

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC
held at St Matthew's Harwell on Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Revd Jeremy Parsons (Chairman)
Tony Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Stephen Manning (Warden)
Adrian Bollon
Adrian Rance-McGregor
Rebecca Lewis
Nick Clarke (Treasurer)
Elizabeth Clarke (Secretary)

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were **present together for Items 1 to 9**.
For the other items, only St Matthew's PCC members were present.

1. Opening Prayer

Jeremy read from Psalm 48.1-6, 12- 13 and led the Meeting in prayer.

2. Rector's Report (Paper A)

The Rector said that his Report (Paper A) had already been circulated and asked for any comments or questions on it. Hazel Benton thanked him for the update on his health, and commented that this had led her to question whether the extra responsibilities for GWP, Valley Park, and now a second School Governorship would not overtax him. Jeremy replied that he believed the extra involvement in these areas would not result in much of an increase in his workload, but should this happen, he would, of course, review the situation. He pointed out that links with St Blaise School could be beneficial to the Benefice. Stephen Manning commented that the Church Wardens would need to be aware of possible problems, and would assist Jeremy in prioritising his workload.

Revd Pam Rolls commented that while she, Jan Radford, and Alex Reich had offered to explore future All-Age services at Chilton, she did not wish to lead on this. She felt a joint Benefice Group would be a better option. Rebecca Lewis supported this view. Jeremy responded that given the different character of the two churches he felt it would be beneficial for each PCC to discuss and decide on whether they wanted an Intergenerational Act of Worship to continue as part of their pattern of Services, and if so how frequently. Once this had been decided, it would be up to the Leaders and Preachers team to work out if this can be delivered. It was agreed to discuss this question later at the individual meetings.

3. Governance Review (Paper B)

Stephen Manning introduced the paper and noted this was the sixth version of the Review, and reflected the input from 18 meetings he had held with many people, including Jeremy, Geoff Maughan (consultant), and PCC members. Stephen summarised the content of the paper focussing particularly on mission, outreach and succession planning. He thanked everyone for their contributions and asked the Meeting to approve the Report and its recommendations.

Adrian Rance-McGregor asked about ownership of the recommendations, and Stephen replied he would be responsible for keeping a schedule of the progress of implementing them. In answer to a question from Hazel Benton, Stephen said the joint PCC's would be given the opportunity to review progress after twelve months.

Resolution	To accept and implement the PCC Governance Review				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Alex Reich	Passed	Unanimously

4. Greater Didcot Report (Paper C)

The meeting noted that the content had largely been covered in discussions under item 2

5. IT Subcommittee (Paper D)

Stephen said the paper was self-explanatory and followed on from the discussions at the March PCC Meeting. It proposed an IT subcommittee chaired by Stuart Gibson which would review the current IT situation, identify what needs improving, propose a series of recommendations to PCC's, and drive the changes through. He asked the Meeting to approve establishing the Joint PCC Subcommittee and the proposed membership.

Resolution	To form a IT PCC sub-committee comprising those named in Paper D				
Proposed	Hazel Benton	Seconded	Nick Clarke	Passed	Unanimously

Tony Hughes mentioned that he has a large collection of papers and electronic files relating to church matters, particularly buildings, which may not exist elsewhere. Others may also have similar documents. Tony requested that the sub-committee be asked to include consideration of this problem of recording and archiving in in their remit.

6. Safeguarding Software (Paper E)

The Meeting noted that the expenditure mentioned in the paper had been approved by the Standing Committees. Rebecca Lewes raised a concern about the deletion of past records from the system, particularly those with safeguarding implications. She was assured by Jeremy that such records would be retained and that the focus was on individuals who had died or left the parish, and duplication of records. Nick Clarke said the purpose of this exercise was to reduce the files held on HUB Church and therefore our expenditure with them. He drew the Meeting's attention to the need to discuss at a future meeting how long do the Churches wish to keep people's details on their records.

7. 2026 Meeting Dates (Paper F)

The proposed dates were approved by the Meeting

8. Children, Young People and Families Sub Group update/All Age Services

This topic was covered in discussions under Paper A

9. Harwell Feast Marquee Offer (Paper G)

While the opportunity to have a Church service using the marquee was welcomed, the general feeling was that we did not have the resources to do this in 2026, but we would like to think that we would be able to in 2027 should the offer be repeated. Rebecca Lewes and Alex Reich asked the meeting to allow them a couple of weeks to see whether they could come up with a viable proposition for 2026. It was agreed to wait until the end of October before replying to the offer. (Action Elizabeth)

St Matthew's PCC Meeting

Tony Hughes took over the Chair and welcomed everyone to the Meeting

10. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jan Radford and Pam Rolls.

11. Decisions requested between Meetings

Date	Whole PCC or Standing Committee?	Subject	Result
2025-09-06	Standing Committee	Purchase of iKnowChurch's complete Church Administration package for £28.60 per month	unanimous

12. Minutes of the PCC Meeting on 1 July 2025 were agreed and signed.

13. Election of Deanery Synod Representative.

There are currently two Synod Representative vacancies and Adrian Bollon was willing to fill one vacancy.

Resolution	That Adrian Bollon should be elected as a Deanery Synod representative for St Matthew's Church Harwell				
Proposed	Adrian Rance-McGregor	Seconded	Stephen Manning	Passed	Unanimously

14. Resignation. The Meeting noted with regret Phill Johnston's resignation from Harwell PCC for personal reasons.

15. Building Committee Report (Paper N)

The Meeting noted this Report, and the planned re-rendering of the north transept in November. Tony Hughes drew the Meeting's attention to the need to find someone to take over the church sound and audio system. It was suggested that a request for help could be included in the proposed quarterly PCC Report or perhaps an appeal could be made during a morning service. Tony undertook to consider these suggestions.

16. Church Hall Report

The Meeting noted this Report and the Committee's plans to seek quotations for the removal of vegetation from boundaries and replacement of fencing as necessary. They noted that Church Hall Committee will then put forward a proposal to PCC once these have been received. Nick Clarke mentioned that anyone wishing to borrow items from the Hall needed to do this through the Village Hall website. It was suggested the congregation could be made aware of this in the Church notices, and a written notice could be placed on the outside of the Hall.

17. Finance (Papers J/K/L)

Nick Clarke reported that the financial position was better than predicted in the 2025 Budget and he was forecasting a deficit of £-5,160 compared with a Budget prediction of £-29,375. However, he would be setting a deficit Budget for 2026, as almost every budget has been since 2015. Over that period, while total Church Funds have hardly changed, the balance between Restricted and Unrestricted Funds has changed considerably. The Church now has no Unrestricted Reserves, and there are limited opportunities to use Restricted Funds.

The Charities Commission no longer requires us to hold six months' reserves but we need a Reserves Policy and Nick and Stephen will be working on developing one. The recent fundraising was successful but we still cannot balance our funds. There is no much scope to reduce our expenditure but we can look to postpone some items. Nick also wants to allocate budgets to individuals where possible. The Meeting were supportive of having another fundraising attempt in the Spring.

It was agreed to settle the final Budget for 2026 at a PCC Budget Meeting on 2nd December at 7.30pm in the Church.

18. Fees for Weddings and Funerals. (Paper M)

Nick Clarke said that these fees had not been reviewed since 2019 and his proposals were made following discussions with the Organist and Bell-ringers. He suggested a further review took place in 2/3 years. The increases were consistent with RSCM and Chilton.

Resolution	To agree the fees proposed in Paper M				
Proposed	Adrian Rance-McGregor	Seconded	Adrian Bollon	Passed	Unanimously

19. Intergenerational Services

This was discussed in the Joint part of the Meeting and we were asked to continue the discussion for our Church. The Meeting discussed whether we wanted to continue to have some Intergenerational Services at St Matthew's now that the group currently running them felt unable to continue. After some discussion, it was decided that St Matthew's PCC would like to have a form of intergenerational worship which would meet the needs of all groups in the congregation.

20. Seasonal.

The PCC noted that the Toy Service would take place on 30th November and the Ukraine Collection would close on 16th November. Preparations are in hand for Christmas and Jane Woolley is working with Stephen on this. A letter will be needed for Phil Roberts if the trees are to be ordered from Chilton Garden Centre.

21. Judith Malan has offered to paint a series of posters with a Christian message to go on the noticeboard outside the Church. PCC gratefully accepted her offer. Stephen will continue to liaise with Judith over the details.

22. Record Retention Policy. Stephen advised PCC that this policy is needed.

The Meeting closed with the Grace at 9.45pm.

Signed.....

Date.....