

Otley Parish Church.

Minutes of Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Monday 8th September 2025

The meeting was preceded by prayers from Norman Barr

Present: Allan Boddy, Tony Pike, Eric Cairns, Rosemary Ellen, Tom Raper, Kevin Keefe, Jonathan Joslin, John Simkins, Martin Hird, Ken Dale

In Attendance: Jenny Liston (up to item 3); Dave Auty for CNZ section.

1. Apologies: Barry Milner, Glynis Milner, Jackie Hird, Aaron Kennedy, Maggie Lolashvili

2. Declaration of interests – none

3. Safeguarding

3.1 The Safeguarding Policy had been circulated to the PCC. This policy was reviewed and accepted without amendment as church policy. Proposed by Tom, Seconded by John

3.2 Reviewing Social Media posts of volunteers as recommended by thirtyoneeight, the organisation which the church uses to do our DBS checks. After discussion, it was agreed to trial the 31:8 service on 2 volunteers who are known to post on social media and then to review the feedback which this screening provides. Proposed by Tony, Seconded by Eric

3.3 Extent of Lone Working in this parish. Jenny is meeting with the Pastoral Support Group in the coming weeks to discuss this.

3.4 Restored training. Jenny is due to do this training over the next 2 weeks

3.5 Questionnaire to Youth groups – this is work in progress

4. Minutes of the meeting held on July 21st 2025

Re 5.2 Tony restated his concern that the PCC has in place robust arrangements to ensure that any notes made about pastoral issues, and any email communication about sensitive issues which takes place between people on behalf of the church is compliant with GDPR Regulation. It was agreed that we would need to come back to this for a full discussion in a future meeting

The meeting minutes were accepted as accurate. Proposed by Kevin, Seconded by Rosemary

5. Matters arising not on the agenda

5.1 Change in format of one service each month. It was decided to defer discussion until Aaron could be present, ideally until Aaron had considered the discussion paper. In the brief discussion this evening there was broad support for variation in format, and acknowledgement that any change would not suit everyone.

5.2 The Prayer Team (John, Aaron, Erika, Pippa and Glynis) are arranging a Prayer Gathering on the third Sunday of the next 3 months at 19.30hrs

6. Events

6.1 Summer Messy Church. This was felt to have been a good event, thanks especially to Katie Mayer's organising/preparation and to Catherine Pettinger's talk. Numbers of people attending were about half compared to the previous one - this was almost certainly due to its timing in the summer holidays. Next Messy Church planned for October 18th

6.2 Heritage Open Day - September 13th. Thanks were expressed to those who had helped clear the area behind the Saxon Crosses in time for the event

6.3 Otley Folk Festival. September 19/20th. Martin, Chris and Allan are supporting this event over the weekend

7. Finances

7.1 Finance Report. Tony briefly summarised the circulated Finance Update. In response to a question he said that our Parish Share is likely to increase by approximately inflation, until we have our face to face review with the Diocesan Finance Director which is projected to be in 2028

7.2 Insurance Premium As outlined in the document circulated by Tony, our insurance premium has increased by a substantial amount of 15%. This followed a recommend 10% increase in the sum insured. As our insurance is provided by Ecclesiastical, who specialise in insuring church buildings, there is no obvious alternative. It was decided to stay with our current provider

7.3 Electricity supplier. Our 1 year fixed price electricity contract is soon up for renewal. The energy broker recommended by the diocese has reviewed available prices and found that we could save about 8% by moving to Smartest Energy with a 2 year fixed price contract. This provider is approved by the Church of England and it provides a 100% renewable supply. It was decided to move to this provider with a 2 year contract. Proposed by Tony and seconded by Tom

7.4 Budget for 2026. Tony is preparing a proposed budget ready for the PCC November meeting. This will be based on year up to the end of September 2025. The church reserves are reducing, because of recent deficit budgets. Please let Tony

know if you are aware of any upcoming major costs which can be anticipated. Tony outlined the major outgoings in the budget:

- Parish share – likely to increase by inflation to about £107 000
- Youth Worker £23-24 000. The 3 year initial agreement is completed in September 2026. We need to consider how to proceed, given that to continue this commitment is likely to mean continuing to have a planned deficit in our budget. Tony suggested that we consider inviting Missional Generation to the next PCC meeting (prior to the budget being set) to give a presentation.
- Energy costs
- Our Printer/Photocopier is coming to the end of its serviceable life. To replace this would cost in the region of £8000.

The total spending budget for 2026 is likely to be in the region of £200 000 – an increase of about £5000

7.5 AOB relating to finance. Our quinquennial inspection is due to take place next year. Tom agreed to review the last review to see if there any outstanding urgent actions which may affect our budget for next year

8 Properties

8.1 Carbon Net Zero

8.1.1 Appointment of an architect. Dave and Norman summarised the process of selection to date and Norman proposed that, from the final shortlist of 2 excellent applications, we appoint Carl Andrews of Soul Architects. His high level of experience with heritage projects lifted him above the other strong candidate. Proposal seconded by Tom. Decision was supported unanimously

8.1.2 Revised budget. The revised budget for the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) Expression of Interest application, which had been sent out, was presented. Dave presented the reasons why the budget has grown so significantly leading up to this application. This is not a result of the cost of new roof growing, but the need to include a range of other project expenses in the application. Acceptance of the budget was proposed by John and seconded by Eric and was supported unanimously by the PCC

8.1.3 Draft letter to congregation. The letter was discussed with the following amendments recommended:

- amend the total collected since the appeal to £62 800
- remove or replace the word 'further' in the final section to ensure that this request includes potential new givers to the project
- move the description of the wider scope/mission of the project and title that reflects this to the start of the letter
- suggestion that the letter needs to be signed by the Chair of the PCC

The letter will be redrafted with the above amendments, and the PCC supported the CNZ group to send out the revised version of the letter.

8.1.4 The PCC was updated about the next steps for the NHLF application which is the submission of the Expression of Interest. The church should receive a response within 3 months. If successful, we would then need to build up a more detailed project plan and budget. It was decided that we should go ahead with the application. Proposed by Tony and seconded by Kevin

8.1.5 Outcome of Energy Audit. To be discussed at a future meeting

8.2 Summer working parties. The reordering of the vestries and the development of the Mezzanine into a more usable storage space were completed over the summer. Jackie was thanked for co-ordinating all this, and the hard work of a small number of volunteers was acknowledged with gratitude

The high work in using a mechanical scissor lift was successful and the operation of the Clerestory windows is now significantly improved. Dave and Tom were thanked for leading this work (with a small group of supporting volunteers)

8.3 Environmental sustainability policy implementation. The next proposed step is to work on the development climate change resilience plan to manage the regular flooding after heavy rainfall

8.4 Kitchen Security gate for Rascals. Tom reported that he is having difficulty securing the services of a joiner to complete this work. He will persevere in approaching someone who has done other work for the church

8.5 Any other matters relating to properties

8.5.1 A member of the congregation fell backwards down the south door steps on Sunday. There is only a handrail on one side of these stairs and this accident may have been prevented by a handrail. Tom noted this and will add it to the list of outstanding work

8.5.2 Tom to review the last Quinquennial report to see if there are other outstanding jobs with Health and Safety implications which need to be prioritised

9 Youth and children's ministry John highlighted that donations for the Otley Youth and Community Centre, can now be made directly to them, and that they are able to reclaim Gift Aid. Further information will be put in the notice sheet

10,11. **Reports** from the Community Network Lunch (July 23rd) and the Otley Prayer Network (July 17th) were noted

12. Any other business

12.1 Extension of vicars' wall plate – no further progress. Kevin is in contact with the company responsible

13. Prayers at next meeting – John Simkins volunteers

14. Date of next meeting

Monday October 13th 2025

Closing prayers: Norman