



# St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

## Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 15 September 2025

**Present:** David Houghton (Chair)(Churchwarden)  
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech  
Stephen Cheetham  
Sue Cooper  
Maria Dineen  
Ian James  
Richard Nightingale  
Anne Scull  
Will Wake

**Apologies:** Keith Hilton-Turvey (Rector), William Hopkinson, Sue Simpson,

**1436.** The meeting agreed that David Houghton should chair the meeting. David opened with Psalm 127 and prayer.

### Minutes of meetings held on 2 June and 23 July

**1437.** These were agreed unanimously and signed.

### Minutes of the Standing Committee on 1 September

**1438.** These were noted.

### Safeguarding

**1439.** No outstanding safeguarding issues were reported.

### Volunteering

**1440.** 31 people had responded to the questionnaire. The responses were being collated. The Volunteer Group will consider these in formulating their proposals.

### Community garden

**1441.** Maria Dineen will be considering ideas for adapting the churchyard to be a more environmentally friendly space, and to provide an area for people to relax and enjoy the quiet. She will be working with Margaret Chapman and June Smith on this and hopes to

produce costed recommendations later this autumn. Andrew Beech mentioned that the Local Government Association is in dispute with the Church of England over the maintenance of churchyards by local authorities. Hence whatever is done in the churchyard by the church should not give Ledbury Town Council the idea that we would not want them to continue in their maintenance role.

## **Finance**

**1442.** Stephen Cheetham reported that giving remained below budget. Expenditure on maintenance was now expected to rise, with the heating proposal (see below) and the work on the upper room floor soon to come.

**1443.** Stephen noted that the size of the legacy from Stuart Heaton would require the church henceforth to have a full audit of the accounts each year. This would be expensive. Stephen is liaising with the Charity Commission to see whether an exception could be made, given that the bequest was a one-off.

**Action: Stephen Cheetham**

## **Fabric**

### Heating

**1444.** Andrew Beech spoke to the paper at Annex A. In discussion it was agreed that it was essential that the church be heated this winter. The church has lost one quarter of its congregants at any typical winter morning service compared with the situation in winter 2022/23, the year before the boiler failed.

**1445.** The high cost of air-source heat pumps was noted. The project would cost some £400,000, twice the average annual gross income of the church. It was noted, furthermore, that there would be delay in installing air-source heat pumps, notably due to the need for fundraising and the need to obtain a faculty, planning permission and listed building consent. Accordingly, Richard Nightingale proposed the recommendations in Annex A(10), seconded by Ian James. These were agreed unanimously. Andrew Beech will request an Interim Faculty to enable these works to be carried out. Andrew will also draft a note to the congregation to explain the progress made. Andrew and the Fabric Sub-Committee were thanked for their work on this issue.

**Action: Andrew Beech**

### Organ repair

**1446.** Work was under way, and should be completed by the start of Advent.

### Upper rooms

**1447.** A faculty had been applied for, and a response was awaited. Ian James was thanked for taking this project to fruition. He asked that the plan to include a lift to connect the meeting room to the upper rooms be resurrected.

## Notice board

**1448.** The joiner who adapted the pews has taken one of the noticeboards from the porch to his workshop, to renovate it.

### **Administrative support**

**1449.** There was discussion about the size of the budget allocation for administrative support. Cath Beech asked for council members to notify her of anyone who might be interested in the role.

### **Audio-visual and sound**

**1450.** No progress was reported.

**Action: Keith Hilton-Turvey**

### **Other business**

**1451.** The liturgical changes agreed at the previous meeting will be postponed until the scaffolding has been removed from the vestry.

**1452.** Richard Nightingale reported a number of minor thefts from the church, and asked that people be careful about where they left things.

### **Dates for 2026**

**1453.** These were agreed as:

- Monday 19 January
- Wednesday 18 March
- Monday 18 May
- Wednesday 22 July
- Monday 21 September
- Wednesday 18 November

**Date of Next Meeting:** 7.15pm on Monday, 19 November in the Chapter House.

The meeting ended at 20.23 with prayer.

## Heating

1. At its meeting in July, the PCC was informed that Ian Mather had started work, and would produce a report on the heating. He has done so, and this report is attached.
2. The key recommendation is that the church be heated in the future using air-source heat pumps, which are considerably more efficient and powerful now than even a couple of years ago. Given the demand for such pumps, further technological progress can be expected.
3. However, the report also concludes that the church could not be in a position to obtain the necessary permissions (which will include planning permission as well as a faculty) by this winter. Quite apart from anything else, a considerable sum of money would need to be raised.
4. The report therefore recommends obtaining a second-hand gas boiler to see the church through until such time as the air-source heat pumps become operational. A boiler has been sourced. It is a Lennox boiler that has recently been removed from a school. It is 14 years old, but has a number of years' life left in it. It is rated at 110/120kW, considerably less than the 200kW of the defunct boiler, but Mr Mather believes that, being more efficient, its output will be comparable to that being replaced. The boiler cannot be guaranteed but it was working a few weeks ago and will be commissioned by the installer. It is most likely that the Contractor will caveat his quotation regarding this and also the existing flue as the type of flue installed cannot be determined until it is removed and most likely it is a flue liner which is not allowed in the current gas regulations. The new installations must be compliant with these regulations, and this affects several items of the installation including the gas pipe and valving arrangements. To attempt to determine the flue details a Drone was used to inspect the flue details on 8 September, but unfortunately a steel plate has been installed at the final flue exit, preventing a proper inspection. The flue will have to be installed manually using a cherry picker.
5. It is important that we use an existing boiler. This reinforces our to reinforce the proposal, as it maintains our *bona fides* that we really do plan to decarbonize the church in the next few years. The life span of the second-hand boiler would be only 7-8 years.
- 6. This paper considers only the purchase and installation of this boiler, and not any other aspect of the Mather report.**
7. The boiler is owned by Compass M&E Ltd. of Brierley Hill. They are willing to give it to the church, provided that they could be given the contract to remove the defunct boiler and install the replacement one. The quotation from Compass will specifically include a 12-month defects and liability period, including the servicing of the boiler within that period. After 12 months the servicing of the boiler can be tendered out.

8. Some of the existing pipework within the boiler room will need to be replaced to be compatible with the replacement boiler, and the existing single flue will need to be replaced with a double one, to be compatible with the latest Gas Regulations, as above. With a fair wind, it was thought that the boiler could be in place by the end of October. For the time being, the radiant heaters purchased in 2023 will remain in the nave arches, as a back-up.
9. It is estimated that the total cost of the installation, including removal and disposal of the old boiler, will be a maximum of £37,000. A fixed price quotation should be available within a few days from Compass. The Friends have been asked to consider making a contribution to the installation; but the cost is within the means available to the church.
10. **The PCC is recommended:**
  - (a) to agree that the boiler offered by Compass M+E be installed by them;**
  - (b) that the necessary alterations to the pipework and flues be carried out; and**
  - (c) that an emergency faculty be applied for to allow the work to be carried out.**
11. Should the PCC agree this recommendation, an emergency faculty to allow the work to proceed will be applied for. The attitude of the Diocesan Chancellor to the application cannot be predicted. However, if he approves, it is possible that the boiler could be installed and working by the end of October. Other faculty work would be required thereafter, but that would be for the PCC Secretary to carry out.
12. Further papers will deal with the planning and financing of the long-term heating of the church.

Fabric Sub-Committee

September 2025