

PARISH OF CIRENCESTER
St John Baptist | Holy Trinity | St Lawrence

Minutes of the Special Parochial Church Meeting (SPCM) meeting held at 11:30 am on Sunday 27th of July 2025 at St John Baptist Church

Present: Revd Luke Falvey, Aileen Anderson, Caz Cameron, Mark Dennis, Peter Ewart, Ann Farrow, Christina Gardiner, Ros Ivison, Chris Mottershead, Susan Mottershead, Michael Spittle, Hugh Thomas, Pauline Samengo-Turner, Robert Wheatley, Deidre Waddell, and Charles Woodd.

Apologies: Revd Canon Graham Morris, Sue Beck, Claire Pearson, Ian Robertson, and Mo Shepherd.

Revd Luke Falvey (LF) opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and reiterated that **the only agenda item was the one on the convening notice, which is to consider the *Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2024*** since that was not completed at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. He also offered to provide a printed copy of the report if anyone required one.

The Treasurer, Charles Woodd, led the discussion. He opened by mentioning that the *Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements* were approved by the PCC the week before, and have been published on the Cirencester Parish website (in PCC section) for review and inspection for a little over a week.

The Treasurer discussed the difference between Unrestricted Funds, Restricted Funds and Endowment Funds and the importance of considering these categories when determining the financial health of the Parish. He also emphasised the importance of differentiating between the living Church day to day costs, and the capital costs and use of restricted funds.

The Treasurer mentioned that we are still operating with a negative deficit, nearly £80000, in unrestricted funds but overall we can conclude we are in better financial shape than previous years for various reasons. Particularly, since Stewardship giving by the church community and visitor donations have increased, and since the overall figures were skewed by some required one off capital and maintenance expenses, e.g, a new photocopier was purchased outright for about £10,000 to save money long term. Additionally, grants received in 2023 for energy costs (as a result of the 2022 energy crises) also skews the baseline comparison between the years.

The Treasurer emphasised that although we are currently not in a long term sustainable position, there are reasons to be positive. The current financial loss is smaller, and the PCC is taking positive steps to increase income, particularly progressing along in developing St John Baptist as more usable for hireable events. The Treasurer also discussed the status and factors involved with the current balance of reserves.

Deidre Waddell queried how the St John Baptist Project — which consists of 3 main elements of installing 7 loos, a servery and replacement of the remaining Scott pews in the nave with light weight stackable pews — will be funded. The Treasurer mentioned that the Friends of Cirencester Parish Church is a possible option to explore along with other sources. Peter Ewart (PE), Chair of Finance Committee, elaborated on the progress of the St John Baptist Project. He mentioned that fundraising early in the project is difficult since the process of getting faculty approval is a slow process with the Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC) and we have not yet gone out to tender, so likely costs have not been properly estimated. However, he was pleased to report that the Winstone Trust had offered a grant of £200,000 but it was contingent on all three elements of the project proceeding. Following informal feedback from the DAC and its consultees the project team has decided not to proceed with the replacement of the Scott pews. The Winstone Trust is reviewing its position now that one of the elements has been dropped. PE reported he had discussed the matter with the chair of the Friends of

Cirencester Parish Church. Although the The Friends are likely to help, they see their first priority as funding the repair work to wall elevations in the North Aisle of St John Baptist, which project is just beginning and the costs are as yet unknown.

LF proposed the *Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements* for the year ending 31 December 2024 be received by the SPCM [to satisfy M5(1) of the *Church Representation Rules*]. Unanimously approved.

Mark Dennis, Secretary, emphasised that the *Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements* are publicly available on the Parish website and once submitted then through the Charity Commission website.

LF closed the meeting with prayer.