

Minutes of The Tenth Meeting of the 2025/26 Parochial Church Council of St Francis of Assisi held on 19th March 2026 at 8pm in Parish Room

Present: Archdeacon Janet (Chair), Carol Jager (CJ), Sarah Branwhite (SB), Stuart Richardson (SR), Montse Day (MD), John Owen (JO), Andrew Watkinson (AW), John Butler (JB), Graham Bloye (GB), Cathy Bloye (CB), Pui San Apling (PA),

Apologies: Gavin Johnstone (GJ), Rachel Basch (RB), Eric Pavyer (EP), Rob Smith (RS)

Archdeacon Janet opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Archdeacon Janet welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for those mentioned above were noted.

2. Minutes from previous meeting held on 24th February 2026

The PCC asked that the published minutes show that there was a wide-ranging discussion on choir week and that they should also state that the PCC were supportive of the principles put forward. There were some reservations over the financial details and further reflection was needed on these.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the PCC Secretary.

3. Adoption of the APCM Pack

The draft pack had been issued to PCC members ahead of the meeting. Archdeacon Janet thought it was a good document which highlighted how active the church was. She also suggested that the Parish Profile was added as an appendix to the pack.

As part of the legal requirements ahead of the APCM the PCC is required to confirm that:

- ***The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse as well as those who may present a risk to others.***
- ***The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding and vulnerable adults).***
- ***The PCC have adopted all of the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practices Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults' policy) and domestic abuse statement.***

JB proposed that the PCC confirm that the above have been adopted and complied with, JO seconded the proposal.

The PCC voted in favour of this with no abstentions.

Audited Accounts: The Treasurer gave an update on the audited accounts; these had been submitted to the independent examiner who has requested some additional information in the explanatory notes. There has been no change to the numbers in the accounts.

The PCC agreed that the audited accounts did not need to come back to the PCC for approval and that the changes to be made could be delegated to the Treasurer.

Churchwardens: Archdeacon Janet informed the PCC that if no nominations were received for the churchwarden roles that the PCC could still operate without them. Churchwarden responsibilities would be divided amongst the PCC.

PCC would also need to nominate someone to be the recipient of correspondence that would normally be sent to the churchwardens and for them to have access to the Churchwardens email account.

CJ would also remain as a churchwarden until 31st August if no one was nominated.

If no new churchwardens, the posts would become a casual vacancy and if someone comes forward after the APCM we can hold an extra ordinary Parishioners Meeting to approve the nomination, and arrangements would be made with the Archdeacon to swear them in.

Archdeacon Janet also confirmed she would be at the APCM.

4. Safeguarding

The Parish Safeguarding Officer advised that everything was in order and that a meeting to discuss choir week safeguarding arrangements had been arranged for 23 March.

5. Choir Week

At the February PCC meeting a request was made for £5.4k for choir week and after much discussion by the PCC £3k was approved. Since that meeting the Treasurer has worked with the Director of Music to reconcile the costs.

The Treasurer will also continue to work with the Director of Music on a way forward for future years after Salisbury is over.

The PCC recognised that there are people going to support choir week who support St Francis but don't attend St Francis on a regular basis and are grateful for their support as choir week is seen as an important part of our outreach.

The Treasurer proposed that the £3k approved at the February meeting is increased to £3.5k to cover Choir Week costs, this is to come from the Choir Week fund and after Salisbury the Treasurer will work with the Director of Music on the vision for choir week for the future. This was seconded by PSA

The PCC were supportive of the approach described above and asked that their thanks be recorded for the Treasurer and Director of Music for doing such a thorough reconciliation of the choir week finances.

All PCC members present voted in favour to approve an additional £500, with no abstentions.

6. Matters Arising

The following items were discussed:

- **Roof:** The Treasurer gave an update on the roof; a quote has been received for £2.5k to undertake a survey which also includes the use of a drone; however, it will cost an additional £1.8k to get into the loft safely. These costs include VAT, and it is the same company/person who undertook the quinquennial survey.

The Treasurer asked the PCC to approve up to £6k to get the surveys done so that we can fully understand what work needs to be undertaken. JB seconded the proposal.

The PCC voted in favour, there were no abstentions.

The PCC also asked if the Assistant Warden could talk to Welwyn Hatfield Council again about solar panels. It is thought unlikely they will have changed their policy as Parkway is in the Heritage Zone.

- **Rob Smith:** Archdeacon Janet informed the PCC that Rob had stood down early as Churchwarden. Archdeacon Janet had spoken with Bishop Richard, and it has been agreed he can stand down without giving the two-months' notice normally required, and the decision is effective from 13 March 2026.

The PCC asked that their thanks for Rob's 5 years of service as a churchwarden be recorded.

- **Childrens Church:** an update was provided on what is happening with the youngest childrens group. A volunteer has been found to help with this group.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer reminded the PCC that anything like this she needs to be involved with to make sure we are safely recruiting volunteers and that they undertake the correct safeguarding training.

- **Electronic Storage:** an electronic storage solution is being looked into and a proposal will be brought back to a future PCC meeting.

7. Correspondence and Reports to Note

The PCC noted the Finance report and thanked The Treasurer for all of his hard work.

Archdeacon Janet handed out a copy of a letter from Bishop Jane proposing a meeting with all parishioners about the vacancy, support and next steps. It would be an open meeting to be held on 16 April either in the Church or the hall.

The PCC suggested that the meeting should start at 7:30pm rather than 8pm to allow as many people as possible to attend and that the letter should be emailed to all members of the church.

Archdeacon Janet will check with Bishop Jane that 7:30pm is ok with her and will confirm with the Churchwarden.

It was also suggested that something goes into the Pew Leaflet about the meeting.

Archdeacon Janet asked the PCC to continue praying for the process going forward.

It was also mentioned that a Prayer Group had been set up by one of the parishioners to pray for a new Vicar.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm with a blessing.

The next meeting will take place on 5th May at 8pm in Parish Room