

Minutes of Annual Church meetings, St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden, 11th May 2025

Meeting of the Parishioners

	<p>Attendees: Bron Ferland, Oli King, Hannah Razzell, Heather Finch, John Bridges, Lesley Sibson, Bill Rose, Gill Caswell, Patrick Li, Trevor Carver, Richard Freeman, Margaret Barnes, Rufus Barnes, Noel Starr, Gerald Gardner, Judith Hasler, Steve Hasler, Charis Jame-Glespie, Brenda Sheath, Roger Manse, Paula Griffiths, John Mumford, Pamela Mugliston, Hilary Walker, Pam Russell, Margaret Walter, Ruby Parsons, Petronella Oelman, Kathryn Bennett, Jennifer Kirkaldy, Robin O'Neill, Helen O'Neill, Vivian Falk, Hayden Rocks, Helen Nash, Ralph Meloy, Alison Trew, John Pickthorne, Simon Potter, Edward Gildea, Diana Tyler, Christine Ractliffe, Janine Heaney, Jan Siewertson.</p>
25/1	<p>Confirmation of the Notice convening the meeting The secretary confirmed that the appropriate notices had been posted and that the meeting had been convened legally.</p>
25/2	<p>Apologies for absence. Apologies had been received from Clifford Want, Shawn Martin, Martin Hugall, David Birchall, Sue Birchall, Marion Garvey, Richard Garvey, Andy Colebrook, Hazel Colebrook, Lesley Green and Kathleen Huey.</p>
25/3	<p>Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parishioners held on 5th May 2024</p> <p>Jeremy Trew proposed that the minutes of this meeting should be accepted. The minutes were approved by a show of hands with no abstentions.</p>
25/4	<p>Election of two Churchwardens</p> <p>The following were elected as churchwardens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Simon Potter (proposed (P.) Julian Herbert, Seconded (S.) by Katie Edwards, --both members of the local government register of electors, an alternative to being members of the Church Parish Roll, and in accordance with the church representative rules) and ● Vivian Falk, (P. Susan Birchall, S. Petronella Oelman)
25/5	<p>1. Election of four Assistant Churchwardens</p> <p>Since five people had been nominated as assistant churchwardens, it was decided to have 5 instead of the usual 4. The following were elected by a show of hands, with no abstentions:</p> <p>William Rose (P. Vivian Falk and R.J. Garvey) , Gill Caswell (P. Vivian Falk and C.J. Cowling, and Pam Russell (P. Janet Siewerston S. Vivian Falk) Patrick Li, (P. Vivian Falk, S. Susan Birchall) Janet Siewertson (P. Gill Caswell S. C.J. Cowling).</p>

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Attendees: Bron Ferland, Oli King, Hannah Razzell, Heather Finch, John Bridges, Lesley Sibson, Bill Rose, Gill Caswell, Patrick Li, Trevor Carver, Richard Freeman, Margaret Barnes, Rufus Barnes, Noel Starr, Gerald Gardner, Judith Hasler, Steve Hasler, Charis Jame-Glespie, Brenda Sheath, Roger Manse, Paula Griffiths, John Mumford, Pamela Mugliston, Hilary Walker, Pam Russell, Margaret Walter, Ruby Parsons, Petronella Oelman, Kathryn Bennett, Jennifer Kirkaldy, Robin O’Neill, Helen O’Neill, Vivian Falk, Hayden Rocks, Helen Nash, Ralph Meloy, Alison Trew, John Pickthorne, Simon Potter, Edward Gildea, Diana Tyler, Christine Ractliffe, Janine Heaney, Jan Siewertson,

A25/1	Confirmation of the Notice convening the Meeting The secretary confirmed that the appropriate notices had been posted and that the meeting had been convened legally.
A25/2	Apologies for absence Apologies had been received from Clifford Want, Shawn Martin, Martin Hugall, David Birchall, Sue Birchall, Marion Garvey, Richard Garvey, Andy Colebrook, Hazel Colebrook, Lesley Green and Kathleen Huey.
A25/3	Approval of the Minutes of the APCM held on 5th May 2024 Gill Caswell was nominated/seconded as Laity Rep on the Deanery Synod by Jeremy Trew and Anna Martin. The list of attendees only circulated on one side of the meeting: others, including Hazel and Andy, were present. “Pentons” should be “Bentons”. With these corrections, the minutes were approved by a show of hands.
A25/4	Matters arising from the minutes: there were none.
A25/6	Report on the amended Electoral Roll: The report had been circulated. In it, the Electoral Roll officer, Clifford Want, reported that the role had been duly revised that year, under CRR M5 (1) (a), and that the numbers entered on the new roll are 234, of whom 35 worship, or also worship, at Swards End and 15 worship, or also worship, at Little Walden. This compares with 284 on the old roll, of whom 39 worshipped, or also worshipped, at Swards End and 18 worshipped, or also worshipped, at Little Walden. The new figure of 231 includes 43 people who were not on the old roll. Clifford was not standing again as Electoral Roll Officer. The Chair, Rev’d Trew, thanked Clifford, and thanked him for his long service as Electoral Roll officer. It was proposed that Hayden Rocks be appointed as the new Electoral Roll officer. Proposed Jeremy Trew, seconded Anna Martin, passed by general acclamation with no abstentions. Rev’d Trew thanked Hayden for his willingness to take on this role.
A25/7	Annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) (Paper A25A which formed the first section the Annual Review pamphlet). In it, PCC secretary, Anna Martin reported that the year at St Mary’s had gone well. Denis Tindley retired from the PCC at the last Annual meeting, having served the church well over many years. At the same meeting, Vivian Falk was elected Churchwarden, along with Simon Potter. Patrick Li, Bill Rose, Jan Siewertsen and Pam Russell were elected again as their assistants. Clifford Want, who has served so faithfully as Electoral Roll officer was retiring from that role at this year’s APCM, and she thanked him for all he has done. Patrick Li, Bron Ferland and Hannah Razzell were elected as PCC members for another three years. Gill Caswell, Anna Martin, Shawn Martin and Richard Freeman had been elected as Deanery Synod reps. She thanked them all for their dedicated work. During the Autumn, our Youth Worker, Matt Williamson took up a Diocesan post and moved away, and Rev’d

	<p>Lynda Sebbage joined us as Team Vicar of Debden and Wimbish. We have had five meetings of the PCC this year, which were all convened lawfully. During the year we discuss and take decisions on many issues, including setting the church budget and monitoring finances. Following Matt Williamson's departure, the PCC have been working on defining the role of how we can best serve children and youth in future. The PCC was also working to improve safeguarding routines and training and were grateful to Nathan Colley for taking the lead in this area as Parish Safeguarding Officer.</p> <p>Regarding property matters, we were addressing the issues of the cracked bell, lighting, the organ and notice boards. The help of our Team Administrator, Anthea Slater and our Associate Administrator, Claire Dunn, in the production of the Annual Review and throughout the year was much appreciated.</p>
A25/8	<p>Financial statement of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2021 Although neither the Treasurer, David Birchall, nor the Chair of the Finance Committee, Richard Garvey, were not present, the financial statements and Treasurer's report, Paper A25B had been circulated. In this, the Treasurer explained that The report and accounts had been examined by Bentens and signed off without any changes,. They had also been reviewed by Finance Committee and approved by the PCC on 19 March 2025. The General Fund turned out much better than expected – a surplus of £14k (£14,790 to be exact). This was the first surplus since 2019 (mainly due to a saving of £9k on youth work and the decision to move the rental income from the Verger's Cottage to the General Fund). As the General fund's income and expenditure is included in the unrestricted funds it is difficult or impossible to see exactly how the surplus of £14k is made up - so if anyone wants the detail, please let me know – I have a 1 page summary, available on request. The free reserves at 31/12/24 now stand at £98k. The Fabric Fund is up nearly £70k to £243k as at 31/12/24 – mainly due to the Gift Day for the Lighting Project. He stated that, if anyone would like more information on the finances, he would be happy to explain more to them and they should contact him.</p> <p>There were no questions: Rector thanked the Finance committee for all that they have done and those involved and those who contribute to the finances</p>
A25/9	<p>Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of the parish (Paper A25C) In this paper, Churchwardens Simon Potter and Vivian Falk reported that the Terrier and Inventory were completed in April 2025. All items are present and correct, with the addition of a Ciborium and Silver Chalice and Paten, kindly donated by Martin Hugall, and four banners, beautifully made and presented to the Church by Tessa Hawkes' Sewing Circle. We are very grateful for both these enhancements to the beauty of St Mary's.</p> <p>It has been a relatively quiet year. There was a break-in last June. Nothing was taken but the Vestry door was forced and the lock damaged. This has been replaced and an additional bolt is being fitted to the main South Door.</p> <p>The new lighting scheme is proceeding apace. We are very hopeful that, with your help and prayers, we will be able to bridge the remaining funding gap and, having been awarded a faculty, are therefore going ahead with plans to start work in September this year.</p>

	<p>Unfortunately, the exterior floodlighting of the tower failed recently. Examination showed that it had reached the end of its life and would have to be replaced. We have had a quote for this which wasn't as bad as we feared and are now waiting for PCC approval before submitting it to the Archdeacon. We then plan to get this work done as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Church roofs, previously kept clear of debris by volunteers, are now being managed by contractors. During their initial visit last autumn, they noticed some small cracks in the lead on the South Aisle roof. Lodge and Sons., who replaced the roof some twenty-five years ago, have been back and can weld these cracks relatively easily and inexpensively, and adjust the clips to ensure it doesn't happen again. We expect this work to take place in the coming months. Fortunately, our architect has now reported that the North Aisle Roof, which the Quinquennial Report indicated would need replacing within the next five years, should last considerably longer with careful maintenance.</p> <p>Inside the Church, we are now receiving quotes to repair the broken slab by the South Chapel steps, a damaged ledger stone and to carry out some repointing to the stonework around the West Door. We have also had a quote to replace the Brass Memorial Plaque in the North Chapel. We are hopeful that all this work can be achieved in the near future. This will leave some work to the stonework and glazing bars in the Muniments Room still on the agenda, probably for next year.</p> <p>Finally, in addition to the work on the fabric of the Church itself, some necessary repairs have been carried out to the Parish Rooms and the Verger's Cottage, where the roofs have been repaired, rotten window sills have been replaced and in the case of the Verger's Cottage, the outside plasterwork is about to be repaired and redecorated. Also a broken drain along the front of the building will be replaced during the course of the summer, hopefully resolving a damp problem.</p> <p>There were no questions. Rev'd Trew received the report with thanks and commented that many people visit Saffron Walden for the first time visit this church and we have been given a challenging heritage to care for, to ensure that all can enjoy the church and find some peace</p>
A25/10	<p>Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod Paper A25D (Deanery Synod and Diocesan Reports) had been circulated. In it, Sandie Turner, Deanery Synod Secretary, reported that Deanery Synod met in May, July and October 2024 and in February 2025, with the meeting in July being a Deanery Service.</p> <p>Presentations had included Archdeacon of Stansted, Kate Peacock, who encouraged Synod to “tell their faith story”.</p> <p>“Open the Book” (which is our Deanery Fund project) was introduced by Debs Webster and parishes were encouraged to consider if they would like to receive training to take Open the Book into “signed up” local primary schools.</p> <p>The Diocesan Secretary and CEO, Michaela Southworth gave a presentation explaining Diocesan funding and how the Parish Share is used.</p> <p>There were 2 new members of clergy: Revd Gary Fleming (Clavering et al) and Revd James Webster (IWP parishes). Meetings are open to all, though only Deanery Synod members may vote.</p>

	<p>A question was asked about the nature of the “Open the Book” project: Rev’d Trew explained what it was. Each year the Diocese has given back to the Deanery a small share from central funds. In order to get this money you have to apply for a missional project, let Jeremy know. The money for the Diocese for 2024 was used for a project called “Open the Book” – a Bible Society project. Many school children have little knowledge of the Bible so this project tells a bible story in a simple manner. It is scripted so that the headteachers can read the script in advance. The funder supports a worker who is setting up teams across the Deanery. Started 2024, will continue until the funding is used up. EG St Mary’s primary school. This can make foundational changes in schools and in people’s lives.</p>
A25/11	<p>Rector’s Report (Paper A25E)</p> <p>Strictly speaking this report is meant to cover the calendar year of 2024. With all the changes that have been going on, however, I cannot but stray into the early part of 2025 for some of my reflection.</p> <p>I commented last year on how I had rapidly become the longest serving incumbent in the Deanery. Following an extended period of recruitment, both last year and this, there is now a distinct threat that both the Deanery and our Team will be fully staffed, clergywise, by the end of this Summer. This will be a big relief for me. So, if you see me wandering around the Parish with a slightly bemused look, it’s that. In 2024 we welcomed Rev Lynda Sebbage to the Saffron Walden and Villages Team, serving primarily in Debden and Wimbish. In December Rev Ella Harris was signed off from her Curacy, meaning she could now apply for an incumbent’s post. Thankfully, she has chosen to stay with the Team and will be taking on the leadership of the Cam Villages. More recently we have been able to appoint Rev Romey Poston to the long-vacant post based in Ashdon and Hadstock. My thanks to all who have “held the fort” across the Team, giving generously of time and talents, especially our retired Clergy,</p> <p>My hope is that, with the appointments mentioned above the Team can work more as a whole, rather than separate parts. This is why, in 2024, the Team Council looked at legislation that allows us to reconstitute the Team and its governance. I hope that we can continue the trend of working more closely together, drawing from the best that each worshipping community has to offer, and giving good support to all in the variety of situations we find ourselves in.</p> <p>In 2024 we also said goodbye to Matt, our Children and Youth lead, as he headed to a Diocesan post. The group established to find his replacement have decided to split the role into two part-time posts; one focusing on children and families in Saffron Walden Parish; and, one on youth across the Team. We are currently making good progress on recruitment for the children’s role. Youth workers are in short supply nationally, so please pray as we seek to make this appointment. My thanks to all who have continued to support work with children and youth in our church families and community.</p> <p>Last year the Deanery gained funding to support a project building familiarity with Bible stories amongst children at local Primary Schools. Momentum is growing and we now have the genesis of teams for Debden, Great Chesterford, and now, Saffron Walden. Please pray for Debs, who co-ordinates this for the Deanery, and for our local volunteers as we seek to get this project live locally.</p> <p>Every Wednesday there is a simple and short service of Morning Prayer in the North Chapel at St Mary’s. After this the Team clergy, office staff, and others gather to reflect on work done and imminent and to co-ordinate diaries. This “staff-room” time is a very helpful opportunity to strengthen what we do through sharing skills and insights; something for which I am most grateful. So, my thanks to Claire and Anthea for all their</p>

	<p>work in the office (clergy are not always the best managers, and their patience is only just short of miraculous), and also to Judith, who brings so much insight and experience into our combined efforts. We try to plan to use time well, but there is never enough of it. Last Autumn we took an away-day to plan strategically for 2025, and we hope to do the same again this year; both to plan and to get to know new Team members better. Week-in, week-out, this Parish is very busy, and not just on Sundays. Our Parish Rooms provide a venue for much important community activity. My thanks to John Westnedge for taking a lead on considering options for upgrading the Parish Rooms. My thanks also to all who prepare, welcome, read, pray, play and sing at our services. All of this helps provide a good and special environment in which to meet God. My thanks also to Nathan, who oversees Safeguarding, for his work to help ours to be a safe and open space for all. However, it is all our responsibility to ensure that Church life is inclusive, enriching and safe. Your contribution to this is also important.</p> <p>In 2024 we saw a very positive response to the stewardship appeal, and also very generous giving to pay for the lighting project. My thanks again to David and the Finance Committee for all they do guiding stewardship. My thanks also to Steve, and his team, ensuring that we will soon have a lighting system that both works and should provide for us for decades to come. As this project comes to fruition I would like to turn attention again to a nave reordering at the East end, with provision of a dais and space for our choir to be heard at their best.</p> <p>Looking ahead to 2026, I am marking a big birthday which will mean looking ahead to my remaining years of licensed ministry. To help me in this I have been allocated one of a limited number of sabbaticals, which I will take from shortly after this meeting in 2026 for three months. Clergy are usually entitled to take sabbaticals every ten years. This will be my second in twenty-nine years of ministry, the other being in 2012. The purpose is rest, reflection and study. I hope to explore the theme of pilgrimage, both in the context of physical pilgrimages to specific holy sites, and the idea of pilgrimage within our daily lives and the working out of our faith. I will say a bit more about this at next years meeting.</p> <p>As ever, my thanks to all who are the Churches of St Mary's, St James, and St John's. It is a privilege to be your priest.</p> <p>Following the report, a question was asked. The questioner stated that during the re-organisation of the Eastern End: servery toilet and lighting, considerable consultation was involved. He then asked whether there would be consultation over the re-ordering of the nave area? The Rector confirmed that there would be. Another asked how much it cost to run this place, and whether this was easy? The Rector replied that it cost £750 a day and that the work involved was not easy. For this reason he gently encourages people to look after the church, and emphasises to them that the church do not get money from the government to maintain the buildings but it is our duty to care for them.</p>
A25/12	<p>Annual Review of various committees and groups An Annual Review Pamphlet had been circulated. The Rector read out the names of those who had written reports for the pamphlet: The PCC Secretary, St James, Swards End; St John's Little Walden ; the Servers; the Baptism team;, the Home groups; the Church Flowers team; the Sewing Group; the Prayer group: Ch: the Book Group; the Communications committee; the Parish Office team; the Weddings Co-ordinator, the Children and Youth Committee; St Mary's Church of England Primary School; St Mary's Guiding; the Mother's Union; the</p>

	<p>Oasis mens' group; the Finance Committee; Property Management Committee; the Friends of the Parish Church: Rev;d Chris Bishop for the Parish Archive; the Eco Team; Links with the Worldwide Church also the Church Wardens.</p> <p>Rufus Barnes pointed out that normally there are two home groups, there is only one; they asked if more meetings might be hoped for. The rector agreed that more small groups at different times would be a good thing, and has been identified as a need, but conversations are at an early stage. The PCC, he said, hoped to address this issue shortly.</p> <p>Judith Hasler commented that she was amazed, looking through, at the richness and breadth of activities, and the number of key people running things. She thanked the secretary for co-ordinating the reports and said that it was lovely to see new things happening, including the eco team starting something rolling, and the home groups encouraging us to take on new things. She thanked everyone for making this happen.</p>
A25/13	Appointment of tellers - this did not prove to be necessary as there was no contest for seats.
A25/15	Election of three representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod to fill three casual vacancies for a two-year term: Richard Freeman, Gill Caswell, Anna Martin and Shawn Martin are currently serving. Elections are now held every three years years beginning with 2023 so no election was due this year.
A25/16	Election of six representatives of the laity to the PCC for three-year term Rufus Barnes (Sue Birchall, Lesley Sibson), Noel Starr (James Butler, Patrick Li), Janet Siewertson (p.Vivian Falk, s. Pamela Mugliston), Gill Gibson (p. Bronwen Ferland, s. Otterlie Lefever) and Martin Hugall (p. Pamela Mugliston, s. Vivian Falk) were elected by general acclaim with no abstentions.
A25/17	Election of one representative of the laity to the PCC to fill a casual vacancy for a two year term This vacancy was not filled.
A25/18	Appointment of an auditor to the PCC Jeremy Trew, acting on the advice of the Finance Committee, proposed that Bentons should continue to be the auditor. Seconded Anna Martin, agreed.
A25/19	Any other business
A25/20	Vote of thanks – Churchwarden Vivian Falk thanked Jeremy for everthng he does for the church, he is wonderful, also Hilary, Anna and Anthea and Claire in the office, who are always available and it is lovely to have them. Vivian would like to thank them all on behalf of everyone (claps).
A25/21	Closing prayer The Rector prayed that those present and the church would be a blessing that reflected God's love to all.