



at the heart of Alresford

St John's Parish Church

New Alresford, Hampshire



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

MINUTES – Tuesday January 14th 2025 at 7.30pm in the JPH

Rev Heather Brearey (via video link) , Rex Corfield (RC), Pearl Page (PP), Caroline Wheeler (CW), Maureen Skayman (MS), Diann Adam (DA), Rosie Waring-Green (RWG) Ian Waring-Green (IWG), Susan Roberts (SR), Lawrence Will (LW), James Lees (JL), Sue Clark (SC), Jackie Connell (JC), Colin Scott-Morton (CSM) Charlotte Ryton (CR), Jon Whale (JW), Paul Whiffen (PW), Miranda Pinch (MP) and Jo Whiteman (Minutes) Pelham Allen also attended as an observer and to report back – see below.

Apologies from Jude Cowen

1. The meeting opened in prayer. There were no declared conflicts of interest. See above for apologies.
2. Rector's Report – Heather reported that 'a lot' has happened in the life of St John's and in the wider Church of England. The resignation of the Archbishop and other negative stories around safeguarding in the national press have continued to occupy the public and their perception of the Church. Heather has received a letter from the Archbishop of York which she will circulate.

Parish life continues to be very busy and Heather was very unwell over Christmas with Covid and Norovirus. She is aware that many other people were also unwell. Heather is very grateful to everyone, including Bishop David who 'stepped up' to cover her period of illness. She is feeling much better now. Despite this November and December were wonderful with many answers to prayer for example: completion of a third Alpha Course, a new home group, positive meetings with Perrins School which has opened the door for St John's to deliver assemblies and be part of PSHE, meeting with Howard, Vicar, at Four Marks Church, Gift from St John's, Angel Festival, Nine Lessons and Carols, Christingle and the Crib Service. Numbers were up at all services which is bucking the usual C of E trend. The relationship building with families, including Sunhill School, has resulted in more children and young people beginning to come into church life.

Tim Uffindell will lead a quiet service of reflection once a month at St John's. PCC was also asked for approval for Tim to hire the church premises for his Soul Children group which is a Gospel Franchise. The approval is around safeguarding procedure. **Actions:** Penny will be asked to check the safeguarding element in the rental agreement. Tim, and Rosie, who will be supporting, both have DBS checks. St John's, (Heather/Sarah), need to check Tim's safeguarding policy and monitor any concerns that arise. The church can be deemed guilty by association.

Church Vision and Values - the March PCC will be devoted to this with 30 minutes for business and then the remaining meeting devoted to discussion of three questions: What works well and how can we improve? What hasn't worked well and what can we learn? What ideas and/or concerns have been raised since the last meeting? Heather urges us to continue to pray asking for guidance about what we should do to draw our local community to Christ. We need to think strategically and not just drift along. There was general agreement that doing less better is preferable. This was echoed by Churches Together

Actions: Jo to compile a table of church events, Penny to check safeguarding section in rental agreement, Heather/Rosie to check Soul Children's safeguarding policy and procedure

3. The minutes of the PCC meeting 12th November 2024 were agreed to be an accurate record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere. Actions outstanding from last meeting: Bees Knees/Rex to speak to Sam Scott see below.
4. There has been no Standing Committee meeting since the 10.10.24.
5. Finance Report – Because of the time of the year the accounts are 'in limbo' and Jon can't give an accurate position. Some headlines: regular giving has dropped by 6K, legacy giving dropped in 2024, fundraising is stable, magazine has saved 2K in printing, thanks to Charlotte, giving via card machine increased, interest on investments over 8K. Jon asked for the Expenditure over £500 document to be approved by PCC. There will be an extra 2K to be paid to Dan Groom once invoice is received. **Expenditure over £500 document was approved: Proposed by Colin Seconded by Jackie.** In relation to the magazine Charlotte asked for thanks to go to Liz Petheram who works so hard to secure the local advertising in the magazine. Colin proposed that the 100 club idea be shelved as only 24 people showed interest. Heather agreed and thanked Colin for his efforts commenting that it was probably just not the right time.
6. Safeguarding – the safeguarding email is arlevalleysafeguarding@gmail.com. Due to changes in the length of time DBS checks are valid for there are now a number of people who will require a new DBS check. Sarah will be running drop in sessions on 25th January and 8th February in JPH for people who need a new DBS check. She will contact people directly who need to attend one of these dates. She is also running two training sessions for those who need to do safeguarding training and have not completed the online packages that the diocese provides. These are 15th February and 15th March. She will advertise these dates in due course. There are no new safeguarding concerns to note.
7. Health and Safety – Nothing to add to the report. Rex and Paul did step ladder training for PCC. Names were noted for training records and PCC signed to say they had received the training.
8. Fabric and Churchyard including heating- The carpentry work on the West Room will start on the 3rd February, the decoration on the 10th and the flooring the week after if everything goes to plan. **Approval is needed for the decoration work, which is covered by a donation. The work was approved proposed by Diann and seconded by**

Maureen. Dan Groom continues to do good work in the churchyard and did a couple of extra jobs free, while he was there last weekend namely backfill to a grave and removal of a tree limb. March 29th will be a churchyard clear up day 9-12 more details to follow.

Heating - At November PCC we agreed to accept the quote of £1,824 (inc VAT) from Chris Reading Associates Ltd, to carry out a survey of the church, assess our requirements, and provide us with options. Mike Brennan (our contact there) agreed to fix a date for this sometime in January, but we have not heard anything so far about proposed dates. Last contact was on 19th December so Colin will give him a reminder. The other contractor, Christopher Dunphy Ecclesiastical Ltd, carried out a site visit in November, and has provided three quotes, as follows:

1 - A new 'wet' system, comprising a new gas boiler feeding 19 conventional radiators in the church. This is the most expensive, at £86,052, and has the disadvantage that it perpetuates our reliance on gas.

2 - Installation of 32 electric radiators in the church, for £63,850. This is the most environmentally friendly solution, but we have no information on running costs, and are currently trying to obtain this. The other issue is that it would involve upgrading our electrical supply to three-phase, which would come at additional cost.

3 - Replacement of existing gas burners with new units, still feeding warm air through the existing ducting. This would cost £46,518. However, this option was only ever considered as a 'stopgap' in the event of our existing system failing completely, and at that price is a pretty expensive stopgap!

All three quotes above are exclusive of VAT, and in the light of Jon's comments at the meeting about the future of the VAT refund scheme, there may be some doubt over our ability to recover this, which would increase the cost of each option by 20%.

WAY FORWARD. Once the results of the survey by Chris Reading Associates Ltd are received, the PCC Heating group will reconvene to consider all the options, and report back.

9. Creation Care - Rex invited us to look out for plants in church in the near future. The Eco Church (AROCCHA) silver award questionnaire has changed so will need to be completed again. The Rev Sam Scott, Winchester Diocesan Environment Officer may come to talk at a future Creation Care service or maybe attend a service with lunch and a talk afterwards.
Action through Rex - Bees Knees and Creation Care will look at dates and liaise/invite Sam. Sue R asked about whether the church could use plastic free cloths instead of JCloths. **Action: Rosie asked Susan R to source and buy some plastic free cloths, claim back the money and liaise with the cleaners**
10. Children and Families Worker – Pelham attended the meeting and gave an update of his work to date. He stated that the brief had been more of a challenge than envisaged. It will be difficult to measure the payback against costs of appointment. Heather and Pelham will meet to discuss his research and possible options.

11. Glass Door Update (Miranda, Lawrence and Jon) – Miranda has measured the door and has sent the measurements to Glass Space who quoted £18,401 including VAT. Assa Abloy have told us that unfortunately what we need is not within their production portfolio. Lawrence will continue to research options but with the understanding that funding a new heating system must come first. It was noted that, if and when, the glass door is installed the path leading from the door will also need to be redone to make it safer. Contact with the Church Architect was suggested at some stage in this project. Jon stated for the record that the heating system was a priority as was reducing the budget deficit, which is currently, and positively, going in the right direction. He also made PCC aware that VAT rules are changing and we may not be able to claim back VAT on capital projects such as heating which will impact the overall budget.

12. Events – 18th January 10-11am prayer time at The Methodist Church, 18th – 25th January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (no lunches this year), Churches Together will run Lent Course this year. Welcome packs to be made available for the Watercress Café held during the Watercress Festival on the 18th May.

13. AOB: Jon has received 2 letters one from Firefly and the other from CMS in thanks for our donations in what, as they both stated, has been a tough year. Jackie reiterated how important Churches Together is to unity in the Town and that they are looking to the future and planning what is relevant and possible in terms of events and activities. Rosie asked for PCC approval to purchase 20 more chairs for church while the discount is still available. Jon agreed the cost which is £3,600 for 20 chairs could come from normal church spending. **This was approved by PCC proposed by Susan R and seconded by Charlotte.** Heather thanked Paul for covering the Churchwarden role and asked for prayer for a new Churchwarden. Heather is also exploring the possibility of 2 Assistant Church Wardens to spread the load. She thanked Rosie for chairing the meeting and said that her term at Westminster Abbey was giving her opportunities for growth and learning which she will be able to use personally and for her ministry at St John's.

The meeting closed in prayer and PCC said 'The Grace' together.

Next PCC meeting 11th March 2025 7.30pm JPH