

St. Mary's Church Felmersham

Minutes of the PCC meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on 16th September 2025 at St. Mary's Church, Felmersham

Those present: Reverend Paolo Di Leo (PDL), Mrs. Sue Whitehouse (SW), Mr. Stephen Hill (SH), Mrs. Jane Wells (JW), Mrs. Elaine Longstaff (EL), Reverend Nick Munday (NM), Mrs. Liz Munday (LM), Mrs. Jane Carwithen (JC) and Mrs. Janet Welsh (JtW).

- 1. Prayer:** PDL opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 2. Apologies:** Mr. Graeme Dawson.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting:** were accepted. Proposed SW, seconded JtW.
- 4. Matters arising:** SW asked about the "Ask the Vicar" session at Sharnbrook Upper. PDL explained that this was due to take place in November and it would be about having a conversation rather than winning a debate. LM asked about the candle wax box. SW stated that it is in the vestry and any candles or tea lights can be placed in it, not just those from the church.
- 5. Church Warden's Report:** SW presented her report as follows -

A brief update on the building: I still have not heard from the architect in spite of reminders.

Early in the year Mr. Kinns checked the roof and found a little work needed doing. I had not heard from him in all this long dry summer but he assures me that he is not unwell, just very busy and we are on the list, so he will be along soon.

I have also heard from Boden & Ward and hopefully they will come and advise on the north west corner of the churchyard wall in the next month or so. It is likely to be a very expensive exercise to which the village is not going to want to contribute but we must cross that bridge when we come to it.

We now have permission from the DAC to proceed with the sound system and we have the list B approval. I will leave Paolo to say more about that.

- 6. Finance Report:** SH presented his report as follows -

Bank balances in hand are as follows:

| | General £ | Restoration £ |
|---------|--------------|------------------|
| Current | 1,434.26 | 1,635.25 |
| Deposit | 8,206.83 | 12,435.02 |
| | ----- | ----- |
| | 9,641.09 | 14,070.27 |
| | ----- | ----- |

The parish share for 2025 has been paid up to date to the end of September and the General Fund is currently stable.

With effect from August, HSBC have withdrawn the £5 monthly account charge that they introduced three years ago.

The Restoration Fund includes £404 dedicated to the bells and £4,342 dedicated to the new sound system. The balance of £9,324 is unallocated.

The quote from DM Music for the new sound system is £14,990 including VAT. This can be met from Restoration Fund money plus the transfer of £1,600 from the General Fund, which will bring to nil the balance of money in the General Fund restricted to "digitisation, mission and outreach". The donor has approved this application of the restricted money. The purposes of the Restoration Fund include "Restoration, repair, renewal, alteration or enhancement...of...permanent or semi-permanent fittings including...sound...systems". The unallocated Restoration Fund money can accordingly be put to this use.

It was agreed without a formal resolution that we would seek to be supportive of making some funding available, possibly in conjunction with the Town Lot Charity, to families in need known to Pinchmill School. No money would be formally designated, nor would restricted donations be sought at this early stage of this initiative.

7. Rector's Report: PDL presented his report as follows -

Although not present, PDL was aware that the open day at the church had gone very well and it was a good way of bringing the church and village together. LM stated that she would be happy to organise another event for next year.

Thanks to Liz for a lovely curriculum this year with Open the Book. Faith Explorers is also going well and it was good to have the Souldrop children present at the last session.

It was great to have a full house at the last baptism with plenty of children present. PDL hopes to encourage more baptisms to take place within a communion service.

Fiona has now been commissioned as a lay leader of worship. PDL would like the LLWs to grow and find their niche. He hopes to have a service (probably at St. Peter's) celebrating the role of LLW.

Scarecrow competition - Liz will have an entry ready for St. Mary's. Judging is to take place on Sunday 21/9.

Audio system - as suggested by SH a budget of £15,000 was set. Two quotes were obtained, the first being an apparently simple system but costing in excess of £16,000 and relying on volunteer labour, and the second from DM Music was £14,990 but the company spent a long time at the church assessing the needs. The first quote was a private set up and there was no back up. However, the system offered by DM Music was more comprehensive. It is a stable company providing a warranty, service and training. A lot of thought had clearly gone into the suggested set up. The Diocese had advised that the installation required the Archdeacon's approval rather than a faculty and this approval had been received following a resolution to proceed with DM Music at a brief PCC meeting held on 22nd August. The resolution was now affirmed, proposed by PDL, seconded by SW. SW to contact the company.

8. Deanery Synod Report: LM stated that Ryan from the Diocesan Board of Education was a very good speaker and it would be good to invite him back. He gave models for how to teach R.E. in schools.

9. A.O.B.

JW stated that the last Tea in the Church will take place 17/9. The coffee morning on 4th October will take place in the church with the final one on 1st November will be at Riverside House. Sue and Andy Evans will bring Christmas cards for sale. Teas will resume next April.

The PCC unanimously approved the choice of a ciborium to be generously donated by Mrs. May Mills in memory of her husband, our late choir member Laurie Mills. Proposed by SW, seconded by SH. We are most grateful to Mrs. Mills. A faculty will be applied for.

The meeting closed with the Grace.