



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 Tuesday 16 September 2025

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

Present: Jonathan Booth, Joan Grenfell, Tom Klenka, Lana Liu, Debbie Loughran, Alison Mattinson, Izzy McDonald-Booth, James Parkin, Kay Plumley, Nigel Russell-Sewell, Janet Wilson, Libbie Wilson.

Apologies: Mike de la Hunt

Absent: Brent Swinburne

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 declarations of interest were made.
- 5. Minutes of the last meeting**
 - 5.1 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 16 July were approved (proposed: Kay Plumley; seconded: Joan Grenfell).
- 6. Matters arising and action log**
 - 6.1 *See revised Action Log appended to the Minutes.*
 - 6.2 The fence on top of the wall around the Memorial Garden is in a poor condition. Investigations are being conducted with shot-blasting as a potential for protection.

7. Standing item: Safeguarding

- 7.1 Written report received and noted.
- 7.2 The Chair noted that anyone who has been affected by the data breach has been contacted, with the exception of one person who is not known to either the parish or diocese.
- 7.3 Support for those impacted provided by Experian for one year. Proposed PCC review in 11 months time to see if the diocese would extend the support. Noted that 12 months support seems to be standard but we can ask.

ACTION: Secretary

8. Standing item: Finance

- 8.1 The Treasurer gave an overview of the “Giving Insights 2025” leaflet that had been circulated to both PCC and the congregation. Noted that we should have a budget that works without the Catherine Cookson fund as we should not rely on this.
- 8.2 Income: planned giving is reducing over time and this will start to cause problems if the trend continues. Church Hall lettings have recovered since Covid-19; there will be a 10% rent increase from January 2026. The “other donations” includes donations to the Hub, but this does not include grants or fundraising activities [*Post meeting note: Hub monies raised from all sources: 2023 - £80,933.18; 2024 - £91,255.82*]. People have not been asked to join planned giving for quite a few years; the up-coming ‘giving’ conversations may encourage people to join the scheme. The Chair noted that finance discussions should be held quarterly with the congregation in future; for example “if you want to do x , it will cost y ” so that people know what money is being spent on more clearly, and the cost of new activities for transparency.
- 8.3 Expenditure: Parish Share has reduced by 21% since 2020, even though income has been on an upward trend. Running expenses have increased: heating the church and hall along with electricity account for half of the expenditure. Charitable donations are a very small contribution.
- 8.4 Proposed: Charitable Giving policy of 5% of previous year’s unrestricted income to be distributed to charities. Unanimously approved.
- 8.5 Proposed: Parish Share be increased by 7% in 2026. Noted the diocese is aiming to have 80 stipendiary clergy; currently 71. 80 is a minimum the diocese can function on. But in order to achieve this Parish Share needs to be increased. Following discussion, counter argument proposed to freeze payment until the Hub is operational and we have an increased income. Noted that we have a responsibility to contribute to the diocese when some churches can’t pay their share in full, for example: St Hilda’s. If we don’t pay an increase in share, churches will close and clergy will be lost. Proposal for 7% increase in 2026, noting this is a pledge rather than absolute. Approved with one abstention.

- 8.6 A question was raised about our reserves policy and do we yet have three months running costs in reserve? The Treasurer will investigate.

ACTION: Treasurer

9. Chamber Organ

- 9.1 The cost of repairing damage to the Chamber Organ is £360. PCC requested to approve payment of £200 from the general fund, the balance being met from the organ fund. All approved.
- 9.2 Agreed that the organ should have better protection and noted that this was not the currently the case: the cover was placed on top rather than achieving its purpose. Secretary to inform Director of Music of funding and request to keep the organ covered.

ACTION: Secretary

Tom Klenka (Treasurer) left the meeting.

10. PCC Away Day

- 10.1 The date has been set for 4 October, 10 am – 2 pm. Proposed to meet at St Michael's in Byker (NE6 2FT). Nothing further will be sent out. Attendees should bring lunch. Apologies from Lana.

11. Standing item: Buildings and Projects Group

- 11.1 Meeting notes received. The PCC noted particular thanks to Ian Spencer and the group for all their work.
- 11.2 Derek Nicholson will speak to the DAC and Quinquennial Architect about the pulpit barrier to explore what this might look like and how it would function.
- 11.3 Recommended that temporary staging be available for use at the font as the current platform is too small for practical use.

ACTION: Janet Wilson

12. Standing item: St George's Community Hub 2025

- 12.1 There has not been a meeting of the Hub group since the last PCC; the next meeting is on 23 September. The next event is the Miley Cyrus tribute act. A food lecture will be held on 22 October, followed by a ceilidh in November.

13. Standing item: Reports from Deanery/Diocesan/General Synods

- 13.1 Deanery Synod report: the Director of Mission and Ministry introduced plans for next year's diocesan theme: 'sharing'. The diocese aims to have 120 new worshipping

communities by 2032 [noted St Hilda has five new worshipping communities from October]. Asked if Safeguarding had been discussed: not at this meeting.

13.2 Diocesan and General Synods have not met since the last meeting.

14. Equal Opportunities Policy

14.1 Policy received. Kay Plumley was thanked for preparing this as it will be useful for grant applications as well as good practice to have in place. The policy will be displayed on the website, back of church and in the hall. All approved for the Chair to sign the policy.

ACTION: Chair

15. Churchwarden updates

15.1 Janet Wilson reported that she is still the sole Churchwarden. She does not wish to stand for a further year if no-one else is interested. However, Janet will stand for a further year if someone else stands to allow for a hand-over. A job description is going into October's edition of *The Lance* which includes what a Churchwarden does and doesn't do.

16. Any other business

16.1 Freshers' Fayres at Newcastle University and Northumbria University: to note that Kay Plumley, Janet Wilson, Tom Klenka and Debbie Loughran spent the day at Newcastle University with a display of volunteering opportunities and events as well as services which generated interest. Northumbria University Freshers' Fayre is next week. Interest in Nosferatu. The Chair is having discussions about becoming volunteer Chaplain at Newcastle University.

16.2 Sound system: there is an issue with the speaker system which means in some areas the clarity is not as good as others, and there seem to be dead spots. Preference is to replace the system and do it properly rather than replacing bits or patching. The proposal is to upgrade the whole system with slimline speakers that blend in to the building. A slightly different system is required in the choir, and a new amplifier is needed. The cost would be £12,500 (excluding VAT). The fundraiser thinks there might be a grant available to cover all or at least part of this. Unanimous agreement with the proposal to spend the money and renew the system.

16.3 Rats: there is a large rat community on the north side of the church around the compost heaps and bins. Noted this is something we will have to live with as any attempt to remove them will encourage more to move in. Recommended that we should have locking bins.

ACTION: Janet Wilson

- 16.4 To note: the Bishop of Newcastle will hold the Confirmation Service at St George's on Advent Sunday, 30 November 2025, at 10 am as a joint benefice service. The service on 19 October will also be a joint benefice service to celebrate Reader ministry at 10 am.
- 16.5 Reported: the First Aid boxes have been checked and updated.
- 16.6 Requested: a report on service attendance numbers to each PCC.

ACTION: Jonathan Booth

17. The meeting closed at 9.35 pm with The Grace.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

PCC Meeting	Deadline for Agenda items
Wednesday 19 November	Sunday 09 November, midday
Wednesday 14 January 2026	Sunday 04 January 2026, midday
Wednesday 18 March	Sunday 08 March, midday
<i>Annual Meetings, Sunday 10 May (separate notification)</i>	
Tuesday 19 May	Sunday 10 May, midday

All meetings will begin at 7.30 pm. Meetings held on Tuesday will normally be held in the Choir Vestry; Wednesday meetings will normally be held in the Winskell Room.

ACTION LOG

Future agenda items:

January 2026 Review of EV charging (annual)

March 2026 Solar panels on church roof (annual)

March 2026 APCM format (annual)

July 2026 Review Experian support (2025-09-7.2)

Meeting	Item	Action	Progress	Status
24-11	10.11	Treasurer to continue investigations into endowment fund	Ongoing. Tom to speak to Mike (25-09)	
25-05	19.1	Chair to pursue signage for Memorial Garden	Meeting to take place 17 September 2025	
25-07	16.5	Izzy to share General Synod report	On its way	
25-09	7.3	Secretary to put Experian on agenda for July	Complete (as above)	
25-09	8.6	Treasurer to confirm reserves in place against policy		
25-09	9.2	Secretary to inform Director of Music re chamber organ funding and request to keep covered	Complete (250918 by email). Response from DoM: <i>"the covers do not fit on the organ when it is assembled. They are designed to protect the three constituent parts when the instrument has been disassembled. Janet and I did the best we could to protect it and will certainly produce a sign. Obviously, storing it in its disassembled state means we can't use it. With thanks for the financial contribution."</i>	
25-09	11.3	Janet to explore temporary staging for use at font		
25-09	14.1	Chair to sign policy	Completed	
25-09	16.3	Janet to explore locking bins		

25-09	16.6	Jonathan Booth to compile report on service attendance			
NEW ACTION		COMPLETED	NOT YET COMPLETED (UP TO 4 MONTHS)	NOT YET COMPLETED (OVER 4 MONTHS)	