



# St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

## Minutes of Parochial Church Council – 12 January 2026

**Present:** David Houghton (Chair)(Churchwarden)  
Cath Beech (Churchwarden)  
Andrew Beech  
Sonia Bowen  
Sue Cooper  
William Hopkinson  
Ian James  
Richard Nightingale  
Anne Scull  
Will Wake  
Christine Walters

**Apologies:** Stephen Cheetham, Sue Simpson

**1482.** The meeting opened with Psalm 85 and prayer. David Houghton welcomed Sonia Bowen and Christine Walters to their first PCC meeting. The meeting noted with sadness that Maria Dineen had resigned from the Council for family reasons, and hoped that she would rejoin in the future.

## Minutes of meetings held on 19 November and 3 December 2025

**1483.** These were agreed unanimously and signed.

## Minutes of the Standing Committee on 5 January 2026

**1484.** These were noted.

## Volunteering

**1485.** No names had been suggested for the post of Volunteer Co-ordinator. A list of vacant (or shortly to become vacant) posts had been produced by the volunteer group chaired by Tim Keyes. It was suggested that the job of Volunteer Co-ordinator might be too large for one person. David Houghton suggested breaking the post up into two, and said that he would bring potential names forward at the next meeting.

**Action:** *David Houghton*

## **Intercessions**

**1486.** Vanessa Skelton had volunteered to organize the intercessors' rota. She was thanked for doing so. It was noted that the current rota ends in February.

## **Vergers**

**1487.** Sonia Bowen and Vanessa Skelton had volunteered to become vergers in the light of Peter Tattersall's impending retirement. They were unanimously appointed to this role.

## **Safeguarding**

**1488.** No outstanding safeguarding issues were reported. Maria Dineen had agreed to be the interface between the church and the diocese on safeguarding matters, and will check that the necessary DBS checks have been completed.

## **Church office**

**1489.** Because of its change of policy with regard to rectories/vicarages, the diocese requires the church to vacate the church office by the end of February. This requires the church to find somewhere else to house the material currently held in the office. Much rationalization has already taken place, but this can not reduce the amount of material to nothing. Ultimately it is hoped that the material can be kept in the refurbished eastern upper room, but this cannot be ready for at least one, and possibly two, years.

**1490.** Various suggestions were made as to what the interim arrangements might be. It was agreed unanimously that Cath Beech, David Houghton and Ian James should consider what interim arrangements might be put in place, and circulate their recommendations to the PCC. It was noted that this will need to be agreed before the next scheduled meeting<sup>1</sup>.

**Action: Churchwardens/Ian James**

## **Vacancy**

**1491.** The meeting noted again the timetable for the vacancy, set out in the minutes of the joint PCC meeting with Eastnor held on 3 December 2025. There was considerable discussion about the membership of the group to be tasked to draft the parish profile. It was agreed that Tim Keyes should be asked to chair the group, and that Andrew Beech and David Houghton should be members. But there was no agreement on any other members. Will Wake proposed, seconded by Sue Cooper, that these three should start work on the profile, drawing in expertise from others to complete it. This was agreed unanimously. The intention is that the profile should be adopted by the PCC at the March meeting.

**Action: Tim Keyes/Andrew Beech/David Houghton**

**1492.** The benefice public consultation meeting will take place in the Burgage Hall on the morning of 31 January (time to be announced). Derek Chedzey will chair the meeting; Chloe Garner will email the invitations.

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<sup>1</sup> The diocesan decision to require the church to vacate the church office was rescinded on 14 January.

**1493.** There was no progress in choosing two parish representations to take part in the interview process. The interview panel will consist of the bishop, the archdeacon, the rural dean and two parish representatives from each of Eastnor and Ledbury. In the absence of a decision, the churchwardens are required to be the parish representatives. Members were asked to pray.

**Action: All PCC members**

## **Finance**

**1494.** A finance report prepared by Stephen Cheetham was noted. A paper on the church's investment strategy will be discussed in March, as will the church's giving to external charities.

## **Net Zero**

**1495.** Will Wake will circulate a paper setting out the next steps for the church. In order to secure grants from the Net Zero Church Grants Committee a strategy has to be in place within the next three months. Grants of up to £103,000 (in total) are available. Given the time constraints, David Houghton proposed, seconded by Richard Nightingale, that an additional PCC meeting be held to consider this important issue. This was agreed unanimously.

**Action: Will Wake/Andrew Beech**

## **Fabric**

**1496.** Andrew Beech reported that the heating was now operational. The next stage of the project is to work with the church architect and Ian Mather to determine where the radiant heaters should be relocated on a permanent basis, what and how many PV cells should replace the existing ones on the church roof, and whether finned radiators should be installed in the nave and chancel. A meeting with the architect was scheduled for later in the week.

**Action: Fabric Sub-Committee**

**1497.** The meeting with the architect will also discuss refurbishment of the upper rooms and the provision of compliant disabled access to St Anne's chapel.

## **Sound system**

**1498.** Richard Nightingale and David Houghton had explored ways of improving the church sound system. Annex A sets out the details.

**1499.** A generous and anonymous offer to underwrite the cost has been received. The work could be carried out under the existing faculty.

**1500.** Sue Cooper proposed acceptance of the quote from APi Communications, seconded by Will Wake. This was agreed unanimously. Richard Nightingale was thanked for his work on this.

**Action: Richard Nightingale – to liaise with APi**

## **Worship Review and Development Group**

**1501.** The WRDG had asked that Val Houghton join the group. This was agreed unanimously (David Houghton did not vote).

**1502.** Concern was expressed at the tone of the WRDG's recommendations, to be presented in due course to the PCC. Whilst the recent re-introduction of some ceremonial into the liturgy was welcomed, some members of the Council felt that the additional ceremonial measures to be proposed by the WRDG would make them uncomfortable.

### **Other business**

**1502.** Christine Walters pressed for better co-ordination of the church noticeboards, which were cluttered. It was thought that appointing someone to do this would simply create yet another volunteer role. Instead, guidance could be placed on the noticeboards as to what could be displayed, and what could not.

**1503.** Christine Walters proposed the introduction of a lay-led family service jointly with the Methodist Church, to be held at 4pm on a Sunday afternoon. She proposed that just one be held first, to see whether it could be a regular arrangement. Acceptance of this idea was proposed by Richard Nightingale and seconded by Sonia Bowen. It was agreed unanimously.

### ***Action: Christine Walters***

**Date of Next Meeting:** The additional meeting to consider Net Zero will be held on a date to be announced. The next regular meeting will be at 7.15pm on Wednesday 18 March in the Chapter House.

The meeting ended at 20.19 with the Grace.

### Sound System upgrade

The present sound system is fraught with 'issues', namely: -

- Setting up is complicated;
- Operation via the iPad is daunting to an inexperienced operator;
- Sound quality throughout the building is inconsistent;
- Easy access to the system cupboard allows the possibility of compounding problems by those trying to make corrections without the technical knowledge to do so.

Richard Nightingale made enquiries and located a company in Exeter, APi Communications Ltd, who installed a sound system in St Mary's Church, Ross on Wye. That church is very pleased with the performance of their installation and their ongoing relationship with the company,

Andy Pidsley from APi, visited St Michael's to inspect the sound system. Essentially, he concluded that the system is a good one, but badly installed. He proposed:

- Installation of a simple button panel controller to obviate problems with the iPad. This would have a number of settings (as per the chancel lighting) to enable ease of use;
- Purchase of two remote aerials for the radio microphones mounted on the rear of the organ;
- Installation of a new steel rack cabinet to prevent interference (accidental or deliberate) with the sound equipment;
- Fold-back speakers could be purchased for use by musicians and presenters;
- Altering the angle of the speakers from vertical to horizontal to improve the distribution of sound throughout the church.

The cost of the above would be £3,440 (including VAT). The result would be a system that is easier to operate on a day-to-day level, but which could, if needed, still be operated via the iPad.