

St. Augustine's Church, North Town, Aldershot

Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Meeting

Held at St. Augustine's Church on Sunday 28 June 2026 at 11.30 am

Chair	Fr William (Incumbent Priest)
Present	Fr William - Incumbent Priest Graham Lawrence - PCC Secretary Carol Lawrence - Deanery Synod Member Jackie Dunne - Safeguarding Officer Dot Grobler - Treasurer (via Microsoft Teams) Sarah-Anne Power - PCC member Daniel Walsh – PCC Member
Apologies	John Rook - Churchwarden Pauline Rook - Assistant Treasurer

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

- The meeting opened with prayer led by Fr William.
- Fr William welcomed those present.

2. Apologies for Absence

- Apologies were received from John Rook and Pauline Rook.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed for factual accuracy.
- No factual amendments were raised in the discussion recorded in the transcript.
- The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

4. Matters Arising

- Replacement benches remained outstanding and were to be considered further later in the meeting. It was noted that unsafe existing benches would also need to be removed and disposed of.
- The purchase of a replacement wheelchair remained outstanding. A safer wheelchair had been substituted in the meantime, but a new wheelchair was still required.
- The first-floor storage issue was discussed. The original storage unit had been removed, although further items had since appeared on the first-floor landing area.
- Members remained concerned that storage on landings or escape routes could create a health and safety issue, particularly in light of the expected fire safety inspection.
- It was noted that no further specific request had been received from the pre-school for storage space. The PCC agreed to let the matter rest unless and until a specific request was made, while continuing to keep escape routes clear.

5. Finance Report

- The Treasurer reported that the accounts had been reconciled following receipt of the relevant paperwork.

- Hall income from regular users was discussed. Sam had taken over from Angela in relation to dance school bookings and was paying promptly. Members noted that some payments had increased without the PCC being asked for a discount.
- The Treasurer reported that she had told Christine of her intention to resign as Treasurer. Future accounting support and arrangements would need to be considered.
- No up-to-date statement of the 2026 parish share had yet been received; it was expected to be available in due course.
- Thanks were recorded to Graham Lawrence for calculating and submitting the energy figures required for the Energy Footprint Tool return to the Diocese.
- The Charity Commission / charity report deadline was noted as a matter to be addressed later in the year.
- Parochial fees were discussed. It was noted that returns would only be required where weddings or funerals had taken place, and none were believed to be due for the relevant period at present.
- Fuel and utility consumption were discussed. Comparisons with previous years were difficult because the earlier figures appeared unclear. The PCC noted that the church should look at a greener energy provider when the current contract comes to an end, believed to be around 2027.
- Hall hire charges and utility costs were discussed. The PCC agreed not to make an immediate significant increase, but to keep the position under review, particularly after winter fuel bills are known.
- The 2025 parish finance return reminder was noted and confirmed as dealt with. Difficulties with Parish Returns access and Diocesan IT systems were also noted.

6. Deanery Synod / Diocesan Engagement

- There was no substantive Deanery Synod report at this meeting.
- A further meeting was due to take place on the following Tuesday, and a report would be given at the next PCC meeting as appropriate.
- Members also referred to recent Diocesan gathering and publicity activity, including the use of St Augustine's T-shirts.

7. Safeguarding, Pastoral Concerns and Fire Safety

- Jackie Dunne gave a safeguarding update. Members discussed pastoral concerns relating to older and potentially vulnerable members of the congregation, including possible dementia-related concerns.
- It was agreed that members should remain aware of the situation and continue to keep an eye on those concerned. The discussion was treated as a pastoral and safeguarding awareness matter rather than as a formal safeguarding case requiring immediate escalation.
- Fire safety was also discussed. Members noted that, to their knowledge, there had not been a recent full fire safety inspection of the premises.
- An approach had been made to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, but no response had yet been received.
- Concerns were raised about the number and positioning of smoke alarms, blocked stairwells or landings, windows which may not open properly, and the need for clear fire exit signage.
- It was agreed that professional advice should be obtained through the fire safety inspection so that the PCC would know what work was required.

8. Election of Vice Chair

- The PCC discussed the role of Vice Chair.
- Carol Lawrence indicated that she was willing to serve, notwithstanding the family connection with the PCC Secretary.

- The PCC agreed that Carol Lawrence would serve as Vice Chair. The arrangement could be reviewed at the next APCM if required.

9. Faculty Jurisdiction Rules

- Graham Lawrence reported on his review of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.
- The distinction was noted between List A works, which may be undertaken without further permission; List B works, which require Archdeacon's permission; and works requiring a full faculty.
- It was noted that the replacement or disposal of redundant freestanding chairs, and the introduction of freestanding chairs in a non-listed church, appeared to fall within permitted categories where no full faculty would be required.
- St Augustine's was noted as not being a listed building, although it appears on a local heritage list.
- The replacement of the existing noticeboard / sign on a like-for-like basis, with updated information, was also understood to be permissible without a full faculty, provided the PCC remained within the relevant limits.
- Members noted that any more substantial alteration or new signage in a different position might need further advice or permission.

10. Church Signage

- The PCC discussed the condition and effectiveness of the existing church sign.
- It was noted that the present sign looked dated, was not especially visible or inviting, and contained out-of-date service information.
- The example of the more prominent sign at Holy Trinity was discussed, including the possibility of a notice window. However, members distinguished between replacing the existing sign and considering a larger or different sign in the future.
- A banner for the car park entrance had already been obtained and would need to be put up under the cross near the car park entrance.
- The PCC also discussed the need to trim hedges and trees to improve visibility. The gardener was expected again in August, but a tree surgeon might be needed for larger work.
- It was proposed that the PCC replace the existing sign in its present position on a like-for-like basis, keeping broadly to the same colour and form but updating the information.
- The revised sign should include accurate Mass times and the church website / Facebook details. It was agreed that personal phone numbers need not be included.
- The PCC agreed the proposal unanimously. A larger or additional sign or noticeboard could be considered separately at a later stage, with appropriate permissions if needed.

11. Open Church and Mission Update

- The PCC received an update on the open church arrangements.
- Friday openings were continuing and had been more fruitful than Wednesdays. The Wednesday opening and bacon roll arrangements had been less consistent recently, with no visitors on some Wednesdays.
- Welcome cards had been placed at the back of church so that visitors could be given a simple card thanking them for coming and directing them to further information.
- It was reported that approximately twenty people had engaged with the church during open times so far, including some who had simply looked in from the doorway. One parent from the pre-school had come in on three successive occasions and sat quietly for a time.

- Graham Lawrence had sent a gentle email to Lee after he had not attended for two weeks. Archie, a young adult who had made contact through the website, had also attended and would be followed up appropriately.
- Members discussed the importance of building bridges with schools and young people. Grace had been asked for ideas about reaching older teenagers.
- It was noted that recent Diocesan input had emphasised contact with schools, assemblies and parents as important routes into mission with children and families.
- The PCC agreed that possible future activities, such as a carol service or Easter event for children, would need early planning and publicity.

12. Order of Mass - Updated Version

- The PCC discussed the need to update the Order of Mass so that it is more user-friendly for visitors and occasional worshippers, including clearer directions on when to stand and sit.
- Graham Lawrence had scanned the existing laminated version and sent it to Fr John. Fr John would review it and consult Fr William before any final text was used.
- Members discussed the option of A5 stapled booklets rather than laminated A4 sheets or weekly full service sheets. Weekly bespoke sheets were considered too onerous and costly for the present context.
- Fr William noted the importance of ensuring that the authorised text of the Creed and other liturgical material is used.
- The PCC agreed in principle to fund the printing of revised A5 booklets once the text had been reviewed and approved by Fr John and Fr William. The cost implications were noted and accepted in principle.

13. Replacement Benches

- The PCC returned to the question of replacing the broken and unsafe outside benches.
- Metal-framed benches with wooden slats had been identified as a likely option. Available colours included blue, green and a grey / iron colour.
- Two-seat and three-seat options were discussed. The likely preference was for three-seat benches, with approximately three benches required.
- Indicative costs were discussed, including around £249 for some two-seat benches and around £300 for three-seat benches.
- It was agreed that the old unsafe benches would need to be removed and disposed of, and that the PCC should proceed with replacement arrangements.

14. Gas Meter / Tanner Gas Services

- An email from Tanner Gas Services concerning the gas meter was discussed.
- The location of the gas meter was now known. The contractor was expected to make contact / attend the following day.
- It was noted that relevant emails were being received by more than one officer, and members clarified who had sight of the correspondence.

15. Any Other Business

- No further substantive items of business were recorded.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- The next PCC meeting was fixed for Sunday 23 August 2026 at 11.30 am at St Augustine's Church.
- The meeting closed with the Grace.
- Fr William thanked members for everything they do.

Action Summary

Responsible	Action
PCC / relevant officers	Proceed with arrangements to purchase replacement outside benches and dispose of the unsafe existing benches.
PCC / relevant officers	Purchase a replacement wheelchair; the temporary safer wheelchair remains an interim measure only.
PCC officers	Keep the first-floor landing / storage position under review and ensure escape routes remain clear.
Treasurer / PCC	Keep hall income, utility costs and hall hire charges under review, especially after winter fuel bills are known.
Treasurer / PCC officers	Consider future Treasurer and accounting support arrangements following the Treasurer's stated intention to resign.
Graham Lawrence / Treasurer	Ensure Parish Returns / finance return access issues are resolved securely and that relevant returns remain up to date.
Deanery Synod representatives	Attend the forthcoming Deanery / Diocesan meeting and report back to the next PCC meeting as appropriate.
Jackie Dunne / PCC officers	Follow up the requested fire safety inspection and act on advice regarding smoke alarms, fire exit signage, windows and escape routes.
Carol Lawrence	Serve as Vice Chair of the PCC, subject to review at the next APCM if required.
Graham Lawrence / PCC	Keep a copy of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules note and seek further advice if proposed works go beyond like-for-like replacement.
PCC / Sarah / Graham Lawrence	Proceed with replacement of the existing church sign on a like-for-like basis, with accurate updated information.
PCC officers	Put up the car park entrance banner and arrange hedge / tree trimming as needed to improve visibility.
Graham Lawrence / Carol Lawrence	Continue the open church arrangements, welcome cards and gentle follow-up with recent visitors including Lee and Archie.
PCC	Explore school, youth and Diocesan mission links and begin early planning for possible Christmas and Easter family activities.
Fr John / Fr William / Graham Lawrence	Review and agree the revised Order of Mass text, ensuring authorised liturgical material is used, then arrange A5 booklet printing.
Graham Lawrence / Treasurer	Liaise with Tanner Gas Services regarding the gas meter and related correspondence.