

THE PARISH OF CENTRAL EXETER

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parochial Church Council 3pm on Wednesday 1st July 2026 in St Petrock's church

Present: Revd Sheila Swarbrick (chair), Jessica Claridge, Keith Walton, Betsy Allen, Viv Asher & Mary Keaney (sec)

1. **Welcome & Prayer:** Sheila welcomed everyone and read a prayer from the CMS Prayerlines Magazine.
2. **Apologies:** Claire Mayer & Celia Smith
3. **Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 4th March 2026:** The minutes were signed as an accurate record by Sheila.
4. **Matters Arising/Questions:** None
5. **Parish Activities:**
 - 5.1 **Pastoral Care:** Unminuted. Margaret Sharman's funeral will be on **Tuesday 14th July** and the live stream link has been circulated to the parish.
 - 5.2 **Pattern of services:** Last Sunday's service (28th June) was taken by Revd Nigel Mason and was well received.
 - Sunday 16th August:** a United Service with ULTD at St Mary Arches. Sheila will be leading with a Crossing Place style liturgy.
 - Sunday 23rd August:** Revd Chris Bryan to take service at St Olave's.
 - Sunday 30th August:** A fifth Sunday service to be held in St Stephen's.
 - Sunday 4th October:** Harvest festival in St Petrock's with a shared lunch in St Stephen's.
 - Sunday 18th October:** Betsy to lead Crossing Place
 - Sunday 15th November:** No Crossing Place but Holy Communion at St Olave's
 - Sunday 22nd November:** United service at The Mint with Bishop Moira
 - Sunday 29th November:** Advent Sunday with a shared lunch
 - Sunday 6th December:** Holy Communion at St Olave's
 - Sunday 20th December:** Christmas Crossing Place
 - Sunday 27th December:** No service in the parish
 - Action: Sheila to send service rota to Betsy*
 - Action: Mary to email the parish weekly in the winter months with details of where the Sunday service is located*
 - 5.3 **Parish Social and Events:**
 - July concerts:** Concerts begin this week
 - Cream tea: Sunday 16th August** at Keith and Sandie's Whinfield house. Details to be circulated to the parish nearer the time.
 - St Nicholas' Fair:** To be held on **Saturday 5th December** in St Stephen's
6. **Safeguarding and Health & Safety:**
 - 6.1 **Safeguarding Report:** Circulated prior to the meeting. Mary mentioned that Claire and Viv will be invited to renew their DBS checks later in the year.
 - 6.2 **Hirers Agreements update:** Both AA groups have signed the Hirers Agreement and also signed the key holders form. We also have contact details for each group.
 - 6.3 **Approval for a new church activity 'Vision for a new community in Exeter':** Liz Dunbar's document was circulated prior to the meeting. Sheila reported that there have been 2 trial meetings so far, both held in St Stephen's church. A name is still needed for this group to

promote them and help with advertising. Once funding has been secured they will contribute to the costs of hiring St Stephen's. There is no official start date as yet. The vision for the group was discussed.

6.4 Promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups: The worksheet 1B 'Promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups' was circulated prior to the meeting. We considered both questions: *What vulnerable groups do we have in our church? How could those in leadership roles better engage with and promote their welfare?* Generally, as we are a small community we don't have any specifically vulnerable groups except the concern that most of the congregation is seventy plus. Therefore, care is taken to ensure visits are made to those living alone and in church care is taken to see that the spaces are safe. A hearing loop system is provided and large print when needed.

7. Church Buildings: The Building's Officer report was circulated prior to the meeting.

7.1 St Stephen's: the new storage shelf is being addressed by Barley Manor; HOME Exeter to send a quote to replace bulbs and to repair the font lighting; some overhead heaters may need to be switched off.

7.2 St Petrock's: A meeting with our architect, Barley Manor and Bethany has been scheduled for **Thursday 9th July** to discuss the damp/mould; HOME Exeter to repair the tower stair lights

7.3 St Pancras: The new noticeboard will be in place soon.

7.4 St Olave's: The banner is of concern and needs to be removed from the case asap. However, the expert needs help to do this. Coffee making facilities in the vestry worked well.

Action: Sheila to look at storing the banner in St Olave's.

Action: Sheila to meet with architect, Michila, to discuss solar panels and the elderly electrics and heating system with a view to the Romanian Orthodox Church using St Olave's in the future.

7.5 St Mary Arches: The QI has been scheduled for **Wednesday 22nd July**.

7.6 PCC to consider the terms of any approval of projects: This issue needs to be discussed further.

8. Finance:

8.1 End of May 2026 report: This was circulated prior to the meeting. After receiving some generous donations from parishioners estates the finances are in a better place although consideration does need to be given to the annual electricity bill for St Stephen's which is extremely high. It was thought we could reduce the number of heaters in use from September. It was also noted that it is easier to secure grants if we have 50% of the funding in place which is where the recent large donations may be helpful for future projects.

8.2 Parish Accounts: The wages paid to the employees of the parish are funded 50% by the parish trusts and 50% by parish accounts. The Churches Conservation Trust contributes to the caretakers wage although this hasn't kept pace with inflation.

Action: Notice to be placed in servery asking hirers to use the heating sparingly.

9. CTAX/CTCE: It was noted that the Agape was held in the Mint, The Good Friday service and the Thy Kingdom Come events have all been held since our last PCC meeting back in March. Looking forward we have the Sidwell Street Methodist Church Farewell service on **Sunday 30th August** at 6pm. The church community is closing and dissipating to other places of worship. However, the Pentecostal church and scouts will continue to use the building which has been purchased by a circus.

Exeter City Centre Renewal:

Following Archdeacon Andrew's visit to the PCC in June 25 a meeting was held on Thursday 23 April with Ed Hodges, (now City Dean and leader of Co-Church - St Matts & Exwick), Mike Clark (interim minister at St David's and about to become incumbent), Matt Clayton (Unlimited) and Bob Wallington (Network), Sheila, Andrew and Bishop Moira as she was free. From this discussion a paper was presented to Bishop Mike on Wednesday 10 June.

The vision is to create partnerships between the historic parishes and the 2 Bishop Mission Orders (Network & Unlimited), to enable the historic city centre churches to continue as Christian Beacons and to enable diverse pathways for people to encounter God. For this to happen there will need to be pastoral reorganisation and relationships with both the key churches and neighbouring churches and charities.

Sheila is waiting for a summary of this paper so that individual churches can give in principle approval and for the Archdeacon to then convene a steering group to draft the pastoral scheme.

10. **Deanery Synod:** The latest meeting was held on **Tuesday 21st April** in Alphington. The talk updated the group about the outreach work happening in the new housing developments in the Alphington and Exminster parishes. The Revd Tanya Hockley-Still gave an update about St Mark's church and we heard from 2 lay people about church life at St Leonard's.
11. **CMS link:** Sheila updated us with news that the couple who had hoped to move to Zanzibar with their children have decided after much prayer not to go. They realised it was not the right thing for them at this time.
Action: Sheila to contact CMS to put money toward one of the other links
12. **Correspondence:**
 - 12.1 **Devon Historic Churches Day:** This year it is on **Saturday 12th September 2026**
Action: Mary to send details of churches opening times to Claire Sherlock, admin for DHCD, by Tuesday 14th July
13. **A.O.B.**
 - 13.1 **APi Health Check consultation:** scheduled for **Thursday 23rd July at 2.45pm**
 - 13.2 **St Pancras keys:** Keith to surrender his keys to Sheila as copying her vestry key didn't work and there are a lot of keys already distributed.
 - 13.3 **12 Bar Music & Social Festival in 2027:** Request to have a maximum of 175 standing capacity. The meeting decided 150 max was appropriate.
Action: Mary to convey the PCC decision to Sam Tame.
 - 13.4 **Request for new Taize choir in St Pancras:** Sheila to meet John Zealley at Prayer Around the Cross on **Friday 17th July** to discuss this.
 - 13.5 **QR codes:** Sean, treasurer, and Mary to note if there is an increase in donations to the parish now we have QR codes available.
 - 13.6 **Prayer Pilgrimage:** Create a sign to encourage donations for paper copies of Prayer Pilgrimage.
Action Sheila and Mary to consider this.
14. **Date and Place of future meetings:**
 - Wednesday 2nd September** at 2.30pm in St Petrock's church (*possibly 3pm start as may not have much to discuss, TBC nearer the date*)
 - Wednesday 2nd December** at 2.30pm in St Petrock's church
15. **Closing Prayer:** The Grace was shared.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm