

Approved

Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC
held at St Matthew's Harwell on Tuesday 2nd December 2025

Present: Rev'd Jeremy Parsons (Chairman)
Tony Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Adrian Bollon
Adrian Rance-McGregor
Rebecca Lewis
Nick Clarke (Treasurer)
Elizabeth Clarke (Secretary)

1. Opening Prayer
Jeremy read from Psalm 9 and opened in prayer
2. Apologies for Absence were received from Stephen Manning, Pam Rolls and Jan Radford.
3. Draft 2026 Budget (Paper B and C)

Nick reported that the predicted deficit for 2025 had reduced from £29k to £7k. Expenditure had remained as predicted, but income had increased following the Appeal.

In constructing the 2026 Budget Nick had been conservative in estimating Donations and Planned Giving, basing it on this year's figures. As agreed at Standing Committee, all tax recovery would be credited to General Reserves. He had also utilised more Restricted funds to cover the majority of Outreach costs. It was anticipated that more work would be required on the Church Hall, but this could be met from increased Hall revenue. The figure for Church building costs included the cost of the Quinquennial inspection, but did not include the cost of any work arising from it.

Nick was hopeful that fundraising efforts in 2026 could remove the anticipated shortfall. Nick was thanked for his work on the Budget and the clarity of its presentation.

<i>Resolution</i>	To agree the proposed St Matthew's 2026 Budget as set out in Paper C				
<i>Proposed</i>	Adrian Bollon	<i>Seconded</i>	Tony Hughes	<i>Passed</i>	Unanimously

4. Reserves Policy (Paper D)

Nick said that following discussion at the November PCC meeting, he had written this proposed Reserves Policy following the guidelines laid down by the Church of England. The Church currently has four Designated Funds: Insurance Reserve, Mission Giving, Chancel Roof Repairs, and Legacies. The paper proposed that the Legacies and Insurance Reserves are undesignated, and the monies in them transferred to General Reserve. The paper also proposed a new Reserves Policy as set out below. Rebecca Lewis questioned why the Insurance Reserve had not been increased in line with a policy agreed previously by PCC. She did not have details of this decision and Elizabeth undertook to check the records. ***

Resolution	To agree the Legacies and Insurance Reserve should be undesignated and the monies in them returned to General Reserves.				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Adrian Rance-McGregor	Passed	Unanimously

Resolution	To agree a new Reserves Policy for St Matthew's Church which is: It is the policy of this church to hold in reserves the equivalent of two months general running costs and an additional one month's salary costs. It is also our policy to hold an amount equivalent to the Excess on our insurance policy and an amount for costs arising from the next quinquennial inspection.				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Adrian Rance-McGregor	Passed	Unanimously

5. Mission Giving (Paper E)

Resolution	To agree the World Mission Budget Proposal as set out in Paper E				
Proposed	Tony Hughes	Seconded	Nick Clarke	Passed	Unanimously

6. Proposed changes to the Church Hall Boundaries (Paper F)

Adrian Bollon explained that the current vegetation on the boundaries caused problems both for the nursery and pedestrians. Removing it from the boundary bordering The Park would leave the current fence in place, but it may need some repairs. Removing the vegetation from the boundary bordering Wellshead would require a new fence to be erected. In addition to providing a more secure boundary, it would also allow the nursery to access another area

of the site for an additional play area, needed as they have been advised there is insufficient garden for the number of children.

There were two aspects discussed. Firstly, the height of the fence proposed which Rebecca felt was insufficient according to government guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/site-security-guidance>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=nursery+perimeter+fence+height+required&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&hl=en-gb&client=safari>

Adrian said the nursery had not raised this as an issue, and the general feeling was that if they did they should contribute to the extra cost involved. Adrian was asked to obtain their agreement to the fence height in writing.

Secondly Tony Hughes felt that there should be a second quote for the work. Mike Harvey had been asked for one but had not yet provided it. Nick said the first quote was reasonable, and another potential builder had commented he could not match it. The current quote was exempt from VAT, but the position of this was likely to change in 2026 when the builder will need to register for VAT. It was agreed that a final attempt should be made to obtain a quote from Mike Harvey with a final deadline. If nothing is received, we should accept the initial quote from Ollie Pickles. It was left to Standing Committee to make a final decision and authorise the work.

Action Adrian Bollon and Standing Committee

7. Benefice Newsletter. (Paper G)

Elizabeth explained that this was the proposed format for the newsletter and the content was an example of what could appear in it. The Governance Review had indicated it should be a Benefice newsletter and she proposed three Benefice topic pages and three pages for individual church's items. The back page would be available to highlight forthcoming events such as the Harwell Songs of Praise. The Meeting agreed the format and Elizabeth will send the proposed January issue to PCC for agreement.

8. Deanery Synod Report

Adrian Bollon reported that the recent meeting had concentrated on Deanery finances, particularly Parish share, and on the World Church. Our Parish share is £54,000 and is among the higher contributions. Oxford Diocese have links with four areas: Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa, Nandyal in South India and Vaxjo in Sweden. Churches were asked to pray particularly for these places, and some have established direct links with them. Adrian was thanked for his presentation.

9. Minutes of the PCC Meeting on 7th October 2025 were agreed and signed.

10. Any Other Business.

- a) Jeremy advised the Meeting that due to lack of support Fledglings would cease in Chilton from the end of this term.
- b) Tony advised the defibrillator is up and running and Elaine Shrimpton's husband Geoff has volunteered to maintain it. There are now four in Harwell, the other three being at the Village Hall, the village school and the Scouts Hall.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 with the grace.

Record of decisions between meetings

March 2024

Date	Whole PCC or Standing Committee?	Subject	Result
12 th December 2023	PCC On line	St Matthew's 2024 Financial Budget Proposed Phill Johnson Seconded Jane Wooley	Passed : unanimously
21 st December 2023	PCC By email	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To take out the Trinitas insurance policy despite the risk of an additional £7,000 (metal) and up to £7,500 (other damage caused) cost to us if the South Aisle roof lead was stolen again• To set up a designated "Insurance reserve" fund and deposit £3k annually into it, to be reviewed after 5 years' worth of deposits	Passed: 10 in favour 2 no reply

Date of next PCC Meeting January Wednesday 14th at St Matthews

Signed.....

Date.....

