



St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 2 June 2025

Present: Keith Hilton-Turvey (Rector) (Chair)
David Houghton (Churchwarden)
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)
Andrew Beech
Stephen Cheetham
Sue Cooper
Maria Dineen
William Hopkinson
Ian James
Anne Scull
Sue Simpson

Will Wake (Heating item only)

Apologies: Richard Nightingale

1401. Keith Hilton-Turvey opened with Psalm 18: 1-6, 16-22, 46 and prayer.

Minutes of meetings held on 19 March and 10 April

1402. These were agreed unanimously.

Minutes of the Standing Committee on 19 May

1403. These minutes were noted.

Safeguarding

1404. Keith Hilton-Turvey read the safeguarding policy, and proposed its annual re-adoption. This was seconded by Sue Cooper and agreed unanimously. The rector and churchwardens were undertaking further safeguarding training.

1405. Keith Hilton-Turvey also informed the PCC that concern had been raised about a case involving abuse and bullying. This had been reported to the diocesan team, who will consider what further action to take.

Fabric

Inspecting architect

1406. The PCC Secretary had received the resignation of the church's inspecting architect, Jane Chamberlain. She had been inspecting architect for many years, and was thanked for her work on behalf of the church. A new architect now needed to be found, as various projects were in hand and the next quinquennial inspection is due in 2026. Three potential candidates had been contacted, and responses from them were awaited. Andrew Beech proposed, seconded by Stephen Cheetham, that an interview panel should consist of Andrew Beech, David Houghton and John Hainsworth. Andrew and David declared interests, but the remainder of the PCC accepted the proposal unanimously.

Action: Andrew Beech/David Houghton/John Hainsworth

Heating

1407. Andrew Beech had circulated a paper recommending that the church change its heating consultant from Ingleton Wood to Ian Mather (see Annex). He proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that the PCC agree the recommendations. This was agreed with nine in favour and one against. Andrew Beech will write to both parties.

Action: Andrew Beech

1408. Will Wake reported that work on the EcoChurch application was still ongoing. He will produce a paper for the July PCC meeting setting out measures that the church could relatively easily undertake, which should enable the church to achieve Bronze status. He felt that the adaptations that might be required to achieve Silver status might be a step too far. It was pointed out that Ledbury Methodist church had achieved Silver status, and Will will speak to them about the measures that they took. Maria Dineen proposed, seconded by Stephen Cheetham, that the church should seek to achieve EcoChurch status. This was agreed unanimously.

Action: Will Wake

Upper rooms

1409. David Arnold (surveyor) will supply revised drawings this week, after which the project can go to tender and a faculty be sought.

Action: Ian James

Pews

1410. Andrew Beech will contact Jim Wynter (joiner) about how the project is progressing.

Action: Andrew Beech

1411. All other fabric projects are on hold until a new inspecting architect has been appointed.

Volunteering

1412. The Volunteering Group, under Tim Keyes' chairmanship, is to produce a database showing who does what within the church, and where vacancies lie. A questionnaire will be sent to those known to volunteer within the church to seek to clarify things. Anne Scull asked the PCC to consider why numbers attending church were falling, and what could be done to address that. Cath Beech pointed out that measures had been taken to increase prayer and teaching since the awayday, and asked that this effort be recognised.

Policies and procedures

1413. All existing policies had been sent to PCC members. Some of these required review in the near future.

Action: Cath Beech

WRDG/Liturgy

1414. William Hopkinson stressed the importance of liturgy in the life of the church, for teaching and attracting new members (and retaining existing ones). He asked the PCC to consider whether the conduct and content of worship at SMAA meet the needs of the congregation and those who we might hope to attract to the church, and to ask the WRDG to consider and report back. In discussion, there was agreement on the need for dignity in worship, with restraint of noisy discussion or distraction. A number of members thought that there was a need for some variation in the Eucharist; Maria Dineen suggested that there could be rather different formulae for individual services, for example with more silence in some versions, but with music in certain parts of others. William Hopkinson felt strongly that this should be a matter that the WRDG should consider. It was suggested in discussion that this might be something that the PCC might consider at an additional meeting. In the light of advice from the WRDG, the PCC took note.

Finance

1415. Giving remains below budget. This is balanced by underspending on maintenance. The Heaton Bequest will provide an additional c.£5,000/month, depending upon interest rates. Stephen Cheetham is discussing this with the diocese.

Action: Stephen Cheetham

1416. The Mallen bequest funds will be used to pay the church's share of the gutter repair work on St Katherine's Hall. Whatever is left will be handed to the Dean and Chapter as they take over responsibility for maintenance of the building. Other funds generated from income from hall rentals etc. will come to the church in due course. It is expected that these will be of the order of £20,000. Cath Beech will ensure that the Dean and Chapter are made aware of the terms of the Mallen bequest.

Action: Cath Beech

Audio-visual and sound

1417. William Hopkinson felt that the audio-visual and sound systems left a considerable amount to be desired in their operation and coverage. It was not clear that all elements of the systems held together well. Not being able to position the Choir in the choir stalls has a significant impact on how the church can be used. Those hard-of-hearing are unable to follow the service both in church and online. This is one of a number of major flaws that need to be addressed. Not all would require the commitment of resources, for example some immediate improvements could be made by repositioning the choir and piano. It was agreed that improvements were needed, but there were a number of other projects to be done that are of greater priority. The Chairman curtailed the discussion because of time pressure. The PCC took note, both of the problems set out above, and of the curtailment.

Community Garden

1418. Deferred to the next meeting.

Other Business

1419. Cath Beech indicated that the churchwardens were considering the question of administrative support for the church. This will be reported on at a future meeting.

Action: Churchwardens

Date of Next Meeting: 7.15pm on Wednesday, 23 July in the Chapter House.

The meeting ended at 21.18 with prayer.

Heating consultant

1. In July 2024 the PCC agreed to appoint Ingleton Wood of Oxford as consultants to advise the church on a replacement permanent heating system.
2. Sadly, this has not worked well. Ingleton Wood produced a report which, in its second iteration, formed the basis of the PCC's decision in March 2025 to adopt a three-phase approach to installing replacement heating. But the Fabric Sub-Committee do not believe that Ingleton Wood have devoted sufficient resources to the problem to ensure the installation of adequate heating by this winter and show no sign of doing so.
3. At the risk of changing horses midstream, the Fabric Sub-Committee has had a very positive meeting with Ian Mather. Ian is a fully qualified Mechanical and Electrical Engineer, with much experience of working with churches. Ian's advice (provided on a *pro bono* basis for the first meeting only) is, as we knew, that an electric boiler would be a possible option, but would be expensive to purchase and install and, thereafter, to run. He recommends that air-source heat pump technology forms the basis of the church's heating in the long-term. Air-source heat pump technology is advancing rapidly from a poor start. PCC members will recall from earlier papers that such heat pumps could only provide water up to 50°C, and would necessitate the replacement of all the radiators in the church. Technology has advanced, and air-source heat pumps are now able to heat water up to 60-65°C. Ian is confident that, within a few years, air-source heat pumps will be developed that could heat water routinely to 70°C, which is the temperature that the church needs.
4. Until then, Mr. Mather recommends that the church seek a faculty to purchase and install a gas boiler as a temporary measure until air-source technology is available. This is the solution adopted by St Martin's church, Hereford, where a faculty has been granted for the installation of a gas boiler with a short design life. Mr. Mather believes that this is the only viable solution that would enable heat to be provided in St Michael's this winter.
5. If the PCC agrees, Mr. Mather will draw up plans for St Michael's on this basis. His fees would be £1,600 + VAT for Stage 1 (purchase and installation of the boiler, pipework, moving the radiant heaters into St Anne's chapel and the Chapter House, and some planning for Stage 2), and £19,340 + VAT for Stages 2 and 3 (heating within the church itself, plus additional PV cells on the church roof).
6. The Fabric Sub-Committee recommends (a) that the church ends its relationship with Ingleton Wood, and (b) that Ian Mather be appointed as heating consultant on the above terms.
7. The PCC is invited to agree the above recommendations.