

Notes of St Paul's PCC Meeting 14 September 2026 7.30-9.15pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Imogen Nay (vicar and chair), Andrew Chaplin (treasurer), Andy Gordon, Jenny Mander, Jonathan Chaplin (warden), Peter Bone, Mark Elliott, Vicky Green, Elisabeth von Rabenau (secretary)

Apologies: Jeremy Whitton Spriggs, Becky Warner (curate), Marion Saunders, Christina Barry (LLM)

2. Opening Prayers and Theological Input/discussion (IN)

Having read a passage from Ezekiel, linking to the church's current theme of creation, we reflected on something in creation for which we were grateful.

3. Minutes of last meeting approved as correct

4. Matters Arising and Actions

- **Recruitment of duty wardens:** JC received one expression of interest in becoming an assistant warden, but still waiting for decision.
- **Lighting proposal:** agenda item
- **CDW post extension:** IN spoke to EC who is keen to extend hours by further half day, to be worked as a full day alternate weeks, but is unable to commit to a further whole day due to other commitments. Although less than hoped for, EC is already engaging actively with the vision for this extra time such as sourcing relevant training. The extension was agreed. Action closed.
- **St Paul's CSoC representative recruitment:** IN sent an email to DF but it was agreed that it would be good to acknowledge his contribution in front of the congregation. **IN action**
- **Telling St Paul's story (PCC Away Day follow-up):** IN has spoken to JM about storytelling projects, but in light of curate moving on sooner than expected and increased workload for IN it was agreed to defer the start of this to the new year.
- **Inclusion and Diversity:** Permanent poster has been put up. Action closed.
- **Social and Fundraising events:** Ceilidh planned for 27 February 2027. Helen Robbins booking a band. Action closed.
- **Sunday School Provision review** – deferred to next meeting

5. Vicar's Report - report circulated prior to meeting

The PCC discussed issues arising from two recent burglaries of the church premises and agreed actions to increase security.

b. Ministry – IN highlighted a number of social events over the summer as well as the successful SWISH. Preparation for Manchester Carols is well under way as well as plans to move forward with seeking Eco Church Gold award. BW's early move has significant implications for IN's workload, particularly over Advent and Christmas. IN made a further plea for support with Sunday tasks. It should now be possible to sign up to the rota on-line. JC asked PCC members to check and email him if there is a difficulty.

6. Commerce Report - Centre Manager report circulated prior to meeting

The Commerce Committee will meet before the next PCC meeting and produce a fuller report then. ME and IN raised an on-going debate about how best to balance maximizing income through external lettings versus keeping spaces free to grow the church through other initiatives. Some refocusing of targets for the Centre Manager may need to be considered, as these have been successfully met but heavily income based. This also links to later discussion about strategic planning for funding challenges over the next five years.

7. Finance Report – circulated prior to meeting

AC highlighted a positive position allowing St Paul's to make decisions from a position of abundance rather than scarcity. AC expects to set the budget for 2027 in November. The following proposals were agreed unanimously:

- a. Raise the salary of the Community Worker in line with inflation since 2024 when first appointed.
- b. Reinstate the original meaning of the Electricity Feed-In Tariff designated fund as the 'net zero' fund
- c. Hold a Gift Month in October, to be launched at the service on 4 October with a different person speaking at each Sunday Service about why they give to St Paul's and why it is important. The target amount was changed from the original proposal of £10K, for church running costs, to £30K after discussion of funding for the lighting.

Actions:

- **IN inform EC of salary increase**
- **AC inform JP to enact salary increase backdated to 1.9.26**
- **JM/PB/AG + one other, to be decided, to speak about giving in one of the October services**
- **AC frame the financial details for Gift Month**
- **AC explore additional bank account options following CAF data outage**

8. Commerce and policies – policy documents and review circulated prior to meeting

All were unanimously approved and ME was thanked for the massive amount of work this represented.

There are further policies to be reviewed still, and at the end of the whole process decisions will be made about which ones are purely for internal use and which need to be publicly available on the website.

9. Maintenance

Lighting Design decision – proposal circulated in advance

JC and IN provided further details from meeting with the designer and clarified that the quote provided is for the lights, the installation costing a further £15K, making a total of £30K. This project would be the final update to the building started 25 years ago, and gives much greater control about timing and brightness of lights using low maintenance and long-lasting bulbs and creating a much warmer and more welcoming ambience.

Although the aim is to fundraise, AC confirmed that after allowing for six months of running costs (£122K) we have reserves of £43K that would allow us to underwrite the expenditure. There followed a discussion about ethics as a charity of simply building and sitting on reserves, what level of reserves should be kept and the desire to have a five-year plan for strategic spending challenges. AC proposed the following:

- To set an ambitious £30K target for Gift Month to focus exclusively on lighting, with normal running costs being covered by reserves – agreed unanimously
- To maintain six months of running costs in reserves – agreed majority 9/10.

Heat decarbonisation plan – decision

A spend of £2K+VAT to obtain a plan from Luminus Solutions was agreed.

Quinquennial Report - deferred to next meeting

10. Compassion update – CDW report circulated in advance

EC's work and productivity noted and thanks expressed.

11. Safeguarding – review of non-church activity list

Report expected at October meeting.

12. AoB

Toddler Group – email circulated prior to meeting

The toddler group has been disbanded following loss of former volunteers and staff members who were running it. A member of the congregation previously involved with the group emailed to ask whether this could be re-started. It was agreed that this could be revisited in the future, but that St Paul's already runs a considerable number of community activities and therefore staff and volunteers do not have capacity for this currently.

Repainting of Church Hall – approved by email and confirmed to Centre Manager by email 24.07.26

13. Date of next meetings:

Monday, 19 October 2026, 7.30pm, Lower Hall

Wednesday, 18 November 2026, 7.30 pm – NB this is on-line