

The Parish Church of St Margaret, Rainham
Parochial Church Council

Full meeting of the PCC on Thursday 23rd January 2025
19:30 in Church



To Be Present: Heather Baker (HB); Lorna Dyer (LD); Janet Garnons-Williams (JGW); Nick Grief (NG); Simon Hall (SH); Charley Holden (CH); Felicity Holton (FH); Emi Inetianbor (EI); Revd Jonathan Jennings (JPJ) David Ormiston (DO); Jean Penney (JP); Revd Nathan Ward (NW); Terry Whittaker (TW)

In Attendance: Jo Whittaker (JW) – Secretary; Davina O’Brien (DOB) – Treasurer; Rob & Vicky Schulz – PRF; Liz Mullins – Diocesan Advisor for Giving

PCC MINUTES

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Opening Act of Worship:	
	NW welcomed Liz Mullins from the Diocese who would be talking to us about the Parish Giving Scheme and Rob & Vicky Schulz to update us on PRF. The meeting then opened in prayer.	
2.	Apologies:	
	These were received from Linda Randall (LR) and Philip Holdcroft (PH).	
3.	Minutes of the Meeting on 28th November 2024 and confidential Minutes:	
a.	Approval – JP proposed and HB seconded that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings. All in favour.	
b.	Matters Arising (not included elsewhere) – None to report	
4.	Liz Mullins, Diocesan Advisor for Giving:	
	<p>TW reminded the PCC of the outcome of the combined staff and PCC meeting and outlined the financial direction the church was moving in. LM then introduced herself and provided the background of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which had been set up by the Church of England to support people’s giving to their parish church in a simple and safe way. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving was via Direct Debit either monthly, quarterly or annually • The scheme would process Gift Aid and give back to the church monthly • Gifts could be anonymous • There was an option to increase giving each year in line with inflation, but only with explicit permission from the giver • There would be monthly reporting • It would reduce the Treasurer’s burden with Standing Orders and Gift Aid • Those with irregular income or who didn’t pay tax would not be able to join the scheme, unless it was a one-off donation • It was likely some would prefer to keep donations via envelope • There were three ways to give securely – online, postal using a gift form or through a 5/10 minute phone call with PGS. Online details could be added to our website. • Cost to the church would be free for the direct debit scheme or a 1.2% transaction fee for one-off donations • It was noted that legacies would be a separate piece of work. <p>After some discussion, NG proposed and TW seconded the proposal that St Margaret’s join the Parish Giving Scheme FOR: 13 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTION: 0 Proposal unanimously agreed. Thanks were given to Liz and she would send the forms to DOB for completion and then the scheme would be launched. It was agreed this would be on Sunday 11th May and Liz would come along to the services to assist in the launch. It was agreed she would meet with the Finance Committee to plan this. Liz then left the meeting.</p>	Finance Cttee

5.	Safeguarding:	
a.	JP showed a short video to explain the Parish Dashboard and how it worked in going through all the different steps required and checks that policies, Risk Assessments etc. were in place. Reports based on this dashboard would be brought to PCC each month. JP, NW and the PSO only had access to this system. A Church Action Plan was still outstanding.	JP
b.	Safer Recruitment – role descriptions for all group leaders and their volunteers were being drawn up.	JP
6.	Church Overview:	
a.	Attendance (services and groups) - NW had circulated some papers which showed that numbers had increased over Christmas. NW and the Staff Team had looked at growth in the 10.30 service – this had grown by 28% from 2023 to 2024 (the national average was a 4.7% growth) but there was still a significant ‘churn’. The February staff meeting would consider the focus for 2025 and then come to the February PCC with a plan.	NW / Staff Team
b.	Living in Love and Faith (LLF) – there had been 15 responses to the consultation with two against the blessing of same-sex couples. NW was committed to unity in moving forwards and there was a discussion about next steps. It was proposed that there should be an engagement meeting with people, using the mini LLF course, where people had opportunity to discuss and feedback their views. This would then be added to the PCC agenda and be discussed with the staff team. It was noted this would be March at the earliest or after Easter.	NW
7a.	PRF Update:	
	<p>Rob & Vicky summarised all the steps taken,</p> <p>1) Over the past year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground penetration survey • Started digitalisation of archives • Photos of memorials in the churchyard • Crypt survey • Indicative plans created • Biodiversity study of the churchyard • Indicative plans submitted to the DAC for comment (noted still waiting for a meeting date) • Five-year business plan started • Statement of Need started • Meetings with the National Lottery and a structural engineer • Case for Support started • Feasibility Study undertaken • Reporting on lottery funding <p>2) During January and February 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churchyard details put onto burial software • Crypt work carried out with Adrian Miles • National Lottery Heritage Fund confirmed as the main funder • Business Development Plan started and Development Phase Application made • Activity plan was being created • Working documents being developed • Quantity Surveyor appointed <p>Over the next five years there would be an inevitable effect on the Church and whilst this was currently unknown, it would be managed in a way to limit the level of disruption over a long period.</p>	

	<p>NW thanked Rob and Vicky for their hard work over the last year; the pace of the project had picked up under their leadership and the PCC were very grateful.</p> <p>NW raised two points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The DAC had promised to visit before Christmas but, to date, had failed to provide a date for this. It was agreed to continue to chase the DAC for a response as the PCC were wanting and pushing to share plans with the congregation in the run up to and at the APCM. The Structural Engineers report had been received in draft form and was waiting to be signed off – a full copy would come to PCC when complete. One issue highlighted was the ‘bowing’ of some of the church walls. There was no immediate risk to life but it was key to note this. 	
i.	<p>Review Objective PRF – Stage 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise concept designs for the church, churchyard and Millennium Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These were finalised for the church and churchyard. The Millennium Centre has been deferred for now. Update Statement of Significance and Statement of Need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A working party from within the PRF team had drafted a Statement of Need which was being polished. ➤ It was noted that whilst the University of York had previously written a Statement of Significance things had changed and corrections made to the known history of the church and therefore this needed reviewing. Assistance with the Statement of Significance was being provided by Heritage England. Gain initial approval from the DAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was in progress (see 7.a note i) Consult with key stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was hoped to be in the run up to the APCM in April (see 7.a note i) 	
7b.	Mission Strategy:	
i.	<p>Review Objective Communication 4a – develop a social media vision and strategy, and 4b – recruit a volunteer team to manage social media (carried over from last meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NW was working with Acts Six who had engaged a social media person and was in talks with them about church social media. NW would take the reformulated thought on how we used social media to the February staff meeting and then bring to PCC. <p>Thought was to be given as to whether what we currently produced was having the impact we wanted. It was also noted that Notice Boards were either blank or not up-to-date with information.</p>	
ii.	<p>Review Objective Pray More – Stage 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage daily prayer throughout the congregation by signposting them to different resources both produced by St Margaret’s and wider publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was still to be done. Small groups to include prayer both as an activity and teaching point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Small groups had been following the prayer resource provided by the Diocese – this was now coming to an end. Develop prayer stations within the church and offer ideas on ‘ways to pray’ that are promoted on the website, social media etc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The ‘faith’ section of the website included a ways to pray video, topical prayer cards were available in the chapel. Prayer stations were a work in progress. Offer prayer ministry after service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ With thanks to JGW this was up and running every other week. Signpost families to prayer resources they can use as a family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was still to be done. 	

iii.	Review Objective Read More – Stage 2: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the use of Bible reading notes so people can unpack their reading and consider how it might apply to their lives in a gentle way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 80 sets of Bible reading notes had been provided and there was a list of more that wanted them. 2. Encourage the congregation to join a small group through which the Bible will be used as a key resource and can be discussed within a group context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There was interest but this needed to be done as a continual process due to turnover. 3. Signpost families to resources for reading the Bible together as a family and specific resources for children and young people to read the Bible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NW had looked for resources but these were few and far between. There was a need to think through what resource to buy in. 4. Continue giving new students at St Margaret’s Junior School bibles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was being done. 	
iv.	Review Objective Love More – Stage 2: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further develop the welcoming at all church services to ensure everyone is welcomed and engaged with suitable follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcome at the door was happening but welcome during and after the service needed improvement. We needed to develop a culture of watching, engaging and sticking with people and to look out for those on their own. A clear process was required – to go to February staff meeting and back to PCC. 2. Provide opportunities within the church services for ‘getting to know people’ – e.g. testimony, this is where I work etc.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ After church lunches were happening. NW to look to explore testimony etc. further. 	
v.	Review Objective Children, Youth & Families – Stage 2: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop regular family-based activities throughout the year (e.g. Pancake Party, Christingle) in church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ JW and NW to meet to discuss this the following week and finalise 2025 activities to bring to PCC. 2. Promote Acts of Worship within other Primary Schools in Parish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NW had written to every primary school in the parish to offer to meet. A new Act of Worship has been started at Mierscourt Primary and continued at St Margaret’s Juniors. Caution was needed around NW’s capacity to provide more. 3. Deliver a parenting for faith course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was still to be done – NW to speak to JW. 	
vi.	Review Objective Tafara: – Work with St Philips/Matthias to develop a joint strategy on how we develop and promote our relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NW has had an initial conversation and another is due. JGW and DOB were visiting this Summer which would help to move things on. 	
8.	Finance:	
	<p>DOB was working hard on the year end figures.</p> <p>TW reported that there had been nothing extraordinary or unexpected during January 2025. Two legacies were expected, totalling £15k (of which £5K was for the belltower).</p> <p>The PRF budget for 2025 had been agreed for £4k however, following the Quantity Surveyor’s report, this was going to be £4k plus VAT and permission was sought to agree the overspend. The Finance Committee had no problem with this but advised cashflow would be a challenge although the loan made to Acts Six looked likely to be repaid in February.</p> <p>NW proposed and JGW seconded the proposal for the £800 overspend.</p> <p>FOR: 13 AGAINST: 0 ABSTENTION: 0 Overspend agreed unanimously.</p>	
9.	Health and Safety:	

	NW, JP and Martin Helmore (a health & safety professional) had met and looked at implementing policies and structure, and were then due to meet with Mick Penney and Gary Williams to move this forward. They would report back to the next PCC meeting. It was noted there were no concerns or failures in meeting our own policy guidelines but a structured implementation was required.	
10.	Maintenance:	
	It was noted that the crypt would be closed again at the end of next week and the ladders would be moved back in.	
11.	Correspondence:	
	The Diocese had confirmed that we were still in the bid for a Children and Families Worker from 2026 but all other parts of the bid had been taken out, therefore there was nothing for a St Martin in the Fields music scholar or an additional Minister.	
12.	AOB <i>(to be notified to the Chair prior to the meeting):</i>	
	None to report.	
13.	Dates of Next Meeting:	
	Thursdays at 19:30 in Church: 27 th March 2025 24 th April 2025 APCM – Tuesday 29 th April 2025, 19:00 in church. Change of date due to JJ's last Sunday being 27 th April.	
14.	Closing Act of Worship:	
	The meeting closed with the final part of Evening Prayer at 21:51.	