Minutes of a Meeting of St Matthew's, Harwell PCC APPROVED
held at All Saints Chilton on Tuesday 17th March 2026

Present: Tony Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Stephen Manning (Warden)
Adrian Bollon
Rebecca Lewis
Elizabeth Clarke (Secretary)

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton PCCs were present together for **Items 1-10.** For the other items, only All Saints' members were present.
In the light of the announcement made by Jane Haslam, Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester on Sunday 15th March that the Rector, Jeremy Parsons, has voluntarily decided to step back from ministry to care for his family at the present time.Tony Hughes (St Matthew's Vice Chair) chaired the meeting.

1. **Opening and Prayer**
   Stephen Manning opened the meeting by encouraging us that "Nothing is impossible with God" and read Deuteronomy 31 verse 8. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." To remind the PCCs that God is in control of our situation.
   Following on from questions that Steve had faced since the announcement, he has produced a list of possible questions and answers to aid the PCC, leaders and preachers to field the queries. He went through them and will send a PDF copy to the PCC.
   He reported that the leaders and preachers group would be meeting later this week to make sure all of Jeremy's service commitments would be covered. He had received support from a few willing to increase their commitment, including Kate Evans who had stepped down a few years ago from leading and preaching. He was grateful for these offers.
   Sasha will be assisted by Jane Haslam with her curacy training as well as local parish support.
   Deborah will also be supported by the Churchwardens. In addition ,Hazel Benton, as chair of the employment committee, has been in touch to check her wellbeing. The Churchwardens will ensure that she does not take on too many additional responsibilities.

2. **Annual Report sections 1-3**
   Stephen Manning reported that the Harwell Standing Committee had reviewed the Report and were content with it aside from a few minor typos. Steve highlighted the key aspects of the past year covered in the Report such as Remembrance Sunday in Harwell, Pastoral Care work, Saturday Sanctuary, Chilton Village Hall service and Generation Gold. He noted the dedication of church volunteers to make all this happen.
   Stuart Gibson raised concerns about the safeguarding section as he, as All Saints' tower captain, had not been contacted by the safeguarding officers about the mandatory online Basic Awareness courses for bell ringers, although he was aware of this requirement. He also questioned the inclusion of the DBS check charges for volunteers (£5.99). It was agreed to remove this and it was decided that the secretaries would create an edited version of the report removing these minor details.

Rebecca Lewis asked for her name to be removed from the report in respect of Fledgelings and the Christmas tree decorating as she was just one of many volunteers and did not wish to be singled out.
Sections 1 – 3 were approved in principle, for formal approval later in the meeting by the individual PCCs along with the other sections which were parish specific.
Hazel thanked Elizabeth and Naomi for their work on the report.

3. **a) New Provider for DBS Checks**
Elizabeth reminded us of the data breach in late August 2025 at the DBS checking service, APCS which the Benefice used for DBS checks. A few individuals from St Matthew's were affected by this data breach. Since learning of the data breach at APCS the Diocese has prioritised supporting those affected and finding an alternative supplier to carry out the DBS checks. As a result of a rigorous procurement process, Verifile has been identified as their recommended provider for DBS checks going forward. Therefore, in order to continue doing DBS checks, we need, as individual PCCs, to approve this new provider so training can be started. (We can choose an alternative, this is entirely a matter for the PCC). It was agreed in principle that both PCCs would choose the recommended provider.

3. b) Verifile Adoption Agreement
Further to the decision in item 3 a, the agreement will be signed by the Churchwardens in the individual PCC meetings , and then returned to the Diocese for processing.

3. c) Safeguarding Policy 2026
This policy was created by the Safeguarding Officers, Sue and Judy, using the Diocesan model policy introduced this year. It was agreed to adopt the policy.
Proposer: Pat Moseley, Seconder: Adrian Bollon
This was agreed unanimously. The Policy will be signed by all 3 Churchwardens and then posted on the website and church noticeboards.

3. d) Safeguarding Report
This was noted.

4. **Proposal for Mission and Ministry Project**
The mission and ministry project is a significant part of Curacy training. Sasha is seeking permission to create a team of laity to develop a creative project. The Project aims to allow people to engage with the church and initiate meaningful conversations. The deliverable item proposed is a letterbox-sized welcome box for church visitors or new residents. The contents of the box are important and will be grounded in faith. The box is intended to serve as starting point to an ongoing relationship with the Church. Sasha hopes to create 50 boxes, starting in March/April, with a target for Pentecost, Harwell Feast, or the children's fun run. The current associated costs are around £200. Sasha is seeking approval to begin the process as part of her training. The Project is initially aimed at our parishes and villages.
Liz Morris thought it sounded like an excellent project. Hazel Benton mentioned that Chilton had a welcome leaflet that she may want to look at.
The PCC supports the initiation of the Project and asked to be kept posted of its progress.
It was agreed to support Sasha’s Mission and Ministry Project.

Proposer: Hazel Benton, Seconder: Elizabeth Clarke. Agreed unanimously.

5. **Termination of the Microsoft Contract**
After much discussion, Stuart Gibson reported that he had followed the instructions on the Microsoft letter and has purchased 25 Microsoft 365 Business Basic licences (Microsoft 365 online). He also agreed to talk to Deborah to ascertain whether she needed the online or desktop version of Office 365. If the latter this would cost £2.60 per month. The data may need to be removed from the current One Drive but this needs to be checked once the licences expires on April 10th.

6. **Renewal of Naomi Gibson's three-year term as CAP Trustee**
Naomi's term as CAP Trustee representing the Benefice has come to an end. The PCCs unanimously agreed to reappointing her to this role. This needed to be agreed by the individual PCCs in their meeting.

7. **Wallingford Deanery Synod Summary**
A summary for 2025 and the recent March meeting was circulated for information before the meeting. Adrian Bollan represents the laity of St Matthew's at the Deanery Synod and Tony encouraged others to join, since there was one position vacant for St Matthew's and no All Saints' lay representatives. Adrian pointed out that the Synod is an excellent forum for sharing ideas and the good initiatives undertaken by the churches in our Deanery. This year is of particular importance as membership of the General Synod for the next quinquennium is being renewed, and lay representatives of the Deaneries are those who vote for the candidates standing for election.

8. **CFW Workshop**
Stephen reported that the workshop last Saturday was a great success with 19 people from both parishes attending. The focus was the Benefice requirements for the appointment and there was consistency across the two groups which was encouraging. Jane Woolley and Hazel Benton facilitated the groups and are writing up the findings. These will be reported back at the next meeting.
Tony Hughes asked how much was in the CFW fund. Nick Clarke said there is £60K in a restricted fund from Harwell and £30K from Chilton.
Stephen is uncertain if we can proceed with recruitment at present, but will investigate.

9. **Review of Christmas services**
The leaders and preachers meet monthly to review services. The lessons learned from last Christmas were to plan early. It was suggested to run an Advent bring and share lunch and also plan for an Alpha course to invite non-regular church goers to in the New Year.
It was mentioned that carols in the pub in Chilton was very well attended.
The attendance figures suggested that having the family carol services before the schools break up for Christmas is preferable. Chilton possibly on the Saturday and Harwell on the Sunday of the last weekend of term.

10 **AOB**
Naomi enquired about the progress of the plans for Songs of Praise on Sunday 24th May. Becca and Alex are meeting on Wednesday and will report back after this. It is unlikely there is going to be an orchestra as two key families are away that weekend.

St Matthew's PCC Meeting

Tony Hughes welcomed everyone to the Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Revd Jan Radford, Revd Pam Rolls, Nick Clarke and Adrian Rance- McGregor.

2. **Minutes of PCC Meeting on 14th January 2026** (Paper K)

   The approval of the minutes of this meeting was proposed by Adrian Bollon, and seconded by Stephen Manning. The Meeting approved them unanimously, and they were then signed by the Vice Chairman.

3. **Verifile Adoption Agreement** (Paper B (b))

   The paper on this had already been discussed at the Joint section of the Meeting under item 3. The proposed Agreement with Verifile replaces the previous agreement with APCS, to provide St Matthews with a service for DBS checking of employees and volunteers.

Resolution	To adopt Verifile as our new DBS Provider				
Proposed	Adrian Bollon	***Seconded***	Stephen Manning	***Passed***	Unanimously

The Agreement was signed by Tony Hughes.

Note: The Agreement together with Part 4 (details of the Safeguarding Officer for the Parish) and details of the Treasurer (for invoices) was sent on 18th March to the Diocesan Safeguarding team as requested. The Contract runs for 3 years from 17th March 2026. Details of it are held by the Safeguarding Officer and in the PCC papers.

4. **St Matthews Annual Report 2025 (section 4 onwards)**

   Sections 1-3 had already been agreed in the Joint Meeting earlier. The Meeting noted the absence of a Rector's Report, and that the Annual Meeting was on 19th April 2026.

Resolution	To accept the 2025 Annual Report (Paper A)				
Proposed	Stephen Manning	***Seconded***	Adrian Bollon	***Passed***	Unanimously

5. **St Matthews Annual Accounts 2025.**

   The Treasurer was absent from the Meeting, but the PCC was happy to accept the recommendation from the Standing Committee to agree the Accounts, noting they were still to be formally signed off by the Auditor.

Resolution	To accept the 2025 Annual Accounts (Paper L)				
Proposed	Rebecca Lewis	**_Seconded_**	Stephen Manning	**_Passed_**	Unanimously

Two copies of the Accounts were signed by Tony Hughes, and will subsequently be signed by the Treasurer (Nick Clarke) on his return and then sent to the Auditor for his signature.

6. **Fabric Report 2025** (Paper M)

The Fabric Report was noted and will be publicised with the Annual Report and Accounts

7. **Legacy Policy** (Paper N)

The Legacy policy was discussed and it was agreed that the Church Warden should be the point of contact.

Resolution	To adopt the Legacy Policy (Paper N)				
Proposed	Stephen Manning	**_Seconded_**	Rebecca Lewis	**_Passed_**	Unanimously

Action: To remove phone contact (Nick) and set up Warden signature (Elizabeth). To add to Church Noticeboard and website (Nick)

8. **Church Projector** (Paper O)

Tony explained that the projector was 12 years old, and while recently some maintenance work had been carried out, after a performance assessment had been made, he had concluded that while the image on the screen is acceptable, the projector was going to continue to degrade further. Tony had obtained two quotations: Stage Logic ltd £2,285 + VAT and Total Audio Visual Solutions £3,200 +VAT, and asked PCC to agree to start a fundraising appeal as soon as possible, aiming to raise £3,000, with the aim of replacing the projector in 2026.

Resolution	To start a Fundraising Appeal to purchase a new Projector				
Proposed	Adrian Bollon	**_Seconded_**	Stephen Manning	**_Passed_**	Unanimously

Action: Tony to launch the Appeal with the Church congregation. Appeal to be publicised on the Church noticeboard and on the website.

9. **Guitar Concert at St Matthews** (Paper P)
The Church Office had received a letter from Fernando Aguera about the possibility of hosting a classical quartet concert at the Church. PCC agreed that Deborah should be asked to go back to say we would welcome the idea in principle, and obtain further information about the proposal. She should then pass the information to the Church Concert managers to follow up and organise.
Action: Elizabeth to advise Deborah (done)

There was no other business so the Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed   Date