

**Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Meeting of St John's Church,
Ben Rhydding, on Monday 9th March 2026**

In attendance: Rev Peter Willox, Karen Oxtoby, James Wright, Caroline Elston, Caroline Watson, Janet Munro, Andy Rayment, Sylvia Walker, Miranda Armitage, Lynn Haygarth, Dawn Jenkins, Debbie Walker, Mary Booluck, Nicola Stewart, and Peter Debney. Nikki Barber and Julia Jordan in part.

Apologies: Sharon Crosby and Mark Gurney.

1. Opening Prayer

The Rev. Peter Willox opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Appointment of Parish Safeguarding Officer

Dawn introduced Nikki Barber to the meeting. Nikki was duly appointed as the Parish Safeguarding Officer for St John's Church. Proposed by DJ, seconded by KO. All were in favour.

The diocese had updated the Social Media Policy originally agreed by PCC in 2025. Dawn had re-sent the amended policy to PCC for approval. The PCC confirmed they had read and approved the amended policy. Dawn will now circulate to all group leaders.

Domestic awareness training is now mandatory for all volunteers. Twenty-four volunteers require training. Dawn has set up training sessions for those who wish to do this in a group, others can do it at home online. Ad hoc volunteers are not required to do the training. Julia Jordan asked if a gift aid co-ordinator needed this training. The answer is yes. Thank you once again to Dawn for all her hard work as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Sharon Crosby and Mark Gurney.

4. Declarations of interest - None

5. Approval of PCC Minutes 12th January 2026

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting by the PCC.

Proposed DJ, seconded JM. All were in favour.

6. Any other business

Items for Any Other Business requested at this point to be discussed at item 16.

7. Report on 2025 Accounts

Julia Jordan, bookkeeper presented the 2025 annual accounts to PCC.

Julia compared the various movements in income and expenditure between 2024 and 2025. Regular giving rose by 1.9%. Hall hire increased slightly with the Otley Christian Resources Hub paying rental. More interest has been received due to the opening of the Skipton Building Society savings account. Expenditure has increased on The Work of the church by £7700 due to money spent on the vestry glazing, the organ and the quinquennial and the admin line has increased by £2.5K as the administrator worked the whole of 2025. We paid c.£5.5K less in Parish Share in 2025, £80K. Other than that, expenditure is usually similar year on year. The restricted fund of £53085 contains the money raised for the roof, hall, lights, and kitchen improvements. The £27K deficit in 2025 represents the money fundraised in 2024 but spent in 2025. The general year end surpluses are very similar, £2376 (2025) and £2164 (2024).

There is £88K in the unrestricted fund. £36K represents three months operating costs, £25K is designated for the Pastoral Lead role. This may need explaining at the APCM.

Can we still justify holding such an amount and should we be paying more in to the Parish Share. There will be more intense scrutiny of our giving from diocese in 2027.

Julia has taken over the Gift-aid reclaim from Alex. This is only for the 60% of people who pay direct to the bank and not via the Parish Giving Scheme. It is a considerable amount of work which could be eliminated if we could persuade everyone to join the PGS.

Action Point – to think how to address this problem.

CW/JJ

The 2025 accounts were proposed by Caroline Watson and seconded by Caroline Elston. All were in favour. Thank you to Julia for all her work in producing the accounts and to Caroline as Treasurer.

8. **Allocation of Mission budget**

The proposed mission budget had been circulated to PCC prior to the meeting. The PCC accepted the proposed allocation for 2026. The Mission Committee Chair had asked whether the money unspent from 2025 could be carried forward to 2026. Unfortunately, that is no longer possible.

Peter mentioned that the committee had suggested people could, if desired, give extra to a particular mission partner in envelopes through the plate and that money would be designated.

Dawn had recently looked on the mission page on the website and found it completely out of date.

Action Point – Mission Committee to re-write the mission pages.

Mission Committee

9. **Matters arising and pastoral news**

- Karen had sent Dawn the Sides Person job description.

Action Point – to add turning on the heat curtain to the list of tasks and to re-circulate.

KO

Action Point- Peter still needs to talk to the 8.30am sides people about the communion wine.

PW

- Pastoral Lead post – three people have applied and the interviews will be held week commencing 15th March.

- Andy reported that five people are keen to join house groups but three out of four are full. Andy has gathered resources from Dawn.

Action Point – Peter to try to announce information about house groups sometime in Messy Church. If the new employee's central role is networking, we may eventually be able to start a home group in a family context.

PW

- Peter mentioned some pastoral items and thanked PCC for underwriting the Purple Room which may unfortunately have to close after July unless someone else from church comes forward to run it as a community event.

10. **Format of Welcome Café**

Sylvia flagged up that the Welcome Cafe has changed in format over the past year, with some informal activities now included, and a more informal seating plan with which newcomers might feel uncomfortable? She is concerned as to whether we are fulfilling the brief for our received funding where it is incumbent upon us to signpost attendees to other services in our area. This is not happening. Another aspect of the brief is that the Cafe is not religious in tone, and there is currently a short epilogue. St John's has been in receipt of Council funding since it was started. Caroline Watson pointed out that the funding ceases at the end of March 2026 so we will not necessarily be restricted to a certain format when no longer attached to funding. The religious section could be added as an optional extra at the end if required. The format could be determined by the regular people who attend every week. The Welcome Café is not considered a church activity or primarily for vulnerable people. Peter spoke about developing the Sunday soup lunch for people on their own and the need to advertise this more widely.

11. Growth development plan

Peter informed PCC that five people had attended the Way of Faith course and that it had been a good group. The new lent course will start on 12th March and conclude on Maundy Thursday. Parishioners from Ben Rhydding Methodist's are also invited.

12. APCM preparations

There will be six PCC member vacancies at the APCM. Karen Oxtoby, Miranda Armitage, Andy Rayment and Caroline Elston have come to the end of their term of office. Miranda and Janet Munro have asked to stand down at this meeting. Karen, Caroline, and Andy have offered to stand again for re-election. Caroline W and Debbie are prepared to stay on as wardens. Janet Munro offered to organise the cheese and wine.

13. Reports

Wardens and Standing Committee – no committee meeting had been held.

Finance Committee

- Caroline informed PCC of three generous donations that had been received recently.

Property and maintenance

- The acoustic panels will be installed in the hall on 30th March. Caroline is still awaiting a suitable date for the hall door automation.

Environment committee

- Lynn reported that the Environment Committee had met to plan the earth Weekend and have prepared the posters and notices to promote it. She briefly went through the format of the weekend. The film 'Six inches of Soil' will be shown.
- The committee are still moving towards obtaining the Church Eco Silver Award and need to understand what church people are doing to help the environment. This may come in the form of a survey later in the year.
- The climate resilience plan still needs finalising and approving and we are currently awaiting the results of a diocesan environmental audit which has been already undertaken.

News from Diocese, deanery, deanery synod, CTI

- A deanery synod meeting was held with Bishop Toby.
- CTI - Peter has now stepped down as CTI moderator.
- There will no longer be a walk of witness on The Grove on Good Friday but we will hand out hot cross buns instead. Mike Coe will lead the Sunrise Service and there will be a joint act of worship around Pentecost. CTI is currently two vicars down.

14. PCC Soundbites

- The PCC was pleased to appoint Nikki Barber as our new Parish Safeguarding Officer, and we wish her well in this role. Tremendous thanks go to Dawn Jenkins for all her hard work during the last five years in the role.
- We discussed the development of the Welcome Café and its success so far as a community outreach group.
- We welcome your prayers for the appointment of the right person to the post of Pastoral Lead next week when interviews are due to take place.
- Finally, we would be extremely grateful if everyone who regularly gives to church by paying in to the church bank account could change over to **The Parish Giving Scheme**. The reason for this request is that Gift-aid payments are reclaimed automatically through the PGS, but when you pay direct to the bank account the Book Keeper must administrate a very complicated and time consuming Gift-aid reclaim through HMRC. Please speak to the warden or clergy who can help you set this up.

15. **Items for next agenda** - None discussed.

16. **AOB**

- Janet Munro asked PCC to consider whether St John's could purchase a defibrillator.

Action Point – Janet to research and revert to PCC.

JM

17. **Dates of future meetings**

APCM Monday 18th May 2026

PCC Monday 13th July

WSC Wednesdays 6th May