

# The Parish of St. John the Evangelist Newbury

Parochial Church Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025, beginning at 7.30pm

## Present:

The Revd. Gary Collins – Chair  
Leanne Fowler - Curate  
David Oats (DO) – Churchwarden  
Alison Foulkes (AF) - Churchwarden  
Simon Brown (SB) – PCC Secretary  
Kim Slade (KS) – Hon. Treasurer

## Also in attendance:

Andrew Kingston (AK), Melanie Brown (MAB), Chris Sears (CS), Stephen Kerry

1	<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Welcome</b>			
2	<b>Apologies for Absence &amp; Any Other Business</b> – Jeremy Wright (JW), Margaret Baker (MB)			
3	<b>Correspondence:</b> DO Boiler info, Revd Gary Inclusive Church, JW/MB Boiler feedback, Inclusive Church feedback. SK Litter email from OM.			
4	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> held on Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2025. The minutes were approved by the PCC with proposing AS seconded SK, all in favour.			
5	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes.</b> (Nothing)			
6	<b>Positive feedback since last PCC.</b> AF Lots of new attendees to church. SK updated that there seems to be some talented people also who I am sure would contribute well to the church. Revd Gary feels that we are moving in the right direction. LF updated that the doors are making a difference. LF is seeing quite a few people coming in and just sitting which is great and that people are recognising the church as open. LF fed back that the Downe House concert was fantastic. DO updated they raise £1,148. To Christian Aid. AF fed back that they sounded professional. DO updated that Downe House used the ramp for their instruments' fed back that people tended not to use the ramp when the curtain is in place, AF replied that we just need to have the ramp open. DO fed back that an arrow indicator could point the way to the ramp. MAB fed back that the pancake making went very well (approx. 50 people attended). Lots of support in helping to include LF, AF and MAB. Recent raffle raised £267 which is a record. Revd Gary updated that PCC that we need to consider whether we split the fund raising with 50% outreach once i-CAP is finished. KS suggested we have approx. £16k in hand with the doors to do. KS will share an update so we can reconcile the project expenses.			
7	<b>Vicars and curates report</b> Fr Gary updated we are preparing for Easter and the various rituals and trying to encourage people to be involved, and it would be good to explore Easter with new attendees. The APCM will be after the church service which may encourage more attendees AS suggested we serve coffee at the back of church that day. SK suggested the Parish Room may be more sensible as a venue. Revd Gary reminded us we should encourage people who come to other activities (as well as the 8.30 service) SB offered we could present a brief outline of our roles on the PCC to encourage people to get involved. Revd Leanne updated that she has been working on different services and will be opening the church from 0800 for silent prayer leading up to morning prayer. She will also be organising a parish quiet day. She also took her first funeral which was a privilege. AF and MAB fed back that she did well. Revd Leanne fed back that she is really enjoying her first year. Revd Gary updated that 28 <sup>th</sup> June at 11am is Leanne's priesting and on the 29 <sup>th</sup> of June there is a benefice celebration at St Georges (Leanne's first service.			

8	<b>Safeguarding</b> – Nothing reported. SK updated that Revd Leanne circulated a communication and there was a suggestion that we adopt safer recruitment for events (e.g. Soup Kitchen etc). SK asked whether we need to be more formal with our approach. AS suggested a A4 page yes/no. SK suggested a form of risk assessment. Revd Leanne asked if as a volunteer there a process is. Revd Gary updated that we need a volunteer agreement. SK reminded us we want people to get involved. AF updated that the number of guests is increasing, and the number of soup makers is decreasing which is a problem. AS suggested, he could do some recipe cards for some soup that works in ‘bulk’ . Revd Gary advised that we need to see what level of safeguarding form we need to have (reviewing St George’s approach) and we need to have a small steering committee covering volunteering and safeguarding.			
9	<b>H&amp;S</b> MB indicated that nothing has been reported			
10	<b>Greening Group</b> – SK updated we had a reminder that we signed up to ECO Church and are doing great things. DO updated that we should complete the form and see where we are with the activities and progress we have made. AF suggested we have done this, SK updated that we have not done this recently. Revd Gary updated that we need to get some focus on this. Revd Gary will review with SK.			
11	<b>Inclusive Church</b> – Revd Gary asked if there was any concern. AS fed back that it did describe us, he is concerned over schisms and would abstain. JW fed back that we should put a review date on anything we join. Revd Gary indicated this would help us get the message out that we are an inclusive church. The PCC were asked to vote to be part of the inclusive church network. SB ensured all the			
12	<b>Financials</b> KS updated the PCC on finances. We have had the accounts back from the accountants so we should be able to get the report out for approval prior to the APCM. She also updated that she has finished the slides and the annual report. On i-CAP finances, we have raised c £105k with £8k loan from PCC. I-CAP has had £113k in and £76k via Good exchange (for match funding). £10k from Berkshire Historic Churches and had £15k back in VAT rebates. So far, we have spent £97.5k on i-CAP. In our current accounts we have £16.8k of i-CAP funds left. We continue to get some donations through. What’s outstanding? (doors?) DO updated the door refurbishment and the cleaning of the baptistry ceiling. KS asked whether when we get final bill we should pay the PCC loan back. AK updated we should do the doors in scope. MAB asked what happens to the maintenance of the doors. AK replied we should get a 6-month service and we should find somebody to maintain the doors (potentially use the contractor that St George’s use). Revd Gary thanked all involved in getting the project in on budget. Bishop Mary will be coming down to consecrate the new doors.			
13	<b>Deanery Update</b> – Revd Gary updated we have a new Associate Archdeacon in our area. The PCC passed on our congratulations to Revd Paul Cowan on his new appointment.			
14	<b>i-cap</b> DO Wooden doors will be refurbished in April. <b>Boiler DO</b> proposing that his details are shared. The PCC approved. The design has gone out to tender and are awaiting a response. DO updated that PV panels would be beneficial (for a future project) but did not recommend that we also install storage batteries which are heavy and difficult to place. AS clarified that without batteries any excess would go to the grid, if we are not generating then we would get electricity from the grid. KS updated that the pumps had to be replaced and we ensured they are compatible for the future and will be integrated into the new system. DO updated we will need upgraded electrical 3 phase supply from the road into the church. DO attended an Eco church meeting and lots of information came back regarding fund raising and will circulate information and there is a lot of interest in community helping churches go green. DO updated once we have the costs we can progress with fundraising. SK asked about Parish Room heating, DO updated its not part of the current project but we can feed backwards into the Parish Room, radiators replacing current heaters. DO updated that hot water will remain in under the sink heaters.			

15	<b>Organ – CS</b> updated we need an additional quote, and we should have that in May. When we get that we should be able to make some progress.		
16	<b>Fabric –</b> Brickwork fixes (to resolve at least 3 cracks) Brickwork at the entrance is now completed, now in keeping with the original brickwork. AK asked Revd Gary to think about the illustration for the glass doors.		
17	<b>Children families in Church –</b> Revd Gary indicated, work in progress. Families coming in, and some families growing. DO updated that it's a beautiful open space and lovely to see families and babies playing and it works well, and the people there seem to be at home. Revd Gary and Revd Leanne will investigate options. St Johns School had an OFSTED inspection recently which was very thorough, and we await the outcome. St Johns will have a new Head teacher, and Revd Gary hopes we could have a PCC meeting in school.		
18	<b>Dreaming out loud</b> - The PCC were asked for their immediate thoughts and dreams, 'if I could do one thing....' these included: <b>Cleaning</b> - Need to improve/formalise process for cleaning the church (professional cleaner quotes reqd.) <b>Solar Panels</b> – Review opportunity to source our electricity from roof mounted solar panels <b>Children provision</b> - Maggie carrying the cross and wider improved children provision, coffee area <b>Lady Chapel</b> – Glass panel dividers <b>AV provision</b> – Services display through the porch, AV displays in church (reducing paper) <b>PCC participation</b> – widen and deepen the strength of the PCC <b>Fundraising</b> – put our fundraising on a more sustainable footing, clear plan for deficit removal <b>Music</b> – Strengthen the choir with additional members including additional soprano		
19	<b>AOB – OM</b> promoted the idea of litter picking. LF said that this works well in Thatcham. DO would be happy to join in. AS stated, we have the 'kit'. Revd Gary asked for a volunteer, AS offered to organise the first one.		

**Closing prayer (meeting closed at 21:11)**

**Date & time of next meetings:**

24/04/25 (Thurs 7pm) Zoom PCC meeting to approve Financial Report prior to APCM

APCM (Sunday – after Church) 4th May 2025

