

The Parish of St Mary-the-Virgin, Wivenhoe
Minutes of the PCC Meeting on Tuesday 11th March 2025
at 7.30pm in The Annexe

To welcome & opening prayer: Erwin read a prayer based on the Book of Daniel – The song of the three young men.
Present: Erwin Lammens, Rick Cawley; Jane Taylor; Mary Jakens; Sue Jones; Bonnie Hill; Douglas McCormick; Sandra Osborne; Heather Edwards; Claudia Alsdorf; Sara Batts-Neale; Eric Jakens and in attendance Gill Black Safeguarding Officer
Apologies: Nick Gustard; Glyn Stanway; Hannah Cole; Sam Belcher; Gary Ranford; Greg Butler
Conflict of Interest - None
Conflict of Interest & Fit & Proper Person Forms – completed
Minute 2025\30 Minutes of the PCC meeting held on the 11 th February 2025 were approved and signed.
Minute 2025\31 Safeguarding – Gill Black Gill Black attended the PCC meeting and gave her oral annual report. Only two safeguarding issues had occurred during the year. They had been concluded appropriately. The outcomes were confirmed and documented. Erwin had been consulted during the past year as and when necessary. Gill reminded the PCC that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility. Gill asked whether the safeguarding policies for hirers was in place – details were in the terms and conditions of hire. The latest Diocese safeguarding newsletter declared the launch of a safeguarding dashboard, a simple tool recording local and national updates, 5 national safeguarding standards and asking parishes to evaluate their own progress. All Parishes are required to use the dashboard to track progress on safeguarding requirements and compliance. The evidence can then be shared with PCC members to evidence compliance. Timescales are as yet unknown. Any questions please contact Gill. Erwin asked that when training is undertaken those who have taken the course advise Gill with the name of the course undertaken. Erwin thanked Gill for her work during the year and it was good to know that someone was ensuring that we are up to date and focused. The courses required for PCC members are: Basic Awareness, Foundation and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. The link is https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training/church-of-england-safeguarding-courses There is guidance on how to access the e-learning courses on this page.
Minute 2025\32 Matters Arising a) Visitors Leaflet – QR code – this is still work in progress. b) Assistance with increasing giving. Douglas really needs someone to step up and help with ideas and delivery. St. Mary's bank balance is decreasing by £2000 monthly caused by outgoings exceeding income in part due to high utility bills etc. A strategy needs to be found to address this. In the past Douglas had addressed the congregation and asked them to review their contribution. It may be that this will be done again. £3500-£4000 per month is given by the congregation but outgoings exceed that. One of the things that has helped has been legacies and there is a small legacy due in the future. In order to claim Gift Aid people need to pay tax and some don't have sufficient income to do so. We only have sufficient money to subsidise the church regular giving for 4 years. Trio (The responsibility is ours) was tried previously. Ideas welcome. Due to St Mary's standing in the community, it may be that people may support the church financially even if they don't come to church. Tidings needs to be used as a vehicle for a general appeal for funds. A letter drop has also been used in the past. "Supporters of St Mary's Church" may be a way forward. Friends of St Mary's perhaps needs to be reenergised or changed. Perhaps the younger people attending could be asked to support it. Some of the publicity about the Church of England finances complicate the matter of fundraising. Parish Giving Scheme perhaps? c) Volunteers needed for various roles e.g. to assist at events with catering – see catering report. d) Environmental rep – Jane Taylor volunteered to be the conduit for information and she has recently received a request for her registration. Jane had met Kate the Diocesan Environmental Officer, but she had not registered yet. It may be that we are at bronze level. e) Student Lunch – this took place recently and 8 students attended and were joined by other members of the congregation. It was a great success. More people needed to assist on the day. It will start again in the autumn although it would have been good to offer lunches to those

who are here out of term time e.g. summer. Perhaps bread, cheese and fruit in future so that leftovers could be taken home by the students. Good feedback has been received from the students attending church.

- f) **Photocopier** – although the PCC opted to lease a new machine Bonnie had applied for a grant from King Coel's Kittens. She had done this before the PCC meeting but did not wish to raise hopes as nothing was certain about the grant being forthcoming. Bonnie had received good news that a grant for £3300 (£2750+£550VAT) had been awarded to cover the cost of the new machine. The Standing Committee gave permission for a new machine to be purchased. The only monthly expense will be the normal maintenance fee which is a great saving. An email thanking KCK for the grant has been sent and acknowledged. The Standing Committee hoped that the PCC would find this change of direction acceptable. The PCC approved of the change from leasing to the purchase of a photocopier.

Minute 2025\33 Correspondence

- a) An invitation had been received for a Diocesan study (half) day regarding Church Building Support. For the Colchester Area, the date is **Saturday 7 June at St Botolph's church from 10am until 1pm**. Erwin asked if one or two people from the PCC could attend. Douglas will attend.
- b) An email received from **E-Bound our roof alarm provider** to inform us that there are price rises which come into effect on 31st March.
- c) **Postage charges** on 7th April the second-class mail will rise from 80p per letter for franked mail to 84p. This will result in an increase of about £8.00 per issue. In the last Tidings there was a space where we had lost an advertiser but from May onwards a new advertiser will be in place.
- d) **Lent Appeal** Information received from the Bishop of Chelmsford regarding her Lent Appeal which is Supporting Housing Justice. A Christian charity that works in partnership with churches, community and faith groups across England and Wales to help provide those experiencing homelessness with a safe and stable home. Jane Taylor was unsure if launching a Lent Appeal at the same time as St Mary's roof and general expenses appeal was wise. Namalemba was mentioned but it was decided not this time. The Food Bank was also mentioned with contributions of food items. After discussion it was decided to support the Bishop of Chelmsford's Lent Appeal. Bonnie will produce a flyer and mark up an envelope to go into the service sheet being given out on Sunday 6th April.

Minute 2025\34 Finance – Douglas McCormick

Cash in funds as at 28th February 2025 - Statement

	Nominal Account Name	January 2025	February
Free of restrictions	General fund for running Church	£94,293.72	£91,139.14
Restricted	Bell fund	£12,244.67	£12,244.67
Restricted	Choir fund	£800.27	£800.27
Restricted	Fabric general	£9,519.89	£9,548.31
Designated	Legacies	£52,245.89	£52,245.89
Restricted	Flower fund	£719.15	£719.15
Restricted	FOSM	£10,632.66	£10,689.66
Restricted	Cory maintenance fund	£2,535.00	£2,535.00
Restricted	Organ fund	£370.00	£370.00
Designated	Sunday Club	£5,179.44	£5,179.44
Restricted	Wivenhoe St Mary's Music Society	£1,032.41	£1,032.41
Total Funds		£189,573.10	£186,503.94

Notes:

1. The overall Funds balance exactly with our various bank accounts and those held in the CCLA investment account. The split between the nominal accounts reflects the Treasurer's understanding of those accounts.
2. The audit and independent examination of our accounts is in progress.
3. Legacy of £3000 to come from the estate of the late Elizabeth Anne Jackson – not yet received.
4. Gift Aid for 2024 has been submitted to HMRC. An amount of approximately £13,000 is expected in due course. Douglas McCormick proposed that the £13,000 be allocated to the roof fundraising when received. This was agreed.

5. Proposal: Douglas asked for permission to allocate £30,000 from the CCLA Investment account and £30,000 from the Legacy Nominal account to the funding of the roof works. The balance of the CCLA Account would be £23,664.85 (of which £10,000 is reserved for bells) and the Legacy Nominal account would have a balance of £22,245.89. Clearly while asking for PCC permission to allocate these funds no monies will be spent until sufficient funds had been raised to undertake the works.
Douglas proposed the allocation of £60,000 as given in the details above this was seconded by Eric Jakens and agreed.
6. King Coels Kittens have given a grant of £3,300 to replace the photocopier.
7. We have moved our Utilities accounts to Yu Energy from Total Energies. Gas has been transferred as of 21/01/25 and Electricity will follow on expiration of the current contract later in the year.
8. Other matters worthy of note are the requirements of the Quinquennial Report in respect of repairs to railings, external stone repairs and the fact that included in the Transformation Project but not undertaken were the redecoration requirements for the main Church. The cost of the roof could be £150,000. At least another £90,000 needs to be raised. Grants are being sought at present to raise the balance.
9. There is a slow declining gradient in the balance. A large amount of money within the accounts is restricted.
10. The Independent Auditors have been chased by Douglas and Bonnie so that our Annual Report can be finalised.

Minute 2025\35 Fabric and Health & Safety matters Douglas McCormick & Mary Jakens

- a) **Annual Clock Servicing.** An engineer will attend and service the clock on 13th March at 10.00 a.m. This has been organised by Wivenhoe Town Council and is at their expense.
- b) **Church Railings**
Peter Terry had written to advise Dave Whymark that we will not be going ahead with the repair and repainting of the church railings for the foreseeable future. It was explained that all financial resources had to be committed to the roof repairs. He quite understood the position and was very gracious about the fact we would not be proceeding with the work.
- c) **Churchyard – Peter Terry**
Peter Terry was pleased to report that we have had success with the snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells that were planted last year. First to flower, the snowdrops are looking particularly pleasing at the foot of the tower, at the base of tombs, around tree trunks and either side of the benches. He very much hopes to buy more bulbs this year to add to the display.
The daffodils and bluebells bursting into flower are eagerly awaited over the next few weeks.
Over the last couple of months work had continued in the northeast corner. The two holly trees have been heavily pruned at ground level which has opened up a clear view of the many tomb stones that line the walls there. Most of the inscriptions are no longer visible, but one very simple stone clearly indicates 1750 as the date of burial!
It is very much hoped that Wivenhoe Town Council will remove the lowest branches of the walnut tree which will then allow easy access to the entire area. Many of the larger branches have been saved from this work and the intention is to create a log pile at the base of the trees.
Two new notice boards have been erected. One is tied to the railings and gives information about the wildflower area. The team have made use of the existing post in front of the walnut tree to display the second board which gives general information about our work in this area.
Finally, two substantial bird boxes have been attached to trees near the main gate. They will be watched with great interest to see if they are chosen as suitable nesting sites this year!
Thanks to Mick Wass for making and donating these and for climbing the ladder to erect them!
- d) The fault on the annexe boiler has been repaired.

Minute 2025\36 Mission & Ministry Partnership – Erwin Lammens

A prayer meeting followed by coffee, tea and pastry at St Andrew's in Greenstead had taken place. The next one is on 18 March at the Annexe.

Minute 2025\37 Inclusive Church – Erwin Lammens

A meeting in preparation of the radical welcome course (Inclusive Church Network) will take place as soon as a date can be identified with Lis McCormick, Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale, Revd Sue Howlett and Erwin.

Minute 2025\38 Adult & Children's Ministry – Erwin Lammens

Children's Ministry

- a) **The Sunday Club and The Way Youth Group** have each a vacancy for leadership.
- b) Revd Emma Smith will be leading the **Mothering Sunday** All Together Service on 30 March at

10.30am. Broomgrove Schools won't be taking part. Mothers like to spend Sunday morning with the family.

- c) The **All Together Team** will be preparing the service for 6 April.

d) **Open the Book**

Revd Emma Smith and Mary Jakens in person, and Brian Ford on Zoom have attended the training. One or two more volunteers to join the team are needed. Emma has emailed the schools and is awaiting their response. Open the Book brings Bible stories to primary schools by acting them out. Offers of help were requested, please contact Emma.

e) **St Mary's Youth Drama Group**

St Mary's youth leaders would like to set up a youth drama group performing Bible stories in the context of their lives here in 2025. They also wish to prepare a live performance of the Nativity Play in the streets of Wivenhoe. Hannah Cole is coordinating. There will be a planning meeting with Hannah, Nicky Matthews, Steph Driver and Erwin on 10 March. St Mary's has received £1500 from the Church of England Mission Opportunity Fund for its youth work in 2025. Before the end of the year, we have to report how the money has been used efficiently.

Adult ministry

f) **Communion assistant for home communions**

Erwin needs some help with visiting housebound residents who have asked to regularly receive communion. He has asked Jackie Hopkins if she would be willing to become a communion assistant for home communions. Jackie is a member of St Mary's pastoral visitors team. She has shadowed Erwin a few times when leading a home communion. She may need a DBS check. She will be using consecrated wafers.

It was proposed by Churchwarden Mary Jakens and seconded by Heather Edwards that Jackie Hopkins be approved as a communion assistant for home communions. It was agreed by those present.

- g) In her second Curacy year Revd Emma Smith will fulfil her annual placement in Wivenhoe from 3 March until 6 April. She will be leading services, participate in events and visit groups and individuals. If there is a church activity to which you'd like to invite her to during her placement please speak to Erwin, who is Emma's training incumbent.

- h) On Wednesday mornings in Lent in March and beginning of April Revd Emma Smith will run a **Lent Course 'Spot the difference'**. Emma said that she has only received two emails although fourteen people attended

Minute 2025\39 Away Day – some of the matters have been implemented so progress is being made.

Minute 2025\40 To receive reports and take questions on the reports from the following committees.

- a) **Fundraising** – Heather Edwards – No report

- b) **Catering** – Susan Potter

This weekend we did the refreshments for The Quiz Night followed by an informal lunch on Sunday for students from the university, who have been attending Sunday services. As Erwin described it was a very uplifting event, and the students could not have been more charming. Hopefully, if we can get more help we may hold other similar events.

On the offer of help I am happy to report that two ladies have come forward, not to be part of a team but to help at individual events when free, so that is a step in the right direction.

- c) **Worship Group** – Graham Wadley – Nothing to report.

- d) **Colchester Deanery** – Rick Cawley - No report

- e) **Wivenhoe Churches Together** - No report

- f) **FOSM** – Vivien & Bill Eborn – no report

- g) **Pastoral Visitors** – Gill Strudwick

Our last group meeting was on 5th February 2025. Erwin was supported by a team of volunteers. We said goodbye to Stef Goodman and thanked her for her support. We welcomed our two new volunteers Mary and Rosie to their first meeting. Everyone in the team has been given their new purple lanyard. Volunteers were given a list of useful people and agencies to help with their work. Our next meeting is at 10am Wed.7th May - 9 Woodland Way.

- h) **Administration** – Lynne Horner - Nothing to report.

- i) **Spirituality Steering Group** – Janet Driver – Nothing to report.

- j) **Church Bookings** – Nothing to report.

- k) **Bellringers** – Heather Edwards – No report

- l) **Electoral Roll** – Mary Jakens

A new Electoral Roll is required, and forms have been sent out via Tidings with an explanation of what the roll is and its importance. Forms will also be placed at the back of the church. The effective dates for applications are 12th March until the 26th April. Mary reported that forms were coming in and 58 forms had been received so far.

Minute 2025\41 – Community – Peter Hill Chairperson of the following groups

a) Friendly Club & Café

We continue to make sure each week is different to the previous week by have a bank of entertainers to call on as well as organising talks and quizzes. Last week Jo, Peter Kerr's daughter, entertained the Friendly Club audience of around 60 – 70 people with her Ukulele group. They were very good. We have the Hoolies singing sea shanties for us in March and Joe from the Microgym giving us all some exercises.

b) Wivenhoe St Mary's Music Society

We are planning a series of concerts this year which will start on Friday 30th May. We are very pleased that renowned trumpeter Crispian Steele-Perkins and organist Ian le Grice have consented to perform for us again on that date.

c) Wivenhoe Open Gardens – OG25 - Weekend 17th / 18th May

Plans are now well in hand for OG25. Our immediate challenge is to find people willing to open their gardens for either both days, or just one of those days. We had 30 gardens open last year. So far we only have 11 people who have committed, but it is early days. We do need to have everyone signed up by the 31st March though.

St Mary's benefitted from a grant of £2,100 last year. The small team running OG25 have agreed that the proceeds this year should again be split 50/50 between the Church and The Wivenhoe Society for use in supporting Wivenhoe good causes.

We would be grateful if members of St Mary's Church would consider opening their gardens, large or small, as they are all interesting. Or ask your friends with nice gardens to do so? And would you be willing to bake a cake or something to sell from the Refreshment Stall over that very social weekend or even help sell them from the Church stall.

Minute 2025\42 GDPR; Communications; Licensing; AV and Streaming System – no report

Minute 2025\43 Overseas - no report

Minute 2025\44 Any Other Notified Business

a) Church Clear Out Day will take place on 3rd May 10.00 until 12.30. Anyone with items in church will need to be present on the day, remove the items, or have them boxed and clearly labelled. Anything that seems surplus to requirement in all areas of the church and the shed will be removed and put in a skip. A note in the pew sheet needs to be published.

b) Next PCC Meeting – Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 19.30 in The Annexe.

The meeting closed at 21.05 with everyone joining together in saying The Lords Prayer.