

Minutes of The First Meeting of the 2026/27 Parochial Church Council of St Francis of Assisi held on 5th May 2026 at 8pm in Parish Room

Present: Archdeacon Janet (Chair), Carol Jager (CJ), Stuart Richardson (SR), Montse Day (MD), John Owen (JO), Andrew Watkinson (AW), John Butler (JB), Eric Pavver (EP), Penny Hooper (PH), Louise Lucas (LL) (in person from 8:30)

Present online via Zoom: Sarah Branwhite (SB), Louise Lucas (LL) (from 8:00 – 8:30)

1. Archdeacon Janet opened the meeting with a prayer

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Pui San Apling (PSA) and Graham Bloye (GB)

3. **Welcome to New PCC Members**

PH/LL were welcomed to the PCC and their first meeting by Archdeacon Janet.

All PCC members were reminded that PCC meeting conversations are confidential unless Members are asked to feedback to someone or asked to approach someone not on the PCC do a piece of work for the PCC. All were reminded that “Who said What” must stay within the group and should never be discussed outside PCC.

4. **Election of Church Officers**

Vice Lay Chair:

The Vice Lay Chair is appointed at the start of each PCC Year at the first meeting of the PCC. EP elected to the position

The following were all reconfirmed in post by the PCC

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Cathy Bloye

Treasurer: Graham Bloye

PCC Secretary: Sarah Branwhite

Electoral Roll Officer: Barbara Pavver

Appointment of Sidesmen: the PCC confirmed the appointment of the sidesmen as per the circulated list and asked that SR and JB should be added for the 8am service.

It was also confirmed that SR was re-appointed as Assistant Churchwarden at the APCM.

5. **Appointment of Two Parish Representatives**

GB and SR elected as Parish Representatives.

Archdeacon Janet summarised timetable for the interview day on 19 May:

- Visit to Applecroft School for questions from children - objective of this is to see how well they respond

- Bible study at church - objective of this is to see how well they work with adults.
- Meeting with local clergy
- Visit the vicarage
- Formal interview
- Discussion / decision

The process is confidential

Archdeacon asked the PCC to continue to pray for process.

6. Election of Standing Committee Representatives

SB stated that there must be a minimum of people on the Standing Committee; it normally consists of the Vicar, the two Churchwardens and two nominated representatives from the PCC, normally the PCC Secretary and Treasurer but it does not have to be.

The PCC proposed that EP as Vice Lay Chair, CJ as Churchwarden, SR as Assistant Churchwarden, GB as Treasurer, SB as PCC Secretary, two other PCC members should make up the Standing Committee, and this should be reviewed when the new Vicar arrives. MD and AW volunteered to be on the Standing Committee. CJ will also stand down when her term as Churchwarden ends on 31st August.

7. Allocation of Churchwarden Duties

CJ's term as Churchwarden ends on 31st August 2026, when we will have two churchwarden vacancies. Archdeacon Janet confirmed that we can have a casual election during the year. We would just need to call an extraordinary Parishioners meeting.

We need to look at how the role will be covered from 1 September. One person must be nominated as the churchwarden contact for email. Standing Committee to decide who will receive this.

CJ to provide a list of things that need to be looked after to allow people to consider what they could take on. CJ to agree with SR what he does and that he is happy to continue.

PCC will need to take in turns to do Sunday jobs such as notices, etc.

Keyholder list needs to be prepared. Full list will be needed for insurance. Once list has been compiled, we should make people sign for keys. Master keys can't be cut and the list in office may not be up to date.

8. Minutes from the meeting held on 19th March 2026

These and the summary set were approved subject to the sentence about the confidentiality of the agenda being removed as this is wrong.

Agendas, PCC/Standing Committee meeting dates and deadline dates for Agenda items to be published on the noticeboard.

9. Matters arising from the minutes (not already covered elsewhere in the agenda)

The PCC were advised that the production of the newsletter was being taken over by Cathy Bloye.

PCC photos for the noticeboard were also discussed, this has been left to individual PCC members to decide if they want to do this.

10. Events

Art Festival: AW informed the PCC that last year 40 artists took part with over 200 exhibits and around 600/700 visitors and quite a lot sold. Event was very successful, and it is assumed it would be done again.

Dates for this year are 1-4 October and will be open 11-6pm. There will also be a private view on 30th September and evening event on 2nd October which will be a dessert island discs event.

The budget has been shared with GB. Looking to raise £2,500 for the church and to split the profits between the church and charity. No charity has been chosen yet and looking for the charity to be a partner not just a beneficiary. Looking to split the profit, with 28% going to the charity which is why it is important that we have a charity that want to help with advertising the event, although last year the name of the charity that benefited from the event helped to bring people in.

Although not at the meeting GB had raised a comment that we need to be mindful of our own financial position when deciding on how profits are split with a charity, but he is supportive of the event.

Publicity last time said profits would be shared, it did not mention an amount and people did ask what was going to charity – last year was 30%

The Festival Committee were asked to consider if the split should consider how much they want to be involved and how well known locally. Charity may be more likely to help with advertising than helping on the day and this should also be considered.

The proposed charities are:

- Keech Hospice
- Resolve
- Danesbury
- Parkinsons Society Welwyn Hatfield Branch

It was also suggested that the Festival Committee have a conversation with Waitrose to identify a charity. Other charities nominated for consideration by the PCC are below:

- Willow
- Music 24
- Herts Homeless
- YMCA

And to maybe open up charity nominations to the congregation to see if they have any ideas. Maybe choosing a charity that supports young people might draw more young people into the church with their families. Festival Committee to put a notice in the pew leaflet

Our regular giving of 10% of income has been paused while we are not meeting our parish share commitments, but we do still give to charity through other fund-raising activities such as this.

The PCC asked who is on the Art Festival Committee, AW confirmed it was:

- Rob Smith
- Montse Day
- Tom and Charlie Sudell
- Zoe Jasko
- Andrew Jager
- Andrew Watkinson

The Committee also need to have someone take charge of the refreshments, Julie Owen did this last year but need someone new for this year along with volunteers to help over the weekend.

AW also asked the PCC if they had details of art classes/groups that might want to take part to let him know.

The Entry fee will be £3.50 and will include a drink. A lesson learnt from last year was not enough people went into the hall for refreshments. The ticket price last year was £3.50 but no drink, some visitors expected entry to be free. The majority of the money raised came from the raffle and sale of paintings

The PCC felt that the entry fee was in line with Christmas Tree Festival, and it was also suggested that the Sum Up machines could be used to take extra donations. The giving machine is an awkward place, and we may want to think about where this could go.

The Festival Committee are also looking at buying the Hanging system to reduce future costs, last year it cost £150 to hire. It packs up quite small, but we will need to find somewhere to store it.

The PCC approved a budget of £1500 and agreed to event going ahead. Charity to be advised when decided on.

11. Reports to be noted

Treasurers Report – noted

Safeguarding Report – SB read out Cathy Bloye's update, and this was noted by the PCC.

12. Correspondence

An email had been received from Jan Nafzger regarding the Altar Frontal that has been gifted by the Friends of St Francis. JB/SR declared a personal interest in this item as they are Trustees of the Friends of St Francis.

SR confirmed that a submission had been made to the DAC for an Archdeacons Approval.

It was also confirmed that gifts need to have PCC Approval to accept them, the PCC all voted in favour to accept the gift.

13. Any Other Business

Archdeacon Janet informed the PCC that she had sought further clarification from The Registry on the question raised at the APCM about being co-opted onto the PCC and requirement to be on the electoral roll.

The Registry confirmed that under Church Representation Rule M15 1K that someone can be opted without being on the electoral roll, but they do have to be a communicant of CoE and there can be no more than 2 co-opted members.

PCC Sub-committees should be chaired by a PCC member but should also consist of non-PCC members to provide a broad representation of the congregation.

MD informed the PCC that there are changes to Data Protection which are due to come in on 19th June. They are not huge, but we need to update our complaints policy to reflect the different ways that are available for making a complaint.

Our Complaints policy should also cover GDPR complaints in the same way as it does for Safeguarding complaints, it does already state that we will respond within 30 days which is in-line with data protection complaints.

SB also stated that our Complaints policy does need a full review as it makes no reference to employee complaints which should be handled differently, the policy was drafted to deal with complaints from parishioners.

MD proposed that the GDPR changes were made now, as this was the more immediate need and that the full review should be done later. The PCC agreed. SB to make the changes and bring the policy back for approval.

A couple of PCC members asked about the Trustee Eligibility and HMRC Fit and Proper Person Form they have been asked to complete, what was the reason for this. SB advised that all PCC members should have been asked to complete one of these when they were first elected to the PCC, but this had been overlooked in the past so now needs to be done. All forms should be completed and returned to SB either electronically by email or in paper format and left in the PCC Secretary tray in the office.

The PCC thanked AD Janet for all her support over the last year

Meeting closed at 21:45 with a prayer and the grace.