

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Minutes for the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 2.30pm on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 in St Petrock's church

Present: Revd Sheila Swarbrick (chair), Keith Walton, Betsy Allen, Richard Skinner, Claire Mayer, Jessica Claridge, Viv Asher, Mary Keaney (PCC sec)

Apologies: Celia Smith and Bethany Watts

1. **Welcome:** Sheila welcomed everyone and read a passage about Bishop Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory 1).
2. **Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 4th June 2025:** The minutes were signed as an accurate record by Sheila.
3. **Matters Arising:**
 - 3.1 **Updating the digital display in St Stephen's:**

Action: Keith and Bethany to look at this and contact the company who originally installed the display and find out how we can update it.
 - 3.2 **Follow up discussion to archdeacon's visit in June:** Sheila noted that not much has happened since Andrew's visit. The parish visited UNLTD at St Mary Arches on Sunday 17th August and Sheila suggested she take a Crossing Place style service in August 2026. This service would need planning and to accommodate children. A brief discussion followed about logistics of combining our 2 congregations and the frequency. UNLTD are planning on using St Stephen's for a weekly Drop-In café beginning in October 2025.
4. **Church Buildings:** The Buildings Officer's report was circulated prior to the meeting.
 - 4.1 **St Stephen's:**
 - 4.1.a **Gutter Maintenance:** The meeting accepted Barley Manor's quote of £980 plus VAT for maintenance of the gutters of St Stephen's, St Olave's and St Petrock's.

Action: Bethany to instruct Barley Manor to do this on an annual basis.
 - 4.1.b **Servery floor:** Barley Manor have been instructed to carry out the floor repairs and a damp proof course from Tuesday 16th to Friday 19th September. Smith & Sons will replace the vinyl on Monday 22nd September. The church will be closed to the general public on these days. Barley Manor to repair the door and shelf while working on the floor repairs.
 - 4.1.c **Plaster replacement:** We have received quotes from Barley Manor for replacement of the plaster on the stairs at £540 plus VAT. The meeting accepted the quote from Barley Manor.
 - 4.1.d **Fire Extinguishers:** We have received quotes from Argos Fire Protection Limited for all 4 churches including St Stephen's, St Petrock's, St Pancras and St Olave's. The total cost will be £1,469 inc VAT. The quotes were accepted by the meeting.

Action: Bethany to instruct Argos
 - 4.2 **St Petrock's:**
 - 4.2. **Fire Extinguishers:** see above
 - 4.3 **St Pancras:**
 - 4.3.a **Noticeboard:**

Action: Bethany to research costs of a new board with a key lock as this church is used a lot by visitors and to contact those parties necessary to bring this about.
 - 4.3.b **Wobbly door:**

Action: Bethany to ask Barley Manor to investigate

4.3.c Fire Extinguishers: see above

4.4 St Olave's:

4.4.a Guttering repairs & vestry floor: Work is in progress and the outside wall is drying out after improvements to the gutters and down pipe management.

Action: Sheila to take photos of inside/outside and send to Michila (architect) to see progress.

Action: Bethany to make List B application for the repair to the head of the window once Michila has spoken to the structural engineer to get his design intent/method of repair.

4.4.b Fire Extinguishers: see above

4.4.c CCTV: This is not working

Action: Keith and Bethany are to investigate this on 4th September.

4.4.d Homeless man: Sheila and Julie (caretaker) have reported a young homeless chap causing some disruption in our churches with his belongings and butane gas cylinders. He has moved things around, been looking for money and left his gas canisters behind and a vase full of urine.

Action: Sheila to contact Community Services for advice and support

Post Meeting Update: Sheila received a swift response from Nathan Johnson who promised a greater vigilance of our buildings by the patrol teams. He also gave us a link so we could refer any issues online. This information will go to rough sleeping outreach so rough sleepers can be provided with support.

Betsy expressed thanks to the team for the work done on maintaining the buildings.

5. Parish Activities:

5.1 Pastoral Care: Unminuted

5.2 Pattern of services:

Sunday 5th October: Harvest service in St Petrock's followed by Bring and Share lunch in St Stephen's

Sunday 2nd November: Chris Bryan will preach at St Stephen's followed by a Soup Lunch

Sunday 30th November: Richard Burrige to preach at Holy Communion service in St Stephen's. There is a new Romanian Orthodox minister, Fr Radu, who replaces Fr Julian who has recently received a promotion. Sheila has met Fr Radu. Fr Julian left the parish a bottle of port, some chocolates and flowers as a leaving gift.

5.3 Parish Social and Events:

July concerts: Thanks to Jessica for all the organisation. All concerts were well received. It was noted that fewer lunches were taken than previous years. Jessica is happy to continue organising the 2026 concerts but would appreciate some help finding new performers.

Parish Social at Keith and Sandie's garden: Thanks to both Keith and Sandie for a lovely afternoon in their garden.

Parish Social at the Cathedral Treasury: Possibly try to book a Monday afternoon for January 2026

5.4 National Poetry Day:

Richard gave details of the forthcoming NPD. The 'Room to Write' poets will be launching their follow-up collection to 'The Watchful Tower' on **Thursday 2nd October** in St Stephen's. There will also be a poetry reading by Rosie Jackson and our own Richard Skinner. This event is free but donations will be accepted.

6. Finance:

6.1 End of August 2025 budget report: Sheila reported on Sean's budget report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Gift Aid sum of £2,423 (July-December 2024) is large and later we will receive the sum from January to June 2025. Planned Giving is down. The concerts raised a net amount of £802. Grants have come from the various parish trusts, the Churches Conservation Trust and a grant for the St Olave's work. Mary reported that Christmas bookings

are slightly down on last years. Claire thanked Sean for his work and flower money for the arrangers.

7. **Inner Room:** This initiative will go into hibernation for the time being. 'Room to Write' continues with Peter Hart coordinator. Helen's move to Yorkshire is scheduled for later in September.

8. **Safeguarding and Health & Safety:**

8.1 **Safeguarding Report:** This was circulated prior to the meeting and accepted.

Mary reported that many PCC members are booked on the Domestic Abuse in person training in November and that some people have begun refreshing their Foundations module.

Mary suggested we write a Lone Working Policy in the light of guidance given in the Diocese Guidance 'Lone Working Good Practice'.

Post Meeting Update: *Viv and Claire to join Mary in writing a policy*

Action: *Mary to update the Parish Dashboard with The Guild of Bellringers as a Non Church activity and that the meeting reviewed Church Activities.*

Action: *Sheila to talk to the Tower Captain about the bell clapper*

9. **CTAX/CTCE:** The next United service will be at Southernhay United Reform church on **Sunday 23rd November**. Richard explained that he is unable to join the planning team this year. Claire volunteered to be our representative for this year's service.

Action: *Richard to email Ross Maynard (Baptist minister) about our rep being Claire.*

On 23rd September Sheila is meeting with the city centre churches to plan the Pulpit Exchange which takes place in January 2026. We have a couple of new Salvation Army ministers who are Carl Di-Palma and Elizabeth Di-Palma. Simon Leigh had taken over Sidwell Street church.

10. **CMS link:** Ruth Sayers has retired although she did attend the Mission Partners Conference in July. Her replacement, Luke Brennan, is possibly in the position of having to raise funds to support his mission work.

11. **Correspondence:**

13.1.a Swift Boxes: We received an email asking if we had attracted any swifts to the boxes which we think we had in St Petrock's but possibly not in St Stephen's. As the swifts have left for Africa we are able to disconnect the callers over winter.

Action: *Jessica to contact Jerry about where is best to store the recording machine.*

13.1.b Safe Families Home for Good: We received an email from this Christian charity requesting volunteers to support different families with different needs from our church.

Action: *Mary to email a polite refusal due to lack of resources*

12. **A.O.B.**

12.1 **Filming in St Olave's:** Charlie Palmer and his dad requested permission to film in St Olave's. They produce a YouTube film Raw Faith where they discuss their faith and Bible studies.

Post Meeting Update: *Charlie and his dad loved filming in St Olave's on Wednesday 3rd September and will let us know when the film is ready to be viewed.*

13. **Date and Place of future meetings:**

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

The meeting closed at 4.40pm with a reading about Gregory the Great.