

Minutes of The Fifth Meeting of the 2024/25 Parochial Church Council of St Francis of Assisi held on Tuesday 22nd October at 8pm in the Church Hall

Present: Revd Canon Jenny Fennell Graham Cathy Bloye Tony Porter Andrew Watkinson Nigel Cox Jo Dunstan Carol Jager Gavin Johnstone Julie Lowes John Owen Stuart Richardson Rob Smith
Nikki Clare (NC),

Apologies: Sarah Branwhite Pui San Apling John Butler Rachel Basch Tony Boon

Rev Jenny opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Rev Jenny welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for absence were recorded. Tony B has resigned from the PCC and Deanery Synod due to moving away. Thanks have been sent for all he has done for the PCC and St Francis over the years.

2. Minutes from previous meeting held on 18 July 2024

A typo error in paragraph 3 of Section 4 was noted, relating to the Contract of our Director of Music. Other questions having been clarified, the minutes were then signed by Rev Jenny as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Inclusion

Rachel and Louise joined the meeting to present this item.

RH, LV and CJ shared a document (attached) to facilitate a discussion on our Inclusion statement and narrative on the St Francis website. The current statement is taken from 'Inclusive Church' and it is felt that we need some narrative that is unique to us, rather than a 'cut and paste' approach.

There was significant debate.

The team have agreed to a) review and amend the Welcome Statement and Inclusive Church statement / paragraph and associated narrative b) once agreed, update the website and other comms eg external noticeboard c) ask people to champion and support specific Inclusive Church areas

5. Chairman's Report

Vacancy following Tony's departure: Rev Jenny stated that there is a vacancy on the PCC and also on the Deanery Synod. Rev Jenny then provided an outline of the Deanery Synod role, frequency of meetings, venues and topics. If anyone would be interested in standing for it they should contact her.

6. Treasurer's Report

Graham provided a summary report and spreadsheet to PCC members. Picture not looking good, we are still £5K short (income) of what we need to cover our costs. We are -£51K (loss) YTD and therefore looking like a -£60K shortfall by year-end.

We have £97K reserves in Bank but at the current rate, we will finish reserves in 18 months' time. We also have major expenditure items to cover. There are few if any areas where we can cut costs so raising money / funding has to increase if we are to reverse the current trend.

Graham will be discussing Parish Share (currently £107K pa) with the Diocese to negotiate a reduction to a more manageable level (c£60K tbc).

Parish Giving is going well, over 80% of regular givers have moved over to the new system. There are still a few people donating by cheque, and we need to ask these people to pay by another method.

Analysis also shows that average income per Parishioner is low (c. £17.00 p.c.m.), and that just 2 people account for ~25% of our total giving. Further effort is required to ask people to donate more if they can, with a focus on demonstrating to people what everyday costs are, and what giving £25 / 50 per month (for example) can pay for.

Graham has also acquired a new SumUp machine, which does not require being paired to a phone or ipad. This will be trialled this weekend.

On the positive side, our new banking and Parish Giving arrangements now enable us to have a much clearer idea of our everyday cash and financial position / status, so Graham expects to present a budget plan for the new Financial Year in November, to be approved in January 2025 and then presented to APCM in April 2025.

7. Wardens' Report

Roof: Builder that was used to carry out immediate repairs is retiring so not able to look at major roof project quotation. A number of other companies have been contacted to receive an estimate. There are questions to be answered re whether we replace the roof tiles when doing the work, and whether we concentrate on repairing the Hall roof before the Church?

Clare Chapel: The new door will be installed on Thursday 24th October

Community Payback: will be coming in on Tuesday 12th November. Specific tasks tbc.

8. Safeguarding

Cathy outlined the different roles relating to safeguarding .

PCC has overall duty of care for the safeguarding of everyone and anyone that comes to our Church. This includes creating a safeguarding plan, and for ensuring that everyone is aware of the plan, what it involves, and how to implement it when required.

People without training have been identified and will be notified by relevant PCC members asap. People whose DBS certification has expired, is being sorted by the team.

Cathy also notified the Churchwardens that they are responsible for creating and storing (for easy access) Risk Assessment (RA) documents for each and every Church activity (including all worship / services and events e.g CTF). Templates have already been prepared for some of these, and Churchwardens will meet asap to discuss and prepare the various RA templates required. Nicky will then add a safeguarding section to each of these documents.

Cathy informed the PCC that there is a new Safeguarding Survey that the Diocese are asking all parishes to complete. This will be sent to all members of the PCC (who need to complete it first) before it is then sent to all members of the congregation for them to complete. Louise has kindly agreed to collate all responses.

9. Health, Safety and Environment

No incidents were reported.

Wardens are preparing H&S Risk Assessments for each space (room) in our Church. Some have already been completed, and an update will be provided at the next PCC.

10. Future Events

Christmas Tree Festival: looking good, we have 61 trees booked in, although the number of trees by St Francis members has reduced significantly. Graham will not be able to manage CTF 2026, so we need to find a successor.

Talent Show (9th November): Volunteers will be required to make this event happen.

For 2025, we need to agree not just a calendar of fund-raising events, but also who (i.e. a name or names) will be responsible for organising each event, so there is clarity and accountability on each event.

11. Correspondence including Electoral Roll Update

There had been no other correspondence.

Electoral Roll: 89 resident, 80 non-resident, total 169 (reduction of 1)

12. Prayer focus: Safeguarding awareness / Finances and giving / Ministry for children and young people

13. Any Other Business

Children's Church: It was mentioned that there have been some new 'younger families' attending St Francis recently and noted some instances of children either not feeling able to join one of our Sunday YACC groups, or joining a group that is inappropriate (age-wise). The profile for each group was clarified, as follows: Hall: up to Year 5, Parish Room: Years 6-7 / Cellar: Years 8+).

The meeting ended at 10.05pm with Grace.

Next meeting: Thursday 21st November 8pm in the Church Hall