



# 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 19 November 2025

at 7.30 pm in the Winskell Room, St George's Church Hall

Present: Mike de la Hunt, Tom Klenka, Lana Liu, Debbie Loughran, Alison Mattinson, Izzy McDonald-Booth, James Parkin, Kay Plumley, Nigel Russell-Sewell, Brent Swinburne, Janet Wilson.

Apologies: Jonathan Booth, Joan Grenfell, Libbie Wilson

In attendance: Dr Graham Rutt (Parish Safeguarding Officer) – for item 3

1. The Chair opened the meeting with a scripture reading and prayer.
2. All were welcomed to the meeting.
- 3. Standing item: Safeguarding**
  - 3.1 A written report was received.
  - 3.2 Question: When will the diocese appoint a new DBS provider? Expect to be in place in about a month. The Chair has had good experience of the new provider. The diocese will fund enhanced DBS searches, but 'normal' DBSs will have to be funded by the PCC.
  - 3.3 List of activities and groups using the church premises had been circulated. Anything that is part of the administration of the church such as PCC and any sub-committees are not listed. A number of groups were identified that were not on the list: fund-raising events, living Nativity. All to email Graham with anything they think is missing.

**ACTION: ALL**

- 3.4 PCC asked to recognise the groups on the list. Proposed: Kay Plumley; seconded: James Parkin; agreed unanimously.
- 3.5 PCC asked to approve the flow diagram for reporting. Proposed: Izzy McDonald-Booth; seconded: James Parkin; agreed unanimously.
- 3.6 PCC asked to approve the action plan which will be circulated for approval in January.

**ACTION: Graham Rutt & Secretary**

- 3.7 All members of PCC asked to check their training is up-to-date. Dr Rutt will contact anyone who has not fulfilled their training requirements.

**ACTION: ALL**

#### **4. Social Media Policy**

- 4.1 An outline policy document and proposal were received.
- 4.2 Arguments for and against were exercised. Noted that children in the congregation felt ignored that they did not appear on the livestream or images from events. Those who do not want to be part of images will not be. Both parents and children would have to agree for them to appear. They can, of course, change their minds at any time.
- 4.3 James Parkin spoke of his experience of safeguarding, particularly with children who have challenging support needs. Photos can be taken anywhere and everywhere by anyone. The Chair noted we need a policy for what we have control of. Support for a policy for social media use, including use of images of children with their and their parents' agreement was requested. With two abstentions, the request was approved, Dr Rutt was invited to compile the policy.

**ACTION: Graham Rutt**

- 4.4 Dr Rutt was thanked for his continuing work in this challenging area.

*Dr Rutt left the meeting.*

- 5. Apologies were noted.

#### **6. Declaration of Interests**

- 6.1 No declarations of interest were made.

#### **7. Minutes of the last meeting**

- 7.1 The minutes of the PCC Meeting held on 16 September were approved (proposed: Izzy McDonald-Booth; seconded: Kay Plumley).

## **8. Matters arising and action log**

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

## **9. Outreach**

9.1 James Parkin attended a meeting with the Chair at St James URC exploring student Christian ministry, creating a social space for students and young people (18-25) to develop their own faith. He subsequently met with the digital lead and discussed how students can be encouraged into Inclusive Churches such as St George's. James asked PCC members to suggest ideas for what we can offer to students (please pass ideas directly to James). These will be taken to the ecumenical group and then explored further with people from the 18-25 age group.

**ACTION: ALL**

9.2 James Parkin noted that JPC and Jesmond Methodist Church have nice banners outside their churches saying what they do. Proposed: a banner to be hanged under the large notice-board. PCC unanimously approved; James to continue to explore this with Kay. It was noted there are opportunities to improve the website.

**ACTION: James Parkin & Kay Plumley**

## **10. Vision update: away day follow up**

10.1 Following the PCC Away Day, a strapline had been proposed:

Inspiring places – Inclusive Worship – Rooted in God – Loving Jesmond

10.2 Other suggestions were brought to the meeting which featured the campanile, eg rising in worship, rooted in Christ.

10.3 The suggestion in 10.1 could be amended to “Serving Jesmond” and “Rooted in Christ”. “Inspiring Places” would be church, green and hall; this seemed confusing to some.

10.4 “*Inclusive - Rooted in Christ - Serving You*” suggested for pilot and different groups to be asked for feedback.

All asked to bring feedback to the next meeting.

**ACTION: ALL**

## **11. Standing item: Clergy Report**

11.1 The Chair reported on the last three months, which have seen so much to celebrate within the life of this Benefice.

11.2 We have been blessed through Izzy's licensing as a Reader and also both her and David's licensing as LGBTQI+ Chaplains for the Diocese; it was wonderful to be able to hold the Reader celebration service and celebrate the ministry of Joan and

Malcolm and to welcome Izzy into that team. I continue to meet frequently with Joan, Izzy and Malcolm to ensure that our ministry thrives and flourishes.

- 11.3 Our three readers in training are working well and I have met with each to work through a working agreement – they are now beginning to preach across the benefice and explore where their ministry may thrive in this place – James has been involved with me in discussions about Ecumenical Ministry with Students and he is going to head up a project over the next 12 months to take this exploration further with the support of JURC, MCC and other Inclusive Churches.
- 11.4 Our work with the universities has ramped up this year as we managed to get ourselves invited into their fresher fairs, both took different tacks with these and we learnt a lot from them – these led to some good interaction with students and lots of info about the benefice being shared into that community. This has since led to me being appointed as a chaplain to Newcastle uni and I have had lots of positive meetings with uni staff since that appointment – I led their remembrance service and had a wonderful thank you letter arrive yesterday from the Northumbrian Universities Officers Training Corps. This ministry will enable me to support students and staff in everyday life and also work with any students who may be exploring ordination, of course it will also give me opportunities to invite them to Benefice churches.
- 11.5 This isn't the only Chaplaincy work I do though and my role in Percy Hedley is going well although I feel that my main role is really to support parents and carers, with some staff support sporadically. It is still a vital ministry as those parents and carers have some of the most profoundly disabled children in local schools. I am having fun learning to sign a song with them at the moment from the KPop film 'Demon Hunters' which I am hoping they will perform at the Light Switch on service on 4<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30 pm.
- 11.6 I have had hundreds of conversations with different groups across the last couple of months – Jesmond Community Forum, Universities, Diocese and local all of which I ensure mention the churches I serve – sowing seeds and seeing where they germinate is a precious part of my role – but these seeds can take time to fruit and so patience is also needed. Kay and I were interviewed by the Jesmond Local about the Hub on Sunday and so watch out for that – coming soon.....
- 11.7 I think we have had five new people join St G 9.30 am in this time, four have stayed and have started to get involved in small ways. One didn't return after his first week with us – but we now have welcomers, who were trained recently, and who will hopefully enable a better first visit in future.
- 11.8 From a discipleship perspective we have been running the We believe course which has had around 12 people attending to find out more about The Nicene Creed particularly looking towards Baptism, Confirmation and Initiation into the CofE.
- 11.9 Our everyday stuff continues also and Little Saints which I attend weekly continues to attract new people almost every week, it is a real hive of fun and laughter along with support and friendship, Christine's welcome to the parents is appreciated and Maggie's talent at making everything out of a cardboard box is amazing. Jenny's support and chatter is a delight and the whole place hums with positivity.

- 11.10 The parish continues to meet in the most fab teams – and I have met with Eco, Children and Youth, Buildings and Grounds, Pastoral, Charity and Hub committees during this time along with having coffee with Tuesday Group most weeks. The full ministry team have met twice and warden / standing committee / safeguarding team meetings have happened also along with many conversations about finance.
- 11.11 Project 1888 meetings have also happened and I am co-chair of that group. Molly is a hive of enthusiasm and great things are being planned for the launch of the trail in April 2026.
- 11.12 We are aware that there are issues with hearing and the new sound system will be operational for the Confirmation Service which I am really excited about. I have had a lot of pastoral conversations and several people who would like to begin to explore a calling to ministry, which is a joy.
- 11.13 Home communions continue with 2 nursing homes visited weekly and a third fortnightly alongside many home communions in individual houses, these are a valuable source of company and spirituality to all.
- 11.14 We have launched a Bereavement Café to enable people to come to should they want to talk about the effects of bereavement – we had two people at the first one, one who had travelled a long way to come to us and both found it very positive and said they would be back in December.
- 11.15 Our local Scouts group asked if they could have access to church to show the Scouts what it looked like – James and I went along also and we and they had lots of fun – the biggest draw was the microphone – so they each spent a long time reading the Bible to each other over the system – how often do you find teenagers fighting over who is going to read the bible next? They are coming back in the summer and are interested in coming to support some services going forward.
- 11.16 The usual stuff has also happened – Midweek MP and HC services along with 8am and 9.30am Sunday services (and 11am and 6pm also). We held a prayer service for peace around the far right infiltrating our city, have done 5 baptisms, 1 wedding and 2 funerals with 1 interment of ashes.
- 11.17 Alongside all of this I have had meetings with Bishop Mark and AD Rachel, as well as the DDO team in the Diocese, been a member of the Deanery Development Group with Kay, attended Clergy Chapter meetings, walked alongside a couple of Clergy Colleagues, attended the Clergy induction day and Clergy study day – been trained in some ADDO stuff and Godly Play alongside attending an interesting lecture on Worship through the lens of autism. In my ADDO role I am working with 2 candidates and next week I am attending a three-day conference at the Hayes centre for this role. Izzy, Pauline and I attended Ruth Stradling’s licensing at St Columba’s Wideopen and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee of which I am a member held an away day.
- 11.18 And this is without the stuff happening at St Hilda’s – if you want to know about that just ask..... But just to say that the five new worshipping communities over there are open to all people and serve many and varied needs in many and varied ways.

## **12. Standing item: Finance**

- 12.1 The list of charities and donations made, totalling £8,000, was noted.
- 12.2 The Treasurer reported that the new Finance Committee has been set up and had met. The committee membership: The Vicar, the Treasurer, Jonathan Richards (Parish Administrator), Caroline Field (GiftAid Giving Officer), Mike de la Hunt (PCC). The group is looking at the main areas of spend and creating budgets to assist planning. The committee will meet every couple of months initially. The Treasurer noted he will be leaving the parish in April so a successor is needed.
- 12.3 The year-to-date is positive, income is £215,000, an increase on last year. We have spent £14,000 less than this time last year. Energy costs are the highest. New tariffs have just been agreed which will help bring costs down further. The current account has about £25,000 with monthly expenditure of £15,000.

## **13. Standing item: Buildings and Projects Group**

- 13.1 The Quinquennial Report had been circulated for information. Buildings and Grounds Group are well on top of repairs.
- 13.2 Noted the report does not cover the hall.

## **14. Standing item: St George's Community Hub 2025**

- 14.1 Janet Wilson reported £50,000 had been received from Garfield Weston Foundation, which is a great boost. Noted: the Heritage Lottery Funding application has to focus on heritage access and conservation, not new build.
- 14.2 A consultation was held with Mark Squires (local businessman/Lighthouse Project) to explore funding and vision. The whole site, including hall and green, make up the heritage alongside the church which will create a good narrative to support funding applications.

## **15. Standing item: Reports from Deanery/Diocesan/General Synods**

- 15.1 No reports from Deanery or Diocesan Synods as they have not met since the last PCC.
- 15.2 Izzy McDonald-Booth reported on the July sittings of General Synod.
- A major part of the agenda was finance and how dioceses are funded. The Church Commissioners have been asked to rethink how dioceses are funded, moving away from a project-based model which is not seen to be working, to fund more fairly.
  - The Abuse Redress measure and rules to enable survivors of abuse to claim redress has been enacted.

- The new Church Representation Rules were enacted and are published (previously circulated to all PCC members).
- Issues in Human Sexuality, a document ordinands had to sign, has been removed and replaced with Professional Conduct for Clergy document.
- A long debate on assisted dying; the Bishop of Newcastle has been appointed to sit on the Parliamentary Select Committee. Synod signed an amendment that disagreed with the bill and the Bishop of London is taking it back to Parliament.
- The current General Synod comes to an end in July 2026. The voting pool is members of deanery synods so it is important all our Deanery Synod representative places are filled at the renewal at the next Annual Meeting.

15.3 The Chair thanked Izzy for her work on General Synod.

## 16. Churchwarden updates

16.1 Janet Wilson thanked Mike and Linsley de la Hunt and Hazel Jones Lee for leading the Christmas Market this year.

## 17. Any other business

17.1 Kay Plumley had circulated a paper to apply for funding for solar panels on the east-facing roof of the Church Hall. Three quotes have been obtained and VAT is zero. The cost to the PCC would be less than £1,000 if we are awarded funding. PCC approved Kay to pursue.

**ACTION: Kay Plumley**

17.2 The Chair had circulated a letter to be sent on PCC's behalf to the Bishop regarding the House of Bishops proposals for LLF. PCC approved unanimously.

**ACTION: Chair**

18. The meeting closed at 9.34 pm with The Grace.

### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

<b>PCC Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline for Agenda items</b>
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.

## 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
25-05	19.1	Chair to pursue signage for Memorial Garden	Agreed and being actioned	
25-09	11.3	Janet to explore temporary staging for use at font	Debbie to look at creation of a platform	
25-09	16.3	Janet to explore locking bins	General waste bin now locks.	
25-11	3.3	All to send any activities not on list to Graham		
25-11	3.6	Graham to circulate action list via Secretary	Received, to be circulated with draft minutes	
25-11	3.7	All to check training is up-to-date and to complete any requested, sending certificates of completion to Graham		
25-11	4.3	Graham and Safeguarding Team to prepare social media policy to present to future PCC		
25-11	9.1	All to send ideas for what we can offer students to James		
25-11	9.2	James and Kay to explore banner		
25-11	10.4	All to pilot 'Inclusive – Rooted in Christ – Serving You' as strapline for St George's		

25-11	17.1	Kay to pursue funding for hall solar panels	The solar panel project has progressed to an application for planning permission and listed building consent, which went in on December 9 <sup>th</sup> (David Cullingford). And 2 grant applications have gone in. One to BEST (Newcastle City Council) and one to the Community Foundation. I plan to submit one to the Diocesan Net Zero Quick Wins fund, but they don't yet know when their next application date will be.	
25-11	17.2	Chair to send letter to the Bishop	Sent	
NEW ACTION		COMPLETED	NOT YET COMPLETED (UP TO 4 MONTHS)	NOT YET COMPLETED (OVER 4 MONTHS)