and Sasha Reeves. Debra Dewhurst and Deborah Evans were absent.

A 3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

A 3.1 June 2024 Combined PCC Minutes

Paper G refers: June 2024 Combined PCC Meeting Minutes for approval.

There were the following corrections from the draft and for approval versions:

Item B1 Children Youth and Families “Harwell and Chilton Schools” heading
paragraph 2 “**Greg Jenkin**” changed to “**Emily Greg-Jenkin**”
Paragraph 3 “**Mr Jenkin**” changed to “**Emily Greg-Jenkin**”

Item B 3.1 Pastoral Care Update: Valley Park heading

At the moment, links with Valley Park are via Sasha Reeves and the Rector giving Communion at Alma Barn. **There is Jan Radford, the Rector and** some of the Great Western Park team.

Changed to

At the moment, links with Valley Park are via Sasha Reeves, **Pam Rolls** and the Rector giving Communion at Alma Barn **along with** some of the Great Western Park team.

Item C 4.3 Employment Committee renumbered to item **C 4.2**

Item added C 4.3 Staffing Review

See items B1 and C 4.1.

Item C 6.1 Meeting Software “Next Steps” heading

“Hazel Benton proposed that **suggested that..**” changed to “Hazel Benton proposed that..”

Straw poll carried.

Passed by the JPCC by implication.

Resolution	That the June 2024 minutes in Paper G are approved.				
Proposed	Peter Cox	Seconded	-	Passed by the JPCC	No objections or abstentions.

As this meeting was held online, the minutes will be signed by the Secretary and Chair in due course.

What is meant by “Working Agreement” as in the June 2024 Minutes, Item C 4.1 Staffing and Leadership Update and plans?

Pam Rolls and Jan Radford said that all ministers and clergy have one. They are drawn up with the incumbent minister. They include: how many hours per week are worked, days off, and the sphere of ministry.

The Rector said that all ministers and clergy have one. When his changes, it triggers a review of all others in the Benefice. His includes overall priorities. The priorities should match those of the other clergy, and match and be agreed by the PCCs.

A4 Actions / Matters arising

Paper H refers. There were the following updates:

Online Broadcast Software for meetings and **Safeguarding Policy Review** were discussed later in this meeting.

Data Protection Policy and Data Storage

There was no update on Data Protection Policy specifically, but the Rector gave the following update on data stored by the Benefice:

The Rector said that as part of the next website development cycle which will be during the next Parish electoral role refresh, a data purge will be undertaken. It seems to him and Deborah Evans that a lot is out of date, and they will take this opportunity to clear out data that is not required.

They are still tracking down access to some data, to which access has been lost during the change in Rector.

A 5 Annual Schedule Items

The annual schedule items on the agenda are: A6 meeting dates B4 Missional focus, C1.3 Data Protection Policy Review (omitted from June meeting), C 2.2 Benefice Share, and C 2.3 Staff Pay Review.

A6 Other Joint Issues

A 6.1 Governance Review

The Rector said that this is a work in progress. Geoff Maughan is advisory to the Rector as a workplace consultant and he will observe one or two meetings. It is becoming clear what changes are needed to improve decision making. They are getting to the end of the process.

The initial work will be concluded before Christmas, and the proposals will be presented at the first PCC meetings of the New Year. There is a certain amount of work to do that affects PCCs, the Joint PCC and the Combined PCC. It is a consultative process, but needs a launch with the leaders after Christmas.

Will Geoff Maughan shadow any PCC meetings?

The Rector said that he would. He will confirm which meetings and inform the groups involved.

A 6.2 Meeting Dates for 2025

These papers refer:

Paper D PCC Meeting Dates 2025

Paper E PCC Meeting Schedule with Deadlines 2025 Draft

Will the Governance Review look at the meeting schedule, so will this schedule be provisional?

The Rector said that the review will look at the schedule, but any recommendations will need agreement and there will be no changes without agreement.

The Rector asked if the meeting agreed with the proposed schedule. **No Objections.**

B Mission Strands

B 1 Children, Youth and Families

B 1.1 Update and Plans, B 1.2 CFW Recruitment, and B 1.3 Greater Didcot Youthwork Trust and Youth / Secondary Schools Work (ECHO)

The Rector reported:

Echo is in an ongoing process. It is a potential route for recruitment of a new Children and Families Worker. He is having conversations with the Echo trustees about this, and will report if this route is viable at the next meeting. It is a moving and complex situation.

It would be helpful if there is anyone else willing to take up the Echo Trustee role. The trust is looking to appoint two further trustees to improve the scope and breadth of the work of the trust.

Would the Rector report on this at the March Individual PCC meeting or the June Combined PCC meeting?

The Rector said that he will report any progress at the next available meeting, as a decision needs to be made. The funding is potentially complex, and will need approval by the PCC Standing Committee and Treasurers first.

B 2 Evangelism and Discipleship of Adults

B 2.1a Home Groups

The Rector said that we should record our thanks to Jean Barton who has very faithfully overseen the home groups, but has now stepped down. She has done very good work and healthy numbers attend the groups.

He is now looking for a new coordinator. In the meantime, Deborah Evans is the main support. He invited PCC members to prayerfully consider someone to provide oversight of the groups.

PROPOSED: Vote of thanks to Jean Barton for her work as Home Groups Coordinator.

Proposed by: Hazel Benton Seconded Elizabeth Clarke

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

B 2.1b Central Courses e.g. Lent and Advent

The Rector said that it was decided not to have a central Advent course this year. They are starting to look at the Living in Love and Faith material in preparation. They will let the home groups make their own decisions about what to do. There may be a gathered group at Lent next year.

B 2.1c Alpha and Christianity Explored

The Rector reported that a small group is continuing to meet following an Alpha course. Hopefully a new home group can be formed including some of these people.

If there is the will and opportunity an Alpha course will be held in Chilton next. Roger Mawle is going to coordinate it, and he and the Rector will meet to discuss.

The last Alpha course went very well, and it would be good to run more.

B 2.2 Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

Paper C Pastoral Care Report: Includes numbers of Baptisms Weddings and Funerals since the June CCCC meeting.

The Rector added:

Baptisms

Baptisms are a success and it seems that we are getting more. If numbers continue to grow, which is a good thing, we will need to consider how to manage the larger numbers. We are starting to have baptisms in services which is not ideal. He would rather address this in anticipation, so he will consult the Preachers and Leaders team. This is not an imminent problem, but if we have more than we do currently (one or two a month) it could be.

Weddings

The Rector highlighted weddings as there have not been any for a while, and he is concerned at the low numbers. Both churches are very suitable. We much fewer weddings than the Church of England average and there should be more. He is not necessarily suggesting promotion until we have considered how we will pick up ministry to Valley Park.

He would like to promote weddings in future and he will recruit one or two people as a communications team to promote weddings to the community. He is encouraged by Alex Reich's promotion of the interactive service, which has encouraged an uptake in awareness and attendance.

B 2.3 Responding to Financial Need

B 2.3.1 CAP Money Courses

Liz Roberts reported:

There will be a CAP money course on 16th November at the Didcot Baptist Church hub as it will be home territory for food bank clients. They would like to do more courses as there is a national CAP money campaign, but the courses need a minimum of 4 available to lead, and be able to cross match with the Baptist church, and 16th November is the earliest date that works.

Banner Launch

The Benefice CAP representatives have obtained a roll-up banner to raise awareness of CAP amongst the congregations. There will be a launch on 27th October at St Matthew's and All Saints' church services. They will use the Banner as a prop to explain what is going on with CAP and the course which will be three weeks after this.

She asked if there is anyone involved in Pebbles or the Interactive service who could contact her to arrange a visit to these services. Either Naomi Gibson or Liz Roberts will visit and explain what CAP does.

Hazel Benton thanked Liz and Naomi for all their work. **Agreed by All Present.**

B 2.3.2 CAP Centre

Paper A refers: CAP Debt Centre Report: 90 clients are debt-free. Also: Clients Annual BBQ, United Conference for supporters, Liberty Joseph is the new centre manager and is looking to visit partner churches. Changes to staff working hours. The August Chilton Charity market raised £840 for the Debt Centre.

No comments.

B 2.3.3 Didcot Emergency Foodbank

No report or comments.

B 2.4 Social and Community

No report or comments.

B 3 Pastoral Care

B 3.1 Update Including appointing a Pastoral Lead for Harwell

Paper C refers: Pastoral Care Report: The paper conveyed thanks to all who carry out Pastoral Care. There is a new leader in Harwell who is forming a new team. Training and DBS checks, Communion at Alma Barn, Home Communion, Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals, Generation Gold, and the monthly cafes in each church.

Pam Rolls reported:

It is very good that Marilyn Thomas has taken over leadership of the Harwell team. She has assembled a good group of people. The Harwell team is having a training morning and the Chilton team are also invited, with Rod Thomas leading. Individuals in the two teams are doing on-line safeguarding and domestic abuse awareness training as required. Most have completed the courses already.

Generation Gold is thriving. A few attendees have moved into care homes or sadly died, but new members and new helpers are attending.

B 4 World Mission

B 4.1 Update and B 4.2 Capital Project Update

Peter Cox reported on behalf of Helen Brook, World Mission Group Leader. She will attend the next Individual PCC meeting to present the proposed World Mission giving budget and an update.

B 5 Worship Services

The Rector reported that planning for Christmas is under way.

As announced on Sunday, he has asked the Ministry Team to organise their rota to ensure that after the current rota finishes at the end of the year, it will be the exception, not the norm, that the preacher preaches at Harwell and Chilton on the same day. He is uncomfortable with preachers either rushing in and leading or rushing off afterwards, and hopefully we can make this something that only happens occasionally. We are blessed with a large team so it should be possible.

C 1 Communications and Operations

C 1.1 Update and Plans, C 1.2 General Data Protection Regulations and C 1.3 Data Protection Policy

The Rector said that Data Protection had been mentioned earlier (item A4).

C 1.4 Friendly Buildings / Hard of Hearing Group

Liz Roberts reported:

1. Conclusion of Hard of Hearing Group Work

The Group reduced their remit and became the Hard of Hearing group due to people leaving who had particular expertise (as reported at the October 2023 meeting).

The group has now concluded their work, and passed its conclusions to the leaders' team to take forward. They have also passed over the "deaf manifesto" written by the British Deaf Association and input from someone who feels excluded. They would welcome the chance to meet with the preaching teams in both Chilton and Harwell to explain the situation.

2. Distribution of Hardcopy of Transcripts of Sermons.

This is an action from the July 2023 meeting.

Transcripts are now being distributed regularly, one printed copy and two by email. There has also been other ad-hoc requests by people who missed a church service, or who are grappling with something in a particular sermon. Everyone who received a copy asked, unprompted, for their thanks to be passed on to the preachers and leaders for providing the transcripts.

Liz Roberts understands that there are several more people who would like to receive transcripts but are reluctant to receive them through Liz Roberts as a lay person. She assured everyone that the distribution is done very confidentially by her, or Jane Woolley as a backup.

The copies could also be distributed through the Church office, but the Church Administrator Deborah Evans is already very busy.

Please ask Liz or Jane if you know of someone who would like copies. Or ask the visiting teams and Pam Rolls so no one else would know who is receiving them.

Discussion ensued including:

- A PCC member asked if recordings of the sermons could be put on the website as they had been a few years ago.
- Was there any feedback on this at the time?
- Can we afford the required web pages?
- Tony Hughes said that we could still do this, but it is complicated to do, and we would need a new recording device.
- Liz Roberts said that the text version could be uploaded and audio recordings at a future date.

3. Hearing Loops in the Churches

The loop in St. Matthew's Church has been tested and is functional. Liz offered to help test the loop in St. Matthews' church further with Tony Hughes or Jim Sinclair if any evidence emerges that it is not doing what the congregation needs.

Jan Radford said that we could ask Jonathan Hunter from the Diocese to visit and advise.

Tony Hughes thanked Liz for her work. First-hand experience from users is very much appreciated, the best way to test the loop is to have one or two people who use hearing aids to walk round the building and report where the loop is working or not.

Jan Radford said that she could get in touch with Jonathan Hunter to check the situation at All Saints'. Tony Hughes said that he could help with any test at All Saints' if that would be useful. Jim Sinclair may also be able to help.

The Rector thanked all involved for their work.

C 2 Stewardship and Finances

C 2.1 Update and Plans and C 2.2 Benefice Share

Tim Roberts, Harwell Treasurer, reported:

He has met Stuart Gibson, Chilton Treasurer and Nick Clarke, Harwell Book keeper, to review the relative allocation of the parish share and compare the financial states of the parishes.

Based on the current state of the finances, there is no reason to change from the current division which is: two thirds of the Parish Share paid by Harwell and one third paid by Chilton.

They have found that there are a lot of commonalities in the financial position of both churches. Harwell has more regular giving “backbone” and a similar level of restricted reserves, though Harwell has slightly more than Chilton.

There is a more fundamental issue for both churches: We are not consistently getting enough income to pay for our outgoings. We are consistently running a deficit or on the verge of one. The only way to pay our bills is by using our reserves which is not sustainable in the long term.

Jane Woolley and the other churchwardens have met to review this. She has put together a paper reviewed by the Treasurers and Churchwardens suggesting a way forward to live as a financially stable Benefice. They do view this as a whole Benefice issue, as both churches have a declining number of people accounting for an increasing proportion of regular giving. Both churches need to find a way to increase giving to cover costs and fund the churches into the future.

The paper will be given to the Standing Committees to review, then it will be put to the PCCs, possibly at a Joint section to agree a plan to increase the regular giving stream.

Jane Woolley said that she has just received some required data from Chilton and will now send it to the PCC Secretaries to circulate to the Standing Committees then put it forward at the October PCC meetings

A Harwell PCC member said that, Harwell has received several unrestricted legacies during the last 10 years or so, which have been counted as part of the reserves as designated funds. They have made good use of the money, for example to pay for the change in layout at St. Matthew’s. To what extent could we regard legacies as part of the regular or irregular giving as opposed to reserves? A lot of other churches do this.

Tim Roberts agreed and said that Harwell and Chilton legacies have played an important part in bolstering the reserves, but they are becoming depleted. Promoting legacies could be part of the campaign, but by their nature they are not predictable in the way that regular giving is, so we should promote both.

Pam Rolls thanked Tim Roberts and the others involved for their work. **Agreed by all present.**

C 2.3 Staff Pay Review.

The Rector asked what the usual timetable was. Tim Roberts said that staff pay is a joint item of expenditure, it includes the Church administrator’s salary and the salary of any other staff members. He and Stuart Gibson meet at the end of October or beginning of November to prepare a draft budget. They send this to the Rector and PCCs. It is passed at a special PCC meeting in December.

C 3 Safeguarding

C 3.1 Update and Plans

Paper B refers: Safeguarding Report: Background, Progress – including DBS Checks, DBS certificates and safeguarding training. Safeguarding Dashboard progress, and Pastoral Care – training for team members.

Sue Greatbanks, Safeguarding Officer, reported:

DBS certificates – the new certificates have numbers which relate to each parish. St Matthew’s certificates will go to Sue Greatbanks and All Saints’ certificates go to Judy Gold.

C 3.2 Safeguarding Policy Modification

The meeting briefly discussed the wording of point 3 of the policy (as discussed at the June 2024 meeting). The Rector said that one or two words need changing. The Safeguarding officers will discuss this and present revised wording to the PCCs.

C 4 Staffing and Leadership

C 4.1 Update and Plans

No report

C 4.2 Employment Committee

Paper F refers: Employment Committee Report: The employment committee has not met and there have not been any requests for support from the staff members. Hazel Benton, Employment Committee Chair, has met with the Rector and others as required. The committee can advise on recruitment of a new Children and Families Worker when required.

No comments or questions.

C 5 Wider Church

C 5.1 Deanery and Diocesan Synod

The Rector said that we do not have any lay Deanery Synod representatives. He asked those present to consider taking up this role.

C 5.2 Great Western Park and Valley Park

No report or comments.

C6 Any Other Business

C 6.1 Ephesian Fund

Phil Johnston presented this proposal.

He proposed that the Benefice considers giving some, or all, of the parish share to this fund. The fund was set up in response to the Church of England's recent discussions at a senior level on the meaning of marriage. The fund supports churches and ministers who follow a more traditional view. More information on the fund can be found on their website ephesianfund.org.uk. He asked that PCCs consider this proposal over the next few months.

The Rector said that the best way of considering this is to note that Phil Johnston is drawing the PCCs attention to this, then raise it with a short note at the upcoming Standing Committees meeting.

Discussion ensued including:

- This involves redirecting our existing parish share to the Ephesians fund, bypassing the Deanery setup.
- This has proved controversial at other churches and a paper would help.
- This should not be considered in isolation, but alongside other items such as the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) material. Any paper should include LLF, and it should be a much bigger piece of work. The Rector agreed.

C 6.2 Meeting Software

This meeting took place using Microsoft Teams software. People had various problems including: joining the meeting, speaking at the meeting, and seeing the other people present. People liked the Chat facility. It was suggested that a short user guide would be useful as many of those present were not familiar with this software and the basic controls are different to the Zoom and Whereby software used previously.

Hazel Benton made notes of the issues during the meeting, which she read out. She asked if she should send a report of these issues to the Secretary to circulate.

Agreed.

The meeting closed with the Grace led by Pam Rolls at 21:19.

Dates of next meetings:

Individual PCCs: 1st October 2024, All Saints' Chilton

Combined PCC: 3rd June 2025 online

These minutes were approved at the CPCC meeting on: _____ Date

CHAIR

SECRETARY