

Christ Church Barnston with St. Michael's and All Angels Pensby

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held after a service of worship on Sunday
11th May 2025 at 10.30 at St. Michael's

N.B - These minutes are unapproved by the PCC and will be taken to APCM in 2026 for approval

Present:

Rev Chris Slater in the chair

100 members of the Church Family were present as recorded on the list at the back of church and the counter. In addition, there were 20 children.

Vestry Meeting

Rev Chris advised that the purpose of the Vestry Meeting is to elect Churchwardens and that this is a whole church decision. There are 2 nominations; the current wardens Rob Moots and Viv Francis who have both worked diligently, patiently and incredibly hard through the last year and we're incredibly grateful. **Chris asked members to vote, there was a unanimous decision to re-elect Rob as warden at Christchurch and Viv as warden at St Michael's.**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies:

15 apologies were received from Church members recorded on the list at the back of church or informed directly.

2. Minutes of last Annual Meeting

These were accepted and unanimously signed. **Lois Millington proposed, Jane McCallum seconded. All agreed.**

3. Matters arising

None raised

4. Electoral Roll report

John Burgess as electoral roll officer for St Michael's and Vicky Bithell for ChristChurch have completed the full renewal of the roll to April 2025. This was presented by Vicky, John had previously given apologies.

Christchurch, Barnston 135 (147 in 2024); St Michael's, Pensby 123 (162 in 2024). Total 258 (309 in 2024). This is a complete renewal. Thanks to the parish for their assistance, the revised rolls will be sent to Cecelia in the parish office after the meeting and Alex Brassey will inform the diocese by email as is required.

Vicky summarized that there has been some reduction in numbers. 45 people didn't sign up again at Christchurch, however a large number of them were replaced by new members. 63 people didn't sign up at St Michael's again, but fewer of these were replaced. This leaves a slight shift or tip of the numbers.

Vicky expressed thanks to all for signing up and assisting her and John. She also gave a special thanks to Cecelia in office for all her work and patience.

Thanks were expressed by Chris to John and Vicky for their work on the roll.

Rev. Chris commented that these figures might seem disappointing, but it is not an accurate picture of the life of the church. It is really encouraging that a number of new people joined. He advised he has a job to do to go through the names but there were a lot of people who were previously on there by name but not really in regular membership. Also there may be some members who may not have got forms filled in in time for the count. He will work through the list. It is important to focus on the nearly 40 new people and celebrate this. He was not surprised by the drop; we can't be complacent and we must persevere.

5. Presentation of Annual Parish Reports and Deanery Synod Report

These were presented in the booklet that had been available and circulated. Thank you to all who prepared a report and contributed to the booklet. Also appreciation is given for the time and effort involved in those ministries.

Question – in the Faculty section it states that the interment of ashes will be on the north side of the church – should it say the south side? Bob Fiddaman clarified the mistake and confirmed it should be south.

Chris advised that the reports are compiled to inform the meeting. If reticent to speak in public, members can always approach the individuals who prepared reports if they have further questions.

6. Presentation of financial reports for the year ended December 2024

Presented by Paul Tolley. Bob Jarvis is the Treasurer, however both he and Rev. Chris thought it may be good to have a different voice, a representative from PCC. Paul explained the treasurer's role, but confirmed that it is the PCC who jointly approve the decisions and whom are responsible for this. At every PCC meeting the Treasurer gives us an update on the state of our finances in order for us to agree how we treat any unexpected financial issue that may arise during the year.

- **Overall Context** - the church is a registered charity, with the PCC as trustees. Rev Chris Slater signs the accounts on behalf of the PCC, these go to Roger Hughes as the Independent Examiner, whom examines the accounts. The accounts have been made available. These run from Jan 24 – Dec 24.
- **Overall Financial Picture** - the accounts show a surplus of £9,800. The Parish share was 'only' £75,000, the one minister rate. Substantially less than we would pay for two. This situation will not continue. The headline good news is that we made a surplus which means our income exceeded our expenditure by nearly £10,000. This compares to last year where we had a £68,000 loss. This will not be the case going forward because the largest ongoing cost we have is the Parish share which we pay to Chester Diocese to fund mission and ministry. This is largely clergy stipends and housing costs but also subsidises ministry in parishes. We have taken the decision to recruit an

Associate Vicar so our Parish share will nearly double when they are appointed, expected around end of 2025.

- **Summary of the Accounts** – in simple terms the money we have can be represented by 3 columns (Ordinary and two Legacies). The 'Ordinary' column is where most of the movement of money takes place, e.g receiving rent from Anton's Rd, donations, gift aid and paying out maintenance costs and general expenses. In 2024 the total income was £199,000 and we spent £185,000. After taking into account all movement of money in each account the net surplus has been rounded up to £10,000. The year end balance of the Ordinary account is £91,000.
- **Legacies** – there are 2 large legacies that are kept in separate accounts. Legacies are given either restricted or unrestricted. Linda Slorach's will restricts the legacy to Christ Church, Barnston for the upkeep of the church building and outbuildings. £15,000 was spent last year on the Christchurch window gratings works. The year end balance is £31,000.

In Julia Oxley's case we had no restriction on how we could spend the funds. A number of years ago the PCC made the decision to use part of the Legacy from Julia Oxley to help fund our Youth Worker and Discipling Co-Ordinator. £7,000 was spent this year towards the Discipling Co-Ordinator costs. The Julia Oxley account made £18,000 interest this year. The year end balance is £399,000.

- **Key issues** - Most of the regular giving is through standing orders. This has declined by 14% from 2022 (£127,000 this year) and while this is boosted by 18% via Gift Aid, our other expenditure is set to increase. For example we pay £18,000 per year in energy costs across the three buildings and this is set to rise again.
- **Looking ahead**

Regular giving may decline further. When we appoint an associate vicar, our parish share will almost double. We would also lose £10k worth of rent from Antons Road plus other costs associated with the appointment which points towards a possible £35-40,000 loss in 2026.

The current outlook financially is not very good and we know from past experience our buildings can be very expensive to maintain. The PCC recognize these issues and have formed a small sub-committee for finances to try to address some of the issues. We all need to pray over and think very carefully about this in the next few months.

- **Thank you** – From Bob Jarvis:

To Roger for auditing –helpful, professional and supportive

To Ce, for working with me and finding solutions.

To Paul, my co-signatory – for his thoughtful comments

To Sue, for her support and patience

- **Adoption of audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024**

The audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024 were **proposed by Bob Fiddaman and seconded by Matt Fairhead and were formally adopted by the meeting unanimously.**

- **Questions**

Can you confirm there are no outstanding mortgages against any of the properties. This was confirmed.

- **Final comment Rev. Chris** – Do remember that in the area of giving we have sent out the Putman family and a lot of giving was/is directed to their mission. Some people have passed away who will have been regular givers. It has not felt appropriate to do a big drive on giving when the financial climate has been so difficult for so many people. But we look forward to the results of the finance sub-committee.

7. **Fabric report has been tabled**

Thank you to Bob Fiddaman for all of his work.

8. **Deanery Synod report has been tabled**

David Reed came up to give this year's report as last year's report was mistakenly tabled in the booklet.

There were 3 meetings held in the north Deanery Synod. These were conducted by the Rural Dean. Topics included:

- Embracing age, understanding dementia and combatting loneliness.
- Safeguarding- safer churches, meeting national safeguarding standards.
- Family and youth, discussing the Love Matters report, valuing family life, empowering children and young people, supporting single people. How church can be active in all stages in life.

All meetings are open to any church members, who are welcome to attend, it is not just open to Deanery Synod members.

9. **PCC elections**

There is a list of PCC members at the back of each church and it is hoped there will be photos soon. Jane McCallum, Graham Hill, Carol Jordan, David Reed and Hilary Bird have all served 1 term. They are all willing to serve again. Lois Millington has served 2 terms. Anna Mountford is resigning.

Rev Chris advised we are allowed up to 15 elected members. Wardens are ex-officio. We previously took the decision to make it more workable and stick to a group of 12. This means there are 3 vacancies. There are new 4 nominations for 3 spaces. I propose that we accept the nominations and increase by 1 member. We recognize the commitment and decision taken to stand for PCC.

Nominations

Mark Chapman - ChristChurch Barnston (deputy warden)

Ray Evans – CCB

Jackie Fiddaman - CCB

Wendy Rowlands – CCB and (Little Tugs coordinator).

All 9 have forms have been signed with proposers and seconders and were agreed unanimously by the meeting.

10. Deanery Synod elections

We are entitled to 5 representatives. They meet 3 times a year and are a sub-committee of Diocesan Synod and ensures communication flow. **David Reed and Lois Millington are our representatives.**

11. Appointments

- Independent Examiner – Mr Roger Hughes, having undertaken the duties of Independent Examiner, indicated his willingness to continue and was re-appointed as Examiner for the ensuing year.
- Treasurer – Bob Jarvis has offered to continue to serve for the time being whilst a replacement is sought.
- Secretary – Alex Brassey is willing to continue.
- Electoral roll officers – John Burgess and Vicky Bithell are willing to continue.

12. Chairman's Report for 2024

Began with Statement of compliance:

the PCC has complied with the requirements under section 5a of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. Under the diligent leadership Coral Greenwood, assisted by Viv Francis, every PCC member has completed DBS checks and safeguarding training modules.

'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Amen. Rev 1:17-18

Jesus reassures John with these words, I am the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega. The first word and the last word in history. To say 'I am the first', is to say that there was nothing before me... He is before all things, He is the beginning, and from him all things come... that's how John starts his gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word...Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.' Or Paul 'in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.'

He's the first, nothing before him, everything is from him... Now think about how important that is for you. Who are you? The fruit of a cosmic burp? With no purpose, no value, no meaning, no authority to live by or under... No identity. You have to create yourself. Your success, your joy, your value, your significance, that's on you. That's pressure. And when trials come in, it's down to you. No divine hand to hold you. In the end, there's no hope. That's where millions of people are today. Actually, the reality of it is so bleak, we're beginning to see Gen Z come into church. Because we have a better story. We have an alpha point, we have a maker, who says, do not be afraid - I've got this, I've got you, I made you, I shed my blood for you, I am with you. As you start with me, and not you, you find yourself, your identity, value, dignity, purpose, help and hope.

I am the first, and the last, the omega. No word after his, there is no judgement, no battle cry, no command before him or after him... all history is rushing toward him all things will be under him, Eph 1. He is the final goal... He is the omega, which means the good life is the life that has him as our ultimate goal His reign, his kingdom, his glory. Our satisfaction, our security, our delight, is found in him, from him, living for him, for there is nothing and no one more glorious, worthy, brilliant, powerful, sovereign than him... We need to make Him our primary goal, our non-negotiable, our driving ambition.

But that's not how we come to him is it? Most of us come to him to get something from him, because we're our own Omega, driving ambition, he's a means to an end, help me Jesus, I

want health, a husband, a hand-out, a hand-up, a handbag.... we use him to give us the thing we're really living for. other things are our driving ambition, our omega.

but Jesus says 'I am the first and last, I am the beginning and the end... all things are moving to me, to my reign... what you need is me, the living one, the satisfaction of your soul, the one who has given himself for you and to you, as bridegroom, the keyholder, one who will bring you into the perfection of his forever reign, make something else your omega point, your goal, it will disappoint you, let you down, or, at some point you'll lose it, but make him your omega point you will be satisfied with him and in him and by him and you will never lose him because he is the first and the last, the living one... with life to give...

Now why am I going on about the first and last in a report? Simply this, because if its true - if this is our conviction and culture...by that I mean not what we say we believe, but what we actually believe in the moment, then it defines what we're about as Church, his people, it centres and sustains our ministry and mission.

If you come to Jesus to get something from Jesus, and something else is your end, your goal, your omega, you'll hang around a long a you're getting that. but: you're not going to put yourself out repeatedly, you're not going to jeopardise your comfort, you're not going to sacrifice willingly nor serve freely, regardless of the response you get. However, if Jesus is your delight, if Jesus has your heart, if he's your goal, pleasing him, loving him, obeying him, knowing him, enjoying him, then there's no stopping you...

And so I take great encouragement from the fact we can sit here today, and reflect on the Lord's kindness, on his provision for us, on his growth of us, because the level of sustained ministry and industry in his name, the fact that we're staff down put people have stepped up, the maintaining of ministry, administration, governance, practical help, the fostering of relationship, the bonds, care, support, the development of hospitality, pastoral work, seasonal events, invitational opportunities, community connections, mission partnerships, younger generations, seniors, safeguarding, and so on, the generosity, is overwhelming, the scale incredible, the man hours, immeasurable, the number of chairs and tables moved, incalculable...

Forgive me, but I can't begin to list specifics or name names to give personal thanks, I'm sure you understand, because when I began to write a list, it just kept growing... All that is indicative of the fact that God is at work here, moving us, maturing us, reordering us from the way we first come to him, to meet our end, to those for whom He himself is our end...

But we can't be complacent. We must never think we've arrived. There's always more weight to put on - to pick up on the sermon, until kingdom come, until the end for which we are saved arrives, there's gospel ministry to engage in. And though I've waxed lyrical about the much done by the many, the reality is the load is not spread evenly, and there are pressing needs, and new opportunities

So what do we need?

1, a conviction that Jesus is first and last.

2, a culture that believes it, a church growing in desire, delight and devotion to Christ.

We move from him meeting our end to him being our end through good old-fashioned discipleship. Believers together pointing one another to the riches and richness of Christ.

So it is encouraging to see a growing consistency in attendance at our gatherings, yet it is a source of deep frustration to me that the demands of the day-to-day have stood in the way of progressing vision, not least small groups. These are key to discipleship, to our growth and health. Where we're known, and engage with truth on a personal level, and build one another up and support in everyday relationship, some are up and running, but I dearly want to see them become part of the bedrock of our life together. So that's my ambition for the coming year...

But they're not just for discipleship, or at least, you can't sep discipleship from mission. reaching out to the thousands in our community and beyond, who have no idea of the first by whom they were made nor the end by whom they are secured and with whom they are satisfied, and it is our privilege and commission to reach them. The end himself has called us. Which is why we need to keep growing, towards having Christ as our end and goal, because only then will we have the motivation, the passion, the power, the awareness for mission. Only then will we be prepared to take the risk to comfort and reputation. Only then will we be alive to the everyday opportunities, Only then will we foster a culture of invitation... Only then will we exist for mission as fire by burning, and be the lampstand witness Xt has made us, together, in community...

Praise God for where it is happening. Thank God for where he's growing us. but friends - think on this, if Christ is the first and the last, the living one who holds the keys to the kingdom, the king of kings and judge of all, yet tender enough to say 'do not be afraid...' then, there is simply nothing on the agenda that trumps shining out with him and speaking of him. So everything we're about - needs to be about our end, the first and the last, everything we do, must either exist to help us grow in knowing him as our goal, or showing him as such by being his community marked by grace, that others encounter, or directly declaring good news.

This year, God willing, we're hopeful of the recruitment of an Associate, to start prob Jan. but he will be a part of the process, not the Archangel Michael! We all have a part to play, let's play it, for it is nothing less than the privilege of serving the one who first served us, the one who is the living one, the life giver, the gate keeper, the glory, the goal. the one who is the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of everything.

Thank you to everyone for all do, and are. Personally, as a family, we're privileged to be here, your support means the world.

Final point – We are one church family, across 2 locations. We need the same identity. This is found in Christ, and we need to be identifiable as the same within the community. I propose, having spoken to diocese registrar, that we become 'Christ Church Barnston and Christ Church Pensby'. I am not asking you to vote now as this is new, but needed to be raised while we are all together. We will hold a special vote on this at a future event where it can be a whole church decision. Rev. Chris invited members to talk to him about it further outside of the meeting.

13. Questions

- Regarding finances, it was reminded to the congregation that as a parish we give 10% of our funds to charity via the mission committee.

Prayer and blessing

Service and meeting closed around 12:30

Signed as a true record

Date