

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Minutes for the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 2.30pm on Wednesday 5th March 2025 in St Petrock's church

Present: Rev Sheila Swarbrick (chair), Keith Walton, Jessica Claridge, Claire Mayer, Richard Skinner, Betsy Allen, Celia Smith, Mary Keaney (PCC sec)

Apologies: Helen Evans & Viv Asher

1. **Welcome & Ash Wednesday service:** Sheila welcomed everyone and led us through the Ash Wednesday service.
2. **Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 4th December 2024:** Sheila dated and signed the minutes as an accurate record.
3. **Matters Arising/Questions:**
 - 5.1.e Handwash is available but Betsy has not been able to confer with Julie about who replaces the washing up liquid on a regular basis.
 - 5.1.f Mary contacted Safe Space but has not heard about their use of St Stephen's in this the Spring term.
 - 5.1 a Jessica has been unable to make contact with a contractor for the clearance of the gutters at St Stephen's but we expect our new Building Officer, Bethany Watts, will take this on.
The Deaf Church are remaining at Palace Gate.
Richard had an object hit him on the head when opening the AV cupboard in St Stephen's on 22nd February. This cupboard has now been tidied by the ENC who have also provided additional boxes for storage of their equipment.
***Action:** Bethany Watts, our new building Officer has been tasked with finding a carpenter to construct and fit a shelf in the chair store as additional storage space.*
***Action:** Bethany to ask the same carpenter to revise the sink cover over the tea bar in St Petrock's to be less cumbersome. This is a more complicated job as the tap has to be changed.*
 - 13.1 Claire has taken possession of a roving Bow door key for the Flower Arrangers. This arrangement is working.
4. **Parish Activities:**
 - 4.1 **Pastoral Care:** Unminuted
 - 4.2 **Pattern of services:**

Sunday 30th March: Mothering Sunday service with Kathy Roberts, a retired priest, to preach

Sunday 27th April: Civic Service at 3pm in St Stephen's with the Lord Mayor. A request to parish for volunteers to help with sound and attend. Some hospital chaplains will mainly do the refreshments. Peter Harflett is to play the piano. The Mayor's office will print the service sheets.

Sunday 29th June: Service at St Martin's church with Peter Beacham

Sunday 17th or 31st August: annual service in St Mary Arches – the date to be confirmed

Sunday 5th October: Harvest Festival service in St Petrock's
 - 4.3 **Parish Social and Events:**

July Concerts: Organisation of the July concerts is well under way. Jessica hopes at least one concert will be a memorial for the musician Paul McClure who died in December 2024. The meeting discussed a possible revision of the amount given to the performers which currently stands at £50.

March Soup Lunch: Thanks to Betsy for organising this as very much appreciated

Parish Social: The meeting suggested a visit to Keith's garden for tea and cakes in the summer.

Words & Music: Bee's charity concert will be on Thursday 14th August at 1pm

5. Church Buildings:

5.1 St Stephen's:

5.1.a Gutters:

Action: *Bethany Watts, Building Officer, is to investigate a contractor to keep the gutters clear of debris*

5.1.b Storage:

Action: *Bethany to investigate a new shelf in the chair store and a new lock to replace the current lock on the chair store door which is difficult to use*

Action: *Mary to purchase a new folding step ladder to access new shelf in chair store*

5.1.c Display board: this is ongoing

5.1.d Personal alarm missing: One of the new flower arrangers has expressed concern over working on her own in St Stephen's.

Action: *Betsy to purchase new personal alarm*

Action: *Claire to talk with flower arrangers about strategies for keeping safe when working alone in the space eg. facing the entrance when working, have a mobile phone handy, know where the personal alarm lives etc.*

5.1.e Gallery plaster erosion:

Action: *Bethany to investigate a contractor in consultation with architect (Michila Wilks) to repair damage done to plaster on the wall with like for like materials.*

5.1.f Bulging Wall: *Claire made us aware that the wall is bulging near the chair store under the window ledge.*

5.1.g Garden: Various plants are in need of pruning or removal.

Action: *Betsy to contact the gardener to do this work.*

5.1.h Servery Floor: the floor is very squishy and needs a builder to look at it.

Action: *Bethany to investigate a contractor to look at floor and provide a quote for any necessary work*

5.1.i Servery: The water hot heater is to be replaced on Monday 10th March.

Action: *Jessica to buy new bowls.*

5.2 St Petrock's:

5.2.a Solar panels/DAC & architect: Fitting of solar panels is our long term plan and procuring approval is ongoing.

5.3 St Pancras:

5.3.a Quinquennial Inspection: The QI report has been received and the main actions are to clear the gutters, repair the noticeboard and re-fit the pulpit flooring.

5.4 St Olave's:

5.4.a Window repair/damp in new cupboard: Progress is being made. We have the promise of a grant and the Archdeacon's approval (List B). Michila (architect) is about to instruct the contractor, Barley Manor, to replace the guttering and hopper. Michila is to write to the Bike Shed to make clear that their guttering should be independent of St Olave's.

Claire has investigated the ownership of EX4 adjacent to St Olave's via the Land Registry and found 3 separate properties. Michila to chase ownership.

Any internal repairs/works will wait until the drainage has been rectified. The west wall will be rendered in time.

Action: *Betsy to remove kitchen equipment from vestry.*

5.4.b Handover to Bethany Watts as Building Officer: Bethany will be the main point of contact between Michila, any contractors and the PCC.

Action: *Sheila to contact Bethany via email with all the pertinent paperwork.*

5.5 St Mary Arches:

5.5.a Appointment of a Building Officer: Bethany has been appointed to work as a Resources Coordinator for Unlimited Church and a Building Officer for the parish of Central Exeter. Her work will be divided 80% for Unlimited Church and 20% for the parish. An induction has

consisted of an introductory meeting via Zoom and a tour of the 4 churches in the parish. Bethany has already done a lot of research on our buildings and read the QI for St Pancras. Her aim is to visit the churches each month and meet with Betsy, Keith and Mary monthly, too. Bethany has met Julie as a key contact and Mary will be available for providing any additional information as required/necessary.

6. Finance:

6.1 End of 2024 accounts to approve: The meeting approved the 2024 accounts. Sean Swarbrick, treasurer, has given the accounts to Simon Gay as Independent Examiner to examine in time for our APCM. Sean has found a successor to Simon as he is unable to continue in the role for 2025 due to work commitments. He will be appointed at the APCM in April.

Sheila made some observations of our accounts for 2024. Income: The Tax Efficient Planned Giving is lower probably due to the loss of Sue Blow and her generosity. The Grants show £23,255 of which approx. £5,000 is the cost of the new projector funded by one of the Trusts. Use of the PCC property is healthy as the Cathedral staff have returned to St Petrock's and St Pancras while work is ongoing in the Cathedral. **Expenses:** Church upkeep is high due to architect fees, Home Exeter costs, door repair in St Petrock's and insurance costs.

DAC have circulated a survey to Sheila and Sean about the VAT reclaim on historic buildings as this is being reduced and probably cut completely by the government.

Action: *Bethany to explore grants to cover the costs of rendering St Olave's west wall.*

6.2 Annual Parochial Church Meeting: Our APCM is on Sunday 6th April at 11.45am.

6.1.a Electoral Role Renewal: We have received most of the expected applications. Mary has sent reminders to some individuals.

Action: *Mary to send the Electoral Roll breakdown of ages to Sheila in time for meeting with Archdeacon on Thursday 13th March.*

6.1.b Reports: Currently we have received the following reports – Flower Arranging, Greeters, Inner Room, Buildings/Fabric and draft Annual Report.

Outstanding are: Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Rector's, Unlimited Church, Finance Statement, Deanery Synod and CTaX/CTCE. All reports should be with Mary by **Friday 21st March.**

6.1.c PCC members: Both Viv and Richard have come to the end of their 3 year term. Richard has expressed a wish to continue in post for another 12 months. Jessica and Celia are up for re-election as Deanery Synod reps in 2026. Celia is to continue as a PCC member and DS rep for another 12 months but is not obliged to attend DS meetings.

7. Inner Room: Helen submitted a report which was read out by Mary. *Inner Room* continues on a restricted basis for health reasons, with fortnightly *Room2Write* zooms led by Peter Hart and supported by group members. In addition, every two months Helen is running an in-person session, and a separate zoom, where members offer feedback on each other's writing (which is blossoming!).

Helen will contact the *Inner Room* team to arrange the next team meeting as soon as she has the capacity, but realistically National Poetry Day in October may be the next *Inner Room* event open to a wider audience. St Stephen's has been booked for the day and Helen is thinking about what the day will look like – something that isn't as much work as last year for volunteers.

8. Deanery Synod Report: The next meeting to be reported on is **Thursday 1st May.**

9. Social Media: Mary read out Helen's report for the meeting. Thanks to Betsy, St Pancras was promoted as a Small Pilgrim Place on the SPP Facebook page in December 2024.

The parish Facebook page was set up in July 2019 and continues on an *ad hoc* basis to promote events/organisations we support.

Helen suggests that now would be a good time for the PCC to review its social media presence in the light of:

- a. A cost-benefit analysis of the value it offers against the work it involves;
- b. Facebook's recent decisions, including to roll back inclusivity initiatives.

Helen is happy to write a brief report outlining some key issues and suggesting possible ways forward, to be circulated prior to the next PCC meeting for discussion, if the PCC would find that helpful. Helen would plan to be at the meeting to speak to the report and answer any questions.

Action: *Helen to write a report for circulation prior to the June PCC meeting for discussion.*

10. Safeguarding and Health & Safety:

10.1 Safeguarding Report: Mary thanked everyone for attending the Safeguarding Meeting on 27th February. All five questions were answered and this is to be logged on the parish Dashboard as soon as possible.

10.2 Approve Action Plan: To be circulated for approval prior to the June meeting.

11. CTAX/CTCE: Good Friday United service at the Cathedral and afterwards on the Green – Friday 18th April, 10am; Agape meal on Maundy Thursday, 17th April, at South Street Baptist Church at 6pm. Maundy Thursday Eucharist in the Cathedral at 7.30pm.

12. Correspondence: see A.O.B below.

13. A.O.B.

13.1 Sheila reported on the request for photographs of St Stephen's, St Pancras' and St Olave's for a new publication, *East Devon: Slow Travel* to be published in August 2025.

Post Meeting Update: *Jessica liaised with Cath Dobson and Andy Dobson about using John's extensive collection of parish photographs but unfortunately they happen to be on CDs which most laptops cannot use. However, Helen came to the rescue with several wonderful images which Mary forwarded to the picture researcher. If any of Helen's images are used in the book we will receive a complimentary copy of the book.*

13.2 Claire extended thanks to Sheila, Betsy, Keith, Richard and Mary for all their hard work.

14. Date and Place of future meetings:

APCM Sunday 6th April at 11.45am;

Wednesday 4th June 2.30pm at St Petrocks;

Wednesday 3rd September 2.30pm at St Petrock's;

Wednesday 3rd December 2.30pm at St Petrock's;

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.