



The Parish Church of St George, Jesmond

Parochial Church Council

Chair: The Reverend Debbie Loughran

Lay Chair: Professor Janet Wilson

Secretary: Dr Nigel Russell-Sewell

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 08 January 2025

at 7.30 pm in the Choir Vestry, St George's Church

Present: Hilary Cullingford, Joan Grenfell, Lana Liu, Debbie Loughran, Alison Mattinson, Enid Pearson, Kay Plumley, Mike Ranson (Treasurer), Nigel Russell-Sewell, Brent Swinburne, Margaret Vane, Janet Wilson.

Apologies: Mike de la Hunt, Izzy McDonald-Booth, Ian Ness.

1. The Chair opened the meeting with a scripture reading and prayer.
2. All were welcomed to the meeting.
3. Apologies were noted.
- 4. Declaration of Interests**
 - 4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.
- 5. Safeguarding (standing item)**
 - 5.1 Sue Vernon (Safeguarding Officer) was unable to attend the meeting due to illness; the meeting wished her well.
 - 5.2 The Chair reported that safeguarding matters were up-to-date.
- 6. Minutes of the last meeting**
 - 6.1 Enid Pearson offered a vote of thanks and presentation to Professor Wilson, Lay Chair, for so ably leading the PCC during the interregnum.

6.2 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 19 November were approved. Proposed: Kay Plumley; seconded: Hilary Cullingford.

7. Matters arising and action log

7.1 *See revised Action Log appended to the Minutes.*

7.2 Gift Audit (24-11 8.1): this will be carried out on 26 January now the Hub presentation has been pushed back to February. Everyone will be asked to complete a form after hearing the sermon, and to leave the form on the altar during the offertory. This approach ensures the form is completed in the service rather than relying on people to complete at home and return. A draft of the questionnaire was circulated for comment. The same opportunities would be provided at 8 am and 9.30 am, with the form going out the following week with the e-newsletter for those who were away or attend on YouTube. A number of suggestions were made and PCC approved the approach. The Chair will ask Jonathan to compile and a final version circulated to PCC.

ACTION: Chair

7.3 Motion-sensitive lighting (24-11 13.2): a preliminary meeting has been held, but will be followed up. The car park remains completely dark. There is a damaged lamppost on St George's Close that Ian Spencer is aware of. Question was raised as to the ownership of the private road, St George's Close. The Chair is going to investigate with the diocese as inappropriate notices have been placed on cars that should not have parked there, restaurant/hotel patrons.

ACTION: Chair

7.4 Speed bump (24-11 13.4) has been repaired several times but keeps popping up. PCC is of the view that the speed bumps should be removed.

ACTION: Enid Pearson

7.5 Table of Fees: circulated proposed fees table for 2025. To be reviewed towards the end of the year annually. The additional heating was amended to £100 to reflect actual cost. PCC adopted, all in favour bar the Treasurer who abstained. The Chair will implement the table.

ACTION: Chair

8. Finance

8.1 Received: written report.

8.2 Noted:

- 2024 concluded in deficit due to the boiler and necessary costs. The Treasurer was not concerned by these as the spending had been carefully considered.

- The cost of the lectern steps impact on the deficit as a cost, although this is paid from a restricted fund.
- Planned giving has been steadily decreasing over the last few years.
- Charges for the Church Hall were similar to the previous year.
- Money has been saved on utility costs.
- Payment to clergy during the interregnum can all be reclaimed from the diocese and Jonathan is looking into this. These payments will be noted as a debtor in the 2024 accounts.
- Donations from the Catherine Cookson Charity (~£22,000 last year) were received towards the running costs of the church. The funds aren't restricted. However, they must not be used towards parish share; as set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (appended).

8.3 Endowment Fund: Barbara Peacock had a minute book from the 1960s and a cash book dating to 1901. The Endowment Fund had been set up in restricted trust by two donors for maintenance of the church, with additional support paid to the diocese. This fund was created before the Garden of Remembrance so the two are not related. Enquiries are ongoing regarding the substantive fund before contacting the Charity Commission to release the Endowment to the Fabric Fund and/or the Garden of Remembrance fund.

9. Organ Project update

9.1 A note from the Director of Music was received:

“The NLHF has awarded St George’s and Jesmond URC a grant of £163,000. This is for stage 1 of the Organ Restoration Project, which they have summarised as follows:

A grant for the Discover Jesmond 1888 project to save two rare T.C Lewis pipe organs and to create a heritage trail and events programme to connect the two churches and engage the community in their shared heritage.

Stage 2 will begin once we have appointed a project manager and Discover Jesmond 1888 is well underway.”

PCC offered congratulations on the success of the application outcome.

9.2 Noted: the Memorandum of Understanding with the United Reform Church requires the Vicar of St George’s to co-chair the steering committee.

9.3 Noted: a project manager is to be employed who will enable the project to proceed at pace.

10. Car park rental spaces

10.1 Kay Plumley noted the opportunity to rent out spaces to local businesses. There is a potential conflict with church activities. A discussion had been held in the past about potential for EV chargers for a number of spaces. Two quotations had been received from different vendors: Recharg; and Believ. The vendors would handle all costs

for installation and running. On this basis, the church would lose two or three spaces. The annual income from Recharg would be £2,500 from three chargers with a contract length of 15 years. Believ would offer £200 for two chargers for a contract length of 20 years. The Environment Group did not see the advantage of pursuing either company further at this stage. PCC did not consider EV charging to be an option for the car park at the moment, but to keep under review annually.

ACTION: Secretary

11. Review of Advent and Christmas

11.1 The Chair invited reflections of Advent and Christmas.

- 150 attended the Nativity but few stayed for refreshments so recommended these aren't provided in future.
- The Living Nativity went well and refreshments were well received, so will continue.
- 827 attended the Christmas Eve carol service.
- Nine Lessons and Carols, reported a nice balance of music with a mix of accessible and more challenging pieces.
- Giving at these services were up on previous years except for the Christmas Day service, which was lower.

11.2 The Chair enjoyed Advent and Christmas. The services will be reviewed for next year. Noted that St George's "likes to do it well". The Advent Wreath and Christmas flowers were stunning; and the music delivered to high standard. Hosting a Nativity service instead of the Christingle was the right approach as it brought in a congregation that was largely new to St George's.

11.3 Following a recent attempt by a younger member of the community to scale the pulpit steps during the sermon, it was proposed a barrier may be helpful to prevent injury; should someone fall there are a lot of sharp edges and awkward angles in the vicinity. Chair to take to buildings group.

ACTION: Chair

11.4 Reported: the Christmas Market raised over £4,500 despite the awful weather. Noted that advertising needs to be significantly further ahead as this year's was advertised with little notice. Three-monthly events cards will be available in future, eg for January-March events to hand out in December.

11.5 Carol Services were held in the care homes by Joan and Debbie with support from Drew. Joan was thanked for all she does for the care homes.

11.6 About 15 attended refreshments after the Christmas Day service. The importance of this ministry was highlighted.

12. Building and Projects Group (standing item)

12.1 Security lighting for the rear car park: covered above. There was nothing further to report.

13. St George’s Community Hub 2025 (standing item)

13.1 The presentation of hall plans at a congregational meeting was deferred to 23 February.

14. Reports from Deanery/Diocesan/General Synods (standing item)

14.1 None have taken place since the last meeting.

15. Churchwarden updates

15.1 Food hygiene certification and the use of the kitchen: users should be Level 2 trained. There is currently one trained user! The training is 45 minutes with an assessment that must be passed. Recommended that at least one person from each team that uses the kitchen should be trained to Level 2; to be communicated to all user groups.

ACTION: Janet and Chair

16. Any other business

16.1 The format of the APCM was noted, to be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTION: Secretary

17. The meeting closed at 9.40 pm with The Grace.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

PCC Meeting	Deadline for Agenda items
Monday 10 March	Sunday 02 March, midday
<i>Annual Meetings, Sunday 11 May (separate notification)</i>	
Tuesday 20 May	Sunday 11 May, midday

All meetings will begin at 7.30 pm. Venue will be confirmed in the agenda papers.

Dates to note:

25 May Joint Benefice Service during the Jesmond Festival, 10 am, St Hilda’s

ACTION LOG

Future agenda items:

March 2025 APCM format (25-01 16.1)

May 2025 Dogs on the Green (24-11 7.2)

January 2026 Annual Review of EV charging (25-01 10.1)

Meeting	Item	Action	Progress	Status
24-09	10.1	Treasurer to add the new Vicar to the Lloyds account as signatory; and ask if Kay or Mike would remain on account	The Chair has heard nothing from Lloyds. The Treasurer will start the process again.	
24-09	13.5	Chair to explore a 'calendar'	This is ongoing.	
24-11	8.1	Chair to pursue Gift Audit	Preparations underway (see Minute 25-01 7.2)	
24-11	8.5	Churchwardens to enhance Ministry of Welcome provided	Area for development following the Gift Audit	
24-11	10.11	Treasurer to continue investigations into endowment fund	Ongoing	
24-11	13.2	Enid Pearson to ask BPG to cost motion-sensitive lighting	See Minute 25-01 7.3	
24-11	13.3	Chair to ask Parish Administrator to put note about email scams in weekly sheet periodically	Complete	
24-11	13.4	Enid Pearson to ask BPG re repairs to speed bump	See Minute 25-01 7.4	

25-01	7.2	Chair to ask Jonathan to compile questionnaire and send to Secretary for circulation to PCC	Prepared and circulated for comment 250118 for replies by 250121	
25-01	7.3	Chair to speak to diocese over ownership of St George's Close	St George's Close is owned by the Church. PCC has been asked whether or not to enquire of entitlements of neighbours regarding access rights.	
25-01	7.4	Enid to speak to BGG about removal of speed bumps		
25-01	7.5	Chair to implement Table of Fees	Energy bills clarified and table now actioned.	
25-01	11.3	Chair to speak to BGG about pulpit barrier		
25-01	15.1	Janet and Chair to speak to user groups about Food Hygiene certification	Ongoing	
NEW ACTION		COMPLETED	NOT YET COMPLETED (UP TO 4 MONTHS)	NOT YET COMPLETED (OVER 4 MONTHS)