



## **ST MARGARET'S CHURCH**

To know and share God's transforming love with one another,  
our local community and the wider world

### **Minutes PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.30pm in the Parish Office Tuesday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Present; Revd Hannah Gordon (Chair), Tom Sanderson Julia Thompson, Jill Lindsay, Ray King, Janice Whittle, Lucy Wales, Nigel Smith, Madeleine MacCallum, Jen Smith, Rosalind Lumberg, Eamonn Davern, Andrea Elliott (Treasurer) Guest (items)

**1** The *meeting commenced* at 7.30pm with an Act of Remembrance for Armistice Day.

#### **2 Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Katherine Wicksteed and Jon Hill

#### **3 Minutes**

The *Minutes* of the meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025 were approved and signed by Rev. Hannah Gordon.

#### **Matters arising not on the agenda:**

##### **Web Site Upgrade**

At September PCC two vendors' offerings were reviewed, for good governance and financial best practice PCC decided that a third proposal should be considered. Ray reported that a third company, Church Pages, had now submitted a proposal. PCC initially decided that the final choice should be between the Church Pages offer and that previously submitted by Church Hub, and that this comparison would also enable a median price to be established.

Following a presentation of these two proposals PCC unanimously agreed that Church Pages provided the best match with St Margaret's requirements. Church Pages is a local faith-based company, it can deliver, compatibility with Church Suite, develop a visual presence which reflects the character of the Church, and improving functionality – particularly navigation, at a lower start up and ongoing maintenance cost than other proposals. Church Pages require two weeks to install the upgrade.

Notwithstanding PCCs preference for engaging Church Pages it was agreed to pause any further

development work on the website redesign pending a full review of 2026 budgets to ensure that PCC can justify the expenditure given a range of conflicting priorities and the current deficit. The Company will be contacted if following the budget review PCC agrees to proceed to implement the new system.

## **Purpose Values and Vision**

Hannah described the current series of sermons she was preaching to raise understanding of the new Parish Vision. All Parish activities must meet St Margaret's Why as described in the Mission Statement. The Values and Purpose would be referenced in all activities to promote Planned Giving.

## **Stewardship of our Resources**

### **4 Christmas Services**

Christmas Carol Services would take place at; St Margaret's on Friday December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm, and Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm., and at St Peter's Woodmansterne on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 4pm.

The family nativity service would commence at 4pm on Christmas Eve and the Midnight Mass at 11.30pm. The All-Age Christmas Celebration would be at 10am on Christmas Day and include Holy Communion.

### **5 Organ Repairs**

Bishop and Sons have still not submitted a quote for repairing the Organ for comparison with that already received from Henry Willis, who had conducted the last major repair in 1990. The latter will be advised that following a recent remedial repair by the regular Organ Repairer /Tuner the Organ is now working again and they will be requested to review their recent £19,000 quote. The issue is now less urgent and a final decision on repair can be deferred until the new procurement policy is agreed at the January PCC.

**Action:** *Nigel will contact Henry Willis to request a review of their Organ Repair quote.*

### **6 Safeguarding Update**

A Parish Safeguarding Dashboard will be implemented. All PCC members are now required to complete Domestic Abuse Training in addition to basic and foundation DBS modules. To follow Safer Church Best Practice Safeguarding requirements should be incorporated within Volunteer's Role Descriptions.

### **7 Finance and HR Committee Report**

#### **Expenditure and Income Review**

Following her report to the September PCC Andrea has continued in her review of the Parish's financial situation. She reported that she had advised the Finance and HR Committee, who agreed, that more rigorous oversight was urgently needed to eliminate the continuing deficit which was currently being financed through depletion of reserves.

The Finance and HR Committee was now recommending that *PCC agree that the current state of Parish finances necessitates a root and branch review of all areas of Parish income and spending. The scope should include contracting, utilities, parish administration, treatment of legacies, planned giving, and a more detailed scrutiny of purchasing, with an aim to identify actions to reduce and subsequently eliminate the deficit within an agreed time frame.*

*This Recommendation was proposed by Eamonn, seconded by Jill and carried unanimously.*

**Action:** *The Finance and HR Committee will prepare draft terms of reference for the review of Parish Income and Expenditure for PCC consideration at the January PCC meeting.*

## **Expenses and Overtime Policy**

The Finance and HR Committee also recommended that *Overtime working could no longer be supported and should cease as soon as possible, and that; no activity which could be undertaken by Volunteers should in future be allocated to paid staff.* Verger payments would be reviewed, and the PCC or Standing Committee would consider alternative options to using paid staff overtime for delivering an activity which might be impeded in the event of a possible lack of volunteers.

*Acceptance of the Finance and HR Committee Recommendations regarding Staff Overtime was proposed by Jill and unanimously seconded by the PCC.*

Work has commenced to introduce more detailed and granular budgets for areas of Parish activity such as hospitality, this was intended to increase transparency and improve budgetary control.

## **Parish Expenses Policy**

A Financial Safeguarding review launched at the July Finance and HR Committee meeting identified a need for the Parish Expenses policy to be amended, and the Committee recommended that PCC accept a revised draft (see annex). These included necessary amendments to certain authorization procedures for consistency with good financial management practice, and the withdrawal of some allowances to ensure compliance with HMRC guidelines.

*Acceptance of the draft revised Expenses policy was proposed by Jill and unanimously seconded by the PCC.*

**Action:** *It was agreed that Tom and Ray would explain the changes to staff Overtime and Expenses policies and take questions from staff at a meeting to be convened on Friday November 14th. The new Expenses policy would take effect immediately following the meeting, and staff Overtime would cease as soon as practicable after Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November.*

## **Whistle Blowing Policy**

The Finance and HR Committee has produced a draft Whistle Blowing Policy which has been developed from Church of England guidance. Eamonn explained the main features of the Policy (see annex) ie The aim is to provide guidance for all members of the church community in instances where there is a genuine and reasonably held belief that normal or proper practices have not been followed. The Policy introduces a three stage process, informally bringing the matter to the attention of the person responsible either verbally or in writing, where step one is not appropriate or fails

to resolve the issue writing to one or both of the Church Wardens, where step one and 2 are not appropriate or fails to resolve the issue writing to the Archdeacon of Reigate.

*Acceptance of the draft Whistle Blowing policy was proposed by Eamonn, seconded by Jill and unanimously carried by the PCC.*

## **8 Premises Report**

The current cleaning contract is being terminated on 28<sup>th</sup> November, the contract with the new provider will be imminently referred to for Finance and HR Committee approval; the Premises Team have put in place plans for a seamless as is possible handover.

Nigel is continuing to pursue delivery of the now long overdue, Quinquennial report from the Architects.

Churchyard works for this year have now stopped for the Winter. Nigel suggested that cards should be sent to all Churchyard Team volunteers to thank them for their hard work.

*Hannah proposed a vote of thanks to the Churchyard Team. This was seconded by Eamonn and unanimously carried by PCC.*

*Hannah proposed a vote of thanks to Nigel for his excellent work in identifying savings of over 50% through negotiating the new cleaning contract. This was seconded by Ray and carried unanimously.*

**Action** Church Wardens will send cards to all Churchyard team volunteers to thank them for their hard work.

## **Planning for our Future**

### **9 Future options for use of the Peter Aubertin Hall**

The Peter Aubertin (PA) Hall has only been occasionally used for Parish activities for many years, especially since the opening of The Orchard in 2013. Following the closure of Chipstead pre-school, most of the rental income has been lost. The Finance and HR Committee has concluded that it is now imperative to explore future options to reduce or terminate the Parish's financial commitment for the upkeep and maintenance of the building. Following discussion PCC agreed that exploratory meetings should be held with the Southwark Diocese which holds the Hall on Trust under the terms of the original gift of the Hall site from Lord Hylton's Estate in 1907. If potential to vary the terms of the Trust can be established, discussions could proceed with the Local Authority and stakeholders, including local community groups, to consider alternative arrangements.

**Action:** *PCC agreed that the Finance and HR Committee will contact Southwark Diocese and the Local Authority to establish the potential for alternative management arrangements for the PA Hall and report back to PCC following discussions.*

## **10 Any Other Business / Date of Next Meeting**

Revd. Hannah Gordon advised that a discussion on treatment of legacies should be tabled for the January PCC. This would be supported by a discussion on a draft Legacy Policy which would be considered by the Finance and HR Committee at its December meeting.

No further items of business were discussed; the meeting closed with a prayer at 9.30 pm.

The *next PCC meeting* will be on Tuesday January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 7.30 pm in the Parish Office.

**Future Meeting**, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026,