

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY'S ALLITHWAITE

Minutes of PCC Meeting Monday 26th January 2026 at 7.30pm, Mary Lambert Hall

Present: Rev Mark Houghton, Chair (MH), Jim Bloomer (JB), Elaine Baldry (EB), Alan Hill (AH), Kevin Dowle (KD), Fiona Dowle (FD), Steve Bell (SB), Les Spring (LS), Helen Whitely (HW) Julie Lanham JuL, John Lanham (JoL), Michael Jackson(MJ)John Tindale(JoT), Janice Tindale(JT), Andrea Mason(AM).

Opening Prayer: Led by MH.

1. Apologies: Approval of Minutes of PCC Meeting 17th November 2025

- Approved.

2. Matters Arising (not elsewhere on agenda)

- SIAMS Inspection update. MH/JoT provided feedback positive evaluation from inspector acknowledging active relationship with church. Noted the number of regular weekly touch points with church.
- Storage System Update. AM confirmed that the storage system was working very effectively and she was very grateful to Arthur and Alan for all their work. Following feedback from JuL of was agreed not to purchase a table for the trolleys but to add a way to hold tables against the wall. AH thanked meeting for feedback and said he with Arthur would maintain ongoing review of units - for example would larger wheels be required to reduce rolling resistance. PCC expressed thanks to Arthur and Alan for all their work on these units.

3. Safeguarding – JB

- No incidents to report since last meeting.
- JB updated PCC on recent discussions with Diocesan Safeguarding team about necessity of DBS check for three additional helpers at Friday Toddlers given that children are always accompanied by a family member -parent, grand-parent etc.
- JB informed PCC that reluctantly he has decided to step back from his role as PSO and Secretary at next APCM. PCC thanked JB for his many years of service as Treasurer, Secretary and acknowledged the time and input he has given to St. Mary's. JB then excused himself from remainder of the meeting.
- It was then agreed that PCC policy will be to undertake DBS checks on all volunteers involved in Toddlers and that age appropriate DBS checks would be undertaken for all volunteers helping at St Mary's.

4. Finance – KD

- KD presented December summary: whilst overall financial position for the year was positive he did highlight that cash flow in December was a challenge.

5. Reports

5.1 Community and Youth Leader – AM

- AM had provided extensive summary of current activities. PCC expressed unanimous thanks and congratulations for AMs work, enthusiasm and commitment. The meeting noted the positive feedback from parents and participants across the range of activities.

MJ will work with CTYL Mgt. team and AM on Strategic priorities for next 24–36 months. Update from MJ at Jan 2026 PCC. (MJ)

5.2 Incumbent – MH

- MH fed back reflections on Advent/Christmas services, overall, very positive and services well attended. Acknowledged Crib Service needs some rethinking.
- MH invited discussion on future opportunities and activities that could link to the community outreach events – Easter, Family Day, Curry/Quiz and highlighted the need for members of St Mary's to “champion” and lead

these activities. MH reported that the Sermon on the Mount series he had facilitated had been well received, but a further course, Christianity Explored had not attracted any participants.

- 4.00 Second Sunday Service - Following from PPP discussions previously, feedback from HW and other PCC members it was agreed that following Easter second Sunday service would be @ 10.00. MH to work through details and confirm month/date for swap as currently both St Mary's and St John's afternoon services dovetail with each other enabling MH to attend. MH to discuss with Sermon/Readers group and agree feasible service swap-over date. **(MH + SB/JoT/JT + others preaching.)**
- Revision of 4.00 service prompted discussion about the value of using a framework – God for All, Up/In/Out to guide discussion and decision making about services and church activities. MH/FD/MJ agreed to invite other members of congregation to join discussion, building on PPP ideas and suggestions for an alternative for 4.00. **(MH/FD/MJ)**

5.3 Warden – JoL

- Main activity has been addressing requirements identified by insurers risk inspection in October. Agreed to engage Able Memorials to undertake work on a number of headstones and to engage RSK Asbestos to undertake an Asbestos inspection. Full summary of risk be audit actions in Wardens report.**(JoL)**

5.4 Spire Update – MJ

- MJ confirmed that suggestion of removing spire would not be approved by DAC and additionally feedback was savings would be marginal.
- Meeting agreed to proposal to appointment Dearbhail Keating as Principal Design Consultant. **(MJ)**
- MJ informed meeting that whilst details are to be confirmed VAT recovery scheme is being continued albeit with some changes which would reduce overall cost. Details to be confirmed. **(MJ)**
- Meeting authorised MJ to proceed with contractual arrangements, subject to written confirmation of a maximum loan of ~ the £60,000 balance of project cost from Diocesan Treasurer and that Diocese will guarantee they will underwrite any shortfall in finance **(JoT)**. (Loan of £60,000 will enable work to commence this spring, bids would submitted in tandem and used to repay loan.) **(MJ/JoT)**
- MJ outlined proposal to fit locks to outer door of Choir Vestry and Vicar's Vestry to provide contractors with access to facilities whilst they are working on the spire. JoL to liaise with A. Baldry for fitting of locks.**(JoL)**

5.5 Diocesan Loan - JoT

- JoT summarised a range of possible options for funding Spire Project.
- Initial bid to Parish Council for £5,000 to cover Architects fees to date was unsuccessful - SB received email from Parish Council 260124.
- Bid to Garfield Western Trust drafted - under review by members of funding sub-group. **(MH/MJ/KD/JoL+JoT)**
- JoT has identified other possible funders to approach.
- Priority agreed was action as 5.4 above to secure written confirmation of Diocesan loan**(JoT)**

6. Review of Advent/Christmas Services (Lessons learnt whilst its fresh)-All

- MH - Accepted Crib Service didn't work quite as effectively as hoped.
- JuL - Commented that very few members of St Mary's supported Crib service which missed opportunity to engage with visitors - majority from Friday Toddler group. MJ suggestion to allocate tasks as a way of involving St Mary's members in future.
- Accepting practical benefits of digital candles consensus of meeting was to investigate real candle options for Advent 2026.

7. School House – JoT

- This item for PCC information. JoT outlined the background to School House Trust. Set up in 2003 as a trust jointly between School/Church for maintenance and upkeep of School House. Current guidance is that this arrangement is not permitted and ownership/responsibility will pass to Diocese and LEA.

- MJ highlighted need to confirm School House footprint / boundary and liability for trees etc. JoT stated that boundaries and responsibilities have been defined by Diocese and LEA. JoT asked to provide copy when available to PCC for review. **(JoT)**
- JoT presented summary of School House Trust finances - ~£27,000 balance to be shared between School/St Mary's. Suggestion (JoL) that this be used to undertake maintenance required on drive, marking of parking bays and managing trees as these are of mutual benefit to Church and School.
- Final documentation being processed and no action is required / no actions can be taken until transfer to Diocese and LEA. JoT will update at next PCC. (JoT)

8. Use of Church/MLH by Windemere Orchestra – October – Agreed - EB/MH to finalise date **(MH/EB)**

9. Easter Day Services – supporting Community Egg hunt – JuL/AM to coordinate/prepare with Angie Woods. AM to oversee/coordinate on Easter Sunday. **(JuL/AM)**
Service timing to be adapted as Easter 2025 to suit. **(MH)**

10. Name Badges -New badges have been made for those on duty and volunteering/helping at other activities - Love to Move, Toddlers etc. All asked to use so it is clear to visitors, parents etc.

11. AOB

11.1 – 4.00 pm Services – HW Covered in 5.2

11.2 – Family Fun Day 13th June

FD happy to coordinate but requested assistance, will produce SMiT article inviting support/help

DoNM – Mon. 16th March @ 7.30 - in Church

Closing

Meeting closed with the Grace at 9.30pm.