

Minutes of The Third Meeting of the 2025/26 Parochial Church Council of St Francis of Assisi held on 17th July 2025 at 8pm in Parish Room

Present: Rob Smith (Chair) Sarah Branwhite Stuart Richardson Jo Dunstan John Owen Andrew Watkinson John Butler Graham Bloye Cathy Bloye Eric Pavver Paul Dunstan Pui San Apling Rachel Basch

Via Zoom: Montse Day

Apologies: Gavin Johnstone Carol Jager

The meeting opened with a prayer.

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

2. Minutes from previous meeting held on 18th June 2025

One correction was made to the minutes under Chairman's Report and the update on Choir Week, and signed as true record.

3. Matters Arising

Image Policy: this had been reviewed by a small team and suggested changes had been passed back to the PCC Secretary to incorporate into an updated version for circulation to the PCC. It was agreed the final decision on the policy would be delegate to the Standing Committee.

Publishing minutes on the website: Now that we are in a vacancy it was felt that the Standing Committee should agree what should be contained in the anonymised version/ summary.

There were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

4. Treasurer's Report

We are breaking even at the moment thanks to a legacy, gift aid reclaim and HMRC rebate, but a further regular giver has decided to stop giving.

There has been no response to our letter re the Parish Share. PCC were thankful for all efforts on this and for continuing the dialogue with the Diocese on this.

5. Safeguarding

Update:

- The choir count as church officers in relation to how we recruit adults, all regular adult attendees of choir are aware of this and those who are non-regular attendees or returnees will be raised with Musical Director.
- Team Leaders are required to do three safeguarding training courses with helpers required to the basic safeguarding training.
- DBS checks are required for YACC helpers.
- This is all about keeping our church safe.
- There is liaison with all team leaders on DBS checks.

6. Churchwarden's Report

- Parish room door needs to have the glass replaced due to an accident involving the Probation Service team gardeners. The bill will be going to the Probation Service.

Post meeting note: after checking the agreement that we have with the Probation Service it was noted that the agreement requires us to have insurance. This has been rectified for the future.

- Solar powered blind in the Lady Chapel is making a noise and it is annoying. The blind needs to work as it can get very bright when the sun shines in from that window. Quote to be sought for its repair or replacement.
- Quote for porch repairs has been received for £1,700 (no VAT as not a VAT registered company). Work needs to be done. Acceptance of the quote was proposed and seconded and all were in favour of the quote being accepted and the work being instructed.
- Homeless visitor is back in the garden and using the shed to sleep in. They had previously been asked to move on and are now back, using the hall to charge their phone and use the toilet facilities. This is a safeguarding and public liability issue. They will be asked to leave again, and PCC will arrange for a padlock to be put on the shed door. Will also write to local councillors about the issue generally.

7. Health Safety and Environment

No matters were raised.

8. Future events

Events diary:

- **Art Festival 26 – 29 September:** lots of interest registered with two actual entries received. Julie will do the catering for the private view and the mayor has accepted their invitation. Need more help with stewarding and volunteers in general. Thank you to Andrew who has been helping with Art Festival logo design.
Action: proposed costs for running the event to be submitted
- **11th October quiz:** this needs publicising. Rob will be running this one.
- **6 - 7 December Christmas Tree Festival:** 12 trees entered already, and two adverts placed which cover the costs of the programme.

9. Chairman's Report

This focused on the **Vacancy process**.

A letter had been received from the Diocese, (copy attached to the minutes) which formally starts the process by announcing the suspension of the benefice. The differences between the two options in the letter were explained. It was also noted that St Francis and St Mary Magdalen would both be vacant at the same time.

There was considerable debate over which option to support. The main concern was the Team structure and whether this might mean that there is potential for Welwyn Parish to become a part of a team ministry. After much debate the PCC decided in favour of Option 1 and appointing an incumbent.

Action: secretary to write to back to the Pastoral & Closed Churches officer to confirm this along with an additional paragraph relating to our financial position.

Parish Profile: every member of the PCC has been given the opportunity to comment or give their views on the draft parish profile. Those received will be taken into consideration by the team who have been delegated the task to pull the profile together.

The PCC thanked the team for all their hard work on this.

The PCC agreed that a copy of the draft profile should be sent to Archdeacon Janet and Bishop Jane ahead of the vacancy meeting on 3rd September so that they could see what has been done to date. It would be stressed that this is still a draft and had not been signed off as the final version by PCC.

Vacancy Meeting: there is a vacancy meeting arranged with Archdeacon Janet and Bishop Jane, for 3rd September. It would be starting at 7:30pm and would be in the parish room.

10. Correspondence including Electoral Roll Update

Electoral Role numbers are 63 resident and 54 non-resident – total of 117, no increase on the previously reported figures.

11. Any Other Business

- the PCC were advised that the Royal British Legion had approached St Francis to host a service on the evening of 2nd September 2026. We have hosted in the past.

Action: Secretary to put on the agenda for next PCC meeting to discuss further whether this is something we could do.

Next meeting: 15th September 8pm in the Parish Room, there is no meeting in August.