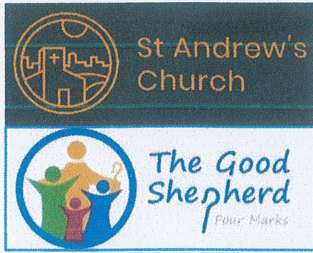


Howard Wright. 18/03/2025



**The Parish of Medstead and Four Marks**  
**Minutes of a PCC Meeting**  
**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025, 7.30pm**  
**at St Andrew's Church Hall**

**Present:** Howard Wright (Chair), Debby Barnes, David Duffin, Jeremy Griggs, Timothy James, Jackie Jurd, John Lofthouse, Frank Maloney, Pam Maloney, Bob Meekums, Ian Trotter, Andrew Walters, Jill Williams, David Williams (Secretary)

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Howard welcomed everyone to the first PM&FM PCC meeting of 2025, and thanked St Andrew's members for their hospitality.  
All members were present, so no apologies.

**2. Worship and Prayer**

Howard reminded everyone of the goodness of God in turning what had appeared in November as a potential annual deficit for 2024 of more than £50,000 into a relatively modest £18k, and maybe only about half that as some amounts had still to be included. So, in recognition of the faithfulness of God and His people across the parish, the meeting rose to speak out Psalm 100 – “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the Earth...” and to sing the hymn “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (from Psalm 96).  
Several members led the meeting, thanking God for ministry over at least 800 years through St Andrew's and around 125 year through Church of the Good Shepherd, and praying for the Spirit to give us a sense of “team”, for wisdom, discernment, patience and kindness, for the mission of the Church.

**3. Declarations of (Financial) Interest**

None

**4. PCC - Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024**

- a. Approval of Minutes – doc: *PCC Minutes 24-12-03.pdf*  
These minutes were approved *nem con* and signed as a true record.
- b. Matters arising
  - i. From 4.a.i. Howard reported that Virginia now has a property, a flat in Alton. She is grateful for the generosity of many who have helped her to equip her home. She is not yet able to drive, so pray for a test to become available for her to be more freely able to get around the parish
  - ii. the applications for her DBSs for both schools are now progressing.

**5. PCC Vacancies:**

- a. Churchwarden vacancy – Peter George-Jones had resigned as from 31<sup>st</sup> December. David Duffin is willing to re-stand. He had been elected at APCM 2024, then resigned to allow Peter to become Warden from the St Andrew's

worshipping community. Howard proposed to hold an SPCM at 11am on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February at COGS.

Ian expressed the concern of some at St Andrew's that Peter's replacement should come from that worshipping community. None had so far offered but there was still opportunity. Howard reminded PCC that Churchwardens are elected from APCM to APCM, so if David or another were elected, they would serve only until the end of April 2025. That gives time and opportunity for someone from St Andrew's to stand for election for a full one-year term. Meanwhile we have just one warden for the whole parish, Andy, and he needs another warden alongside. He and the parish are therefore in a vulnerable situation. This is in the context of the departures of our Area Dean and Area Bishop, which would limit access to outside support. Our agreed parish scheme provides for two wardens and two assistant wardens, and we are grateful for Debby agreeing meanwhile to remain in office as assistant warden with special representation for St Andrew's. Jackie expressed thanks to David Duffin for being gracious to offer to step up again having previously made way for Peter.

- b. PCC vacancies – There is one, Tracey G-J's space (until 2027), and possibly a second, David Duffin's space (until 2026) if he is re-elected Church warden.
- c. Howard expressed the hope that we can stabilise PCC to the point that we can begin to talk about and come with ideas about the way in which the Ministry and mission can be shaped. In turn we want to enthuse our congregations with what Jane and Virginia are doing. To help spread the news, it is proposed to take advantage of the coming Church of England requirement every five years completely to rewrite the parish Electoral Roll. We intend to distribute the Parish News to everyone on the new Roll, with provision to choose to opt out of receiving it. It is hoped to include a more balanced selection of material from both congregations (perhaps more photos from St Andrew's to accompany those that Jane and Virginia already produce).

## **6. Standing Team Decisions for report**

- a. Proposal to close CCLA account (see also note added to minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> December)
- b. Approval of finance for Electrical repairs following 5-yearly inspection
- c. Approval of finance for repairs to St Andrew's roofs
- d. Approval of St Andrew's Gas & Electricity contract renewal.  
St Andrew's LCG sought approval from Standing Team because the amounts required exceeded the local spending limits. PCC recorded its thanks to Peter George-Jones for his time and trouble to secure the contract renewal.

## **7. Local Church Group – meeting notes**

- a. St Andrew's  
LCG had met with the Archdeacon, but nothing regarding finance or governance to report to PCC.
- b. COGS  
Development of the Hall kitchen which has been on hold – we might start the

process of seeking planning permission. No actual building works yet proposed.

## **8. Finance**

### **a. Finance correspondence following the previous PCC meeting**

PCC members had received copies of correspondence about formation of a finance group and there was also online discussion. Three members had agreed to serve: Frank Maloney, Jeremy Griggs, and Rich Gillard (for 9 years a former treasurer of COGS).

### **b. Finance Group**

#### **i. Meetings of Group**

1.

#### **ii. Conversations with Rev Georgi Thompson Leask**

1. The need for a Treasurer - we could only receive the document to be considered as 'item C' on the afternoon of the meeting, and we desperately need someone qualified to interpret them for us. There is somebody looking at the possibility of becoming Treasurer, and another who is prepared to act in a consultant capacity but who cannot themselves serve as Treasurer.

#### **2. Secondment of an Advisor**

No external advisor has been proposed. When a Treasurer is appointed, Rev Georgi Thompson-Leask will be pleased to provide further advice, particularly about generating new income. She is prepared also to attend a PCC meeting.

3. Support of PM&FM staff through returning funds from CMF (see previous meeting, minute 8.a.3). No progress likely given the reported state of Diocesan finances.

### **c. Financial Statement to end of December 2024**

doc: *PM & FM – December 2024.xlsx*

The document only became available on the afternoon of the meeting. It contained two more months' worth of information (Nov-Dec). It was also apparent that the data were more complete and a reliable basis for future planning.

There had been a remarkable turnaround. A projected deficit at the November meeting of £52,000 was reduced to a likely figure of £18,000, and possibly as low as £10,000 as indicated in the cumulative figures for December 2024. There had been a notable response to the appeal made in November; income in October was about £10,000; in November it was £17,000. Some have committed to increasing their regular giving.

There are still further relevant sums to be added in. For example, there is income from December activity at COGS which is yet to be included.

### **d. Parish Budget for 2025**

Jeremy asked what plan was to be made for setting the budget for 2025, aiming for a deficit, for break-even or for surplus? From the 2024 interim figures above there were clear standing commitments – CMF, utilities, staff costs.

On CMF, the team had raised with the Archdeacon Jill's question about funding for our Family and Youth workers whose type of activity elsewhere would be done by a curate supported from Diocesan funds (December meeting, Minute 8). The response had not been encouraging. Frank suggested that to ease our cash flow we might temporarily withhold part of our CMF, though that would need to be made up before the end of the year.

Members were reminded that although some of the deficit was incurred through COGS payment of its additional staff, Peter had pointed out in October that at present St Andrew's is not covering its own costs either, and COGS appears to be carrying some of those costs. This could be seen from the separate lines in the interim accounts, even before allowing for the contribution that staff listed under COGS were making at both ends of the parish.

Frank said that accounts would continue to show each church's contributions to income and expenditure even within the proposed consolidated accounts.

PCC is very aware that the next meeting is well into the current financial year. If the team can make good progress in setting the Parish Budget, PCC should meet sooner.

We are still aware of the monthly shortfall in regular giving. Formerly the gap appeared to be about £5,000. Although with the latest data we can revise that down to about £3,500 it is still serious and demands a serious response as the budget is finally produced.

Members of the worshipping communities might be encouraged to support our staff expenditure if they were more aware of the value of what Jane and Virginia are doing in both areas. COGS has the advantage of seeing them in action on Sundays. We hope to raise their profiles through better distribution of weekly news (see also item 5c).

Jill and Jackie suggested that Jane or Virginia (or both) could talk to the St Andrew's community, perhaps through Café Church. In the longer term it is hoped to start a Sunday afternoon (4pm) meeting, which is possible because of staff availability across the parish. It is to be emphasised that this is not a replacement for Café Church.

Frank had observed that at a recent carol service in St Andrew's there were people willing to offer a cashless donation. While COGS already has this facility. It is worth St Andrew's exploring the use of a card machine and/or the publication of a QR code that allows people to donate with a smartphone.

- e. Progress on opening the new Parish bank account with NatWest  
The first application had failed because NatWest required details of every trustee (PCC member) and not just signatories. Members reported that this requirement had affected more organisations than ours.

A couple of members had been reluctant to give their personal details. It was explained that opening the single parish-wide account would not mean that the old St Andrew's account would immediately close. More significantly, until the new account is up and running, HMRC will not release Gift Aid accruing since April 2024. Currently that is about £35,000 and increasing month by month. This is an obvious hindrance to managing our finances.

**Note: since this meeting, all members have now supplied their details.**

## **9. Schools.**

- a. The recruitment for heads for both schools are progressing with some good candidates applying, with interesting questions coming about the Christian input to the schools. (The Diocese and inspectors already recognise the exceptional quality of what is being done, for example through RE weeks and Prayer Days.) Please continue to pray for the right appointments to the two Headships.
- b. We continue to have a vacancy at both schools for a foundation governor, alongside Tracey George-Jones at Medstead and Alice Marshall (resident in Four Marks though she worships at Christchurch Winchester).

## **10. Safeguarding**

Matt remains in the role of Safeguarding Officer in addition to all the other things he does. We continue to seek a volunteer to take this on. Matt is exploring how Angela Botham, in her volunteer admin role, might take on some of the routine Safeguarding admin. But we still would benefit from having a volunteer take the role of Safeguarding Officer.

## **11. Health and Safety**

Doc: *25.01.18 H&S Rpt.pdf* was circulated prior to the meeting.

Frank commended all those who had cared for the lady who fell by her car at the COGS carol service, as an example of how we should show the love of Christ in practical ways.

Both St Andrew's and COGS have external work ongoing requiring scaffolding. Frank reminded all concerned for the need to have proper Risk Assessments for such work in place at the start of all such activity

## **12. Any Other Business (to be notified before the meeting)**

- a. Full revision of the Electoral Roll  
The Five-Year full revision should be completed before the April APCM. Frank as Electoral Roll officer will visit all congregations in mid-February to remind everyone of their responsibility if they wish to remain on the Roll.
- b. There is evidence of a Church in Medstead recorded in the Doomsday Book of 1086. Jackie reminded PCC that 2025 marks 800 years since the first record of the name of a rector of St Andrew's in 1225. Some celebratory activity was already under discussion, and St Andrew's LCG was encouraged to plan for activity that points to the faithfulness of God over 800 years and more.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

PCC: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025, at COGS Church Hall – preceded by meal at 6.30pm. If appropriate because enough information has been gathered by the Finance Team to prepare and present a budget for 2025, an earlier Extra meeting of PCC will be called.

Howard closed the meeting with prayer at 9.25pm