

Otley Parish Church.

Minutes of Parochial Church Council Meeting held on Monday 24th November 2025

The meeting was preceded by prayers from Maggie

Present: Allan Boddy, Barry Milner, Glynis Milner, Norman Barr, Eric Cairns, Rosemary Ellen, Tom Raper, Kevin Keefe, Rev Aaron Kennedy, Jonathan Joslin, Maggie Lolashvili, John Simkins, Tony Pike,

In Attendance: Apologies from Jenny Liston

- 1. Apologies:** Jackie Hird, Martin Hird, Ken Dale
- 2. Declaration of interests** – Aaron declared an interest in item 7.3
- 3. Safeguarding.**

3.1 Social Media checks

Message from the diocese –‘we do not offer social media checks at the moment. These kinds of checks would need to be paid for by the parish, not by us at the Diocese, and we currently don’t have a system to reinvoice it. Unfortunately, this means that you can’t process social media checks’

3.2 Lone Working Policy

Jenny had circulated a draft policy before the meeting (see PCC area of website) This was a good comprehensive document but Tony suggested that it needed to be more specific for the various risks associated with our particular church buildings, and now Sarah is a lone worker with the departure of OCHR from the Chestnuts. Barry volunteered to review the policy and add some specific instructions and advice.

3.3 Security cameras

Shirley Parker has reported to the PCC that a volunteer had her bag taken whilst they were setting up for the Friday Café. Tom will consider the provision of a lockable cupboard for volunteer use. In the short-term volunteers are advised to lock the Parish Room when at all possible and place any personal belongings in the Tower.

This has reinforced the need for improved security. Ken and Kevin have sourced a suitable CCTV system.

Tom commented that the installation will require a List B application to the Diocese.

Cost thought to be of the order of £600 - £750.

Tom proposed that we proceed with this project, seconded by Glynis, passed unanimously.

3.4 Any other safeguarding issues

Norman reminded the meeting that the national church is being urged to move to external scrutiny of safeguarding procedures. It is unclear if this would affect safeguarding at parish level.

There are occasional safeguarding issues at Open House which are discussed with Jenny and Aaron. Any outcome will be communicated to the volunteers at Open House.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on October 14th 2025.

Approval proposed by Norman, seconded by Aaron, passed unanimously.

5. Matters arising not on the agenda: None

6. Events

- 6.1 Messy Church.** The second event this year went well. Kevin and Stephen Hey are sourcing a new banner to advertise the next session. The PCC expressed thanks to Katie Mayers and all the volunteers for allowing us to offer this type of service again.
- 6.2 Brighouse and Rastrick concert** – Great success and well attended, they will book again for next year. Retiring collection to be split 50:50 between the Roof Fund and the band but nothing received at time of this meeting.
- 6.3 Hug on a Tray Pre-Christmas Fayre** – Successful event which raised funds for the charity and the church Roof Fund. Thanks to Leslie and all her helpers.
- 6.4 Advent and Christmas events and services.** These have been confirmed, and Stephen has provided flyers to advertise.
- 6.5 Christmas Tree Festival** – Allan's team has this in hand, volunteers for the various duties are being sort at each service.
- 6.6 Water pressure in Mezzanine toilets and sinks-** During big events demand on the lower floor toilets starves the upper floor facilities and makes them unusable. Investigations have shown that the water pressure into the south end of the church is half that of the incoming pressure in the boiler house. Kevin has been looking into how this problem can be solved. To be discussed with Carl, our architect, at the next CNZ meeting (Thursday 27th November)
Tony proposed that the decision on the solution to the problem should be devolved to the Standing Committee, seconded by John, passed unanimously.
- #### **7. Finances**
- Tony reminded the PCC that we are all Trustees of the charity and collectively responsible for the financial position. He would always welcome questions about the various reports he circulates to ensure that members of the PCC understand the financial situation.
- 7.1 Finance Update** – see Tony's report for full details.
Tony gave details of the gifts received from each of Molly Sturt's three daughters in her memory, also a gift from in memory of Margaret Mudd from her daughter. Two of these gifts were for general church funds. As these gifts were effectively legacies Tony recommended that we follow our stated policy of transferring these to the designated Fabric Fund. Seconded by Barry, passed unanimously,

Total income from January to October for general use excluding the gift in memory of Molly Sturt was about £146,000, compared to spending of about £161,000, a large deficit of about £15,000 but about £6,000 less than anticipated in the budget. The cash balance in the general fund has now fallen to about £80,000.

We received further donations in October of about £6,800 (including gift aid) to the Roof Fund, following the appeal earlier in the year and the Christmas Fayre this month has raised a further £1,100. This brings the total raised this year to over £70,000.

We have received from the diocese the Parish Share requests for the next three years. The request for next year is only marginally higher than for the current year. This is a result of a fall in our reported attendance numbers for 2024, which was one input to the calculation. The figures for the current and next three years are:

2025: £103,337

2026: £103,590

2027: £106.697

2028: £109,898

All the accompanying documents from the Diocese are available in the PCC area of the website.

Tony had circulated the Budget for 2026 prior to the meeting. This indicated that we were likely to have a further deficit in 2026 of about £20,000, similar to the forecast outcome for 2025. The Church still holds sufficient reserves in the General Fund for this to be acceptable for another year.

After discussion, Tony proposed the Budget, seconded by Maggie, passed unanimously.

7.2 Wedding and Funeral Fees

Tony had circulated a proposal for the Parish discretionary fees with appropriate inflation-based increases. These were seconded by Barry, passed unanimously. We await details from the Diocese of the Statutory fees.

7.3 Vicar's Training Budget

This has been amended to change the approval from 'Wardens' (to reflect the fact that we have only one Warden) to the Warden and another church officer.

Acceptance of revised policy proposed by Norman, seconded by Barry, passed unanimously.

7.4 Any other finance issue – photocopier Toshiba have informed us 18 months ago that model we have is likely to become obsolete in the 2026/7 time period.

We would then have issues with servicing and parts availability. Best option for replacement will need to be investigated in due course.

8. Properties

8.1 Carbon Net Zero

8.1.1 Report on the meeting of the CNZ Committee held on November 6th 2025

The group had a positive Zoom meeting with representatives from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) See email from Norman for details. Meeting with Carl, our Architect, on Thursday 27th November to plan how to take the application forward.

8.2 Security gate in kitchen for Rascals

Conversion of the kitchen door to 'half and half' has been costed at around £2,000, not considered value for money.

8.3 Cost of regrouting nave and paths – Tom has met with Richard Houldsworth. Some regrouting already completed in North porch. Remaining work will cost of the order of £1000. Work will commence 2nd December.

8.4 The problem of slippery paths – The perennial problem of the slippery nature of the York stone paths in wet and winter weather was highlighted by a volunteer breaking her wrist at the recent Hug on a Tray event (albeit that she fell on the pavement on Kirkgate, not within the churchyard) The issue to be discussed again with the architect. In the short term we should consider better warning signage.

9. Youth and Children's Ministry

9.1 Refurbishment of vestries for use by Sunday Club and Youth

This work is mostly complete and the rooms are in use by the different groups.

9.2 Vacancy for a Foundation Governor at Otley All Saints Church of England Primary School

The size of the Governing Body is under review, if it is reduced this will affect the number of Foundation Governors, so filling the vacancy is on hold.

9.3 Email from Missional Generation

We have received an email from MG to the effect that they are in deficit and their sources of funding are under review. They will update us on their position in early December. Aaron offered prayers for the MG staff team and the Trustees in these difficult times.

10. Reports and correspondence received – e mail from Shirley re theft (see above)
Report on Prayer Team meeting from John (to be circulated with these minutes)

11. Community / Churches Together in Otley – John reported that the sale of the Methodist Church building has been completed, 'farewell' service next week. Our prayers go out to the Methodist congregation as they enter this new phase.

12. Any other urgent business

Kevin has reported on the various discussions with Leeds City Council, the Parish and the Diocese about the status of the churchyard. There have been no burials in the

churchyard since the nineteenth century but there is no record that the graveyard had been officially 'closed' and adopted by the Council.

The Diocese has now responded with the details of the procedure we need to follow to rectify the position and Kevin has kindly volunteered to continue to champion the process.

Kevin officially proposed the resolution that we declare a closed churchyard. This was seconded by Tom and passed unanimously.

13. Prayers at next meeting – Barry

14. Date of next meeting- January 19th 2026

The list of proposed dates for meetings throughout 2026 proved to have several conflicting dates for members. Allan will conduct a 'poll' of PCC members to attempt to schedule the meetings for the coming year.

Maggie closed the meeting with prayers.