

St Mary's Linton

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council on

Monday 13th July 2026 at 7.30 in the Pavilion

Present: Revd Paul Seaton-Burn (Team Rector and Chair), Jacqui Burge (Churchwarden), Tom Dodd and Phil Mills (Assistant Churchwardens), Sue Ellis (Treasurer), Ann Macer, Sue Mudge, James Suranga (Lay Chair), Sarah Thorne LLM, Cathy Watts LLM, Revd Michael Wilcockson, Michael Younger.

1. The meeting opened in prayer
2. Apologies were received from Andrew Cornell-Webb (Secretary) and Andrew Gore. Sue Mudge had agreed to take minutes in Andrew C-W's absence.

Ministry and Outreach

3. **Rector's Report**

Paul thanked the teams who had met regularly since the last meeting. This included the three **Root & Branch groups, Mary's Community Kitchen and Tots in Tow** (Sue E said that numbers were variable due to holidays. Some new families had been welcomed).

Mary's Community Kitchen continued to attract good numbers. Venue was either in church or the Village Hall. Some folk like coming into church but the access is less good for other people - and further from where they live. The volunteer team now comprised over a dozen people.

Paul asked for prayers for **Sue Filby** as she nears the end of her LLM training. Sue's licensing is due to take place on Saturday 3rd October, 2.30pm at Ely Cathedral and all were invited to attend.

The **Baptism** of Tracy Mills, who had joined St Mary's with Phil in the last year, during the service on 12th July had been a happy occasion.

Paul invited Sarah Thorne to talk about her recent **Welcomers** session. (Welcomers having replaced Sidesmen or Sidespeople as a title). Fourteen people attended and a similar number could not be there so another date will be offered. Sarah had asked 'what makes a good welcome?' Ideas had been shared and people learned from each other.

Sarah is helping Paul with Linton Heights assemblies and seasonal services - the next one will be Harvest. Paul asked members to pray for even stronger relationship with the Junior school and for contact with Linton Village College.

There is a busy week beginning 20th July with 4 funerals and a wedding.

Planning for **Festival of Angels** continues - includes artwork, community engagement and a fundraising concert of music and readings on Friday 2nd October with Linton Belles, LHJS choir and St Mary's choir. The event will run from Michaelmas, 27th September to 4th October.

Michael Wilcockson was invited to speak about the **Infant School**. Michael said that the Ofsted inspection had gone well and the school met expectations in all categories and exceeded expectations in two areas. The report can be found on the school website.

Beacon Youth Trust – Michael W reported that Youth Worker Cynthia has stepped down after the birth of her baby. Becky Campbell and Gareth Williamson are expanding their hours. Becky is taking on the more spiritual aspects. The Trust is working with about 68 young people, 11 of whom are from Haverhill.

Plans for a new Drop-in centre are being investigated. Linton Parish Council are considering extending the sports pavilion and creating space for youth activities. The Drop-in centre may be refurbished in the meantime. The Trust is looking at developing joint youth and family events with URC and working with Debs Gilbert.

Harvest – Paul said that St Mary's celebration of Harvest is planned for Sunday 13th September, in a normal second Sunday service at 10am with communion. There will be no harvest lunch this year.

Microphones update – Paul said that the wires had perished in the radio mics. Past quotes for repair or replacement had been a staggering c£500. Paul had procured advice from Simon Mackinder and two new Bluetooth microphones (already used for livestreaming funerals, etc) will be purchased at c£80 for both. A small mixer is also needed as the existing iPad is not compatible. Phil Mills offered to investigate the cost of the control box. **Action: Rector & Phil Mills**

Michael Younger asked whether the loop system was working. Some people have commented that they cannot hear well enough – there may be dead spots? Simon Mackinder has also agreed to sort out the cabling under the pulpit.

Music desks – the south aisle trial for choir seating was not successful. It had been agreed that the choir will continue to use the choir stalls in the chancel on 1st and 3rd Sundays (for Sung Communion) and will sit near to the piano on 2nd Sundays. The music desks may now be surplus to requirements – a pity since they were bespoke and made by the son of a congregation member. The eagle lectern (now unused) has been moved further back to enable better lines of sight, not least from the children's area.

The **Community Churchyard Days** have been very successful both in what was achieved and in attracting some new helpers. Thanks go to Margaret Cox for her years of service with the Monday Gang. There are three new volunteers for that group. Tim Brine had mended the steps at the rear of the pavilion. Kirsten Newble has offered to work towards a wildlife award with Tim and the local Wildlife Trust. Melvyn and Lyn Cottage look after the Peace and Pavilion gardens. The recent People's Emergency Briefing film, put on in the church by Linton Roots, attracted a good audience of around 70, and helped to grow relationships between St Mary's and those in the community who care for our local environment.

Tom Dodd is organising a **worship evening** on 4th Sundays – to be called Encounter - to sing and learn a selection of new songs – scheduled for August, September and October.

Paul said that the new **Church bibles** were being well used. Page numbers are now included in the powerpoint presentation on-screen. Those reading should give a page number and wait a few moments for people to find the page.

4. **Updates for the PCC**

Children and Families Team – covered in item 3.

Events Committee – a report had been circulated.

Pastoral Visitors group report – n/a – maybe had not met?

Beacon Youth Trust – covered in item 3.

5. **Deanery and Diocesan matters and DS update**

Michael W, Rural Dean, reported that Mandy Jefferys had been installed in a ceremony at Babraham as the new science parks' chaplain.

Deanery Synod met in Linton on 1st July. Andrew Gore had been re-appointed as Lay Chair and Suzanne Darkins as Treasurer.

Rebates had been paid to parishes.

Linton really should have a 2nd rep on DS. It only meets 3 times a year. No one volunteered for this.

6. **Safeguarding report**

Paul said that he had renewed his Safeguarding training and he had been impressed by the face-to-face session. There was an emphasis on taking care of each other and persons at risk – new terminology, not vulnerable persons any longer.

Cathy had wanted to stand down but, with no one to take over, she is keen to see the work continue and will deal with the new PCC members. Paul would like a paid Benefice safeguarding officer to release Cathy and Lindi, but we need to work out how to fund it. Cathy passed around postcards headed 'If I told you, what would you do?', issued by Diocese of Ely and a DOs and DON'Ts sheet which summarises the outcome of the December Safeguarding workshop.

PCC policies which had been reviewed and agreed need to be put on the website, including Lone Working and Fire Safety and they will be issued to appropriate members of the team. **Action: Wardens**

Phil Mills recommended that we should have a fire drill and do this twice a year in future. He had found the keys to open additional fire exits behind the organ and near the altar. These should be unlocked for all activities in the church, in case the north and south doors cannot be used; and locked again afterwards. Phil commented that fire safety signs had changed recently as running figures were no longer appropriate. Ideally St Mary's should have at least two fire wardens. Phil and Tom volunteered, as one of them would usually be present at Sunday services.

Management and Maintenance

7. **Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 9th March 2026**

P3 Finance & Stewardship – Sue Ellis reported that two parishioners kindly loaned a total of £20,000 to cover the cost of the boiler work until the funds could be accessed from the Friends.

P4 Nanette's name was mis-spelt.

Otherwise, the minutes were agreed by those who had been present in March.

8. **Minutes of the PCC meeting held on 17th May 2026**

These minutes, from the brief meeting following the APCM, were accepted subject to the following amendments.

Item 8 Date of future meetings: September 7th should be September 14th.

P2 – Finance committee: John Organ had subsequently resigned as stewardship officer.

Linton Church of England Infant School: Matt James has been omitted from the list of Foundation Governors.

9. **Matters Arising**

AOB 9th March – A working group to review the lettings policy for church and pavilion is still pending. **Action: Rector & Wardens**

10. **Churchwarden's report including review of social media**

Jacqui Burge said that Tom Dodd and Phil Mills were already proving to be very helpful as assistant churchwardens. Roles were still evolving and a list will be circulated later to show who is doing which tasks.

Social media: A draft Social Media policy was reviewed. St Mary's now has an Instagram account. Paul is grateful to Layla Cornell for setting this up. Sue Ellis said that Charlotte Dodd is also an administrator.

Villio, the new village events app set up by Matt James is useful for advertising events and activities and has potential to reach a wider audience.

Tots Facebook page – Catherine Croxall is the administrator along with Charlotte Dodd. Messy Church Facebook page has been shut down. Sarah Thorne said that used to be under Messy Sarah which she no longer operates.

Photography in church services was discussed. Layla has permission to take photos, but it should be done in a quiet, unobtrusive manner. There have been questions raised about GDPR and consent. Molly Warrington included a question about photography in the GDPR form which she offered to everyone some time ago. This requires investigation and there will be people at St Mary's now who have not completed a form.

Action: Wardens

Tom Dodd suggested forming a WhatsApp group with Layla to agree text before items are posted. Charlotte and Phil Mills will also be in the group.

The Social Media Policy was agreed subject to adding the information and names above.

The Social Media Response Strategy was also reviewed and gives very helpful guidance for everyone using St Mary's social media and describes appropriate responses to comments and questions which may arise. David Watts based the strategy on the Diocesan template. This document was agreed by the meeting.

Action: add dates to the pages – currently shown in red at the end.

Also to arrange to have them posted on St Mary's website for easy reference: Wardens

11. **Finance & Stewardship**

Sue Ellis had circulated figures as at the end of May 2026. There are outstanding payments for charitable giving of about £1,600 which will be addressed. Expenditure headings have been examined in detail by the committee and further savings are difficult to identify. We have had a deficit of about £10,000 for several years, despite increased fundraising efforts from the events committee and other initiatives. Regular giving needs to increase or we will be faced with tough decisions – maybe no organ, no administrator or no heating?

Sue recommended having a **stewardship campaign** in September. Brian Grey has been approached and is willing to be part of a stewardship team.

Members of the congregation will be spoken to sensitively about their level of giving. Regular updates have been in the fortnightly newsletters to try to alert people to the situation.

A legacy of £10,000 – roughly the shortfall in last year's budget - had recently been received from the estate of the late Margaret Clark (no restrictions).

Operating costs for **Mary's Community Kitchen** are now going through the church accounts. There is no charge for a lunch but donations are welcomed. Much of the food is currently donated. Costs are incurred for hiring the VH. Using the church has hidden costs for heating. Donations to date have exceeded expenses, plus some grant funding had been obtained from the Anderson Trust.

David Watts has submitted the **Charity Commission** return for several years, while Churchwarden. Sue Mudge offered to take this on and will liaise with David.

Action: Sue Mudge

Fabric committee

Jacqui Burge said that the boiler room is now locked and there is a key next to the cleaning cupboard. People who need access are aware of this and petty vandalism / unauthorised access will hopefully be avoided.

Barry Roberts is in contact with Crofton Engineering about repairs to the pavilion ramp. Repairs to the roof for the QI works are about to start.

Jacqui will circulate other information.

12. Any other business

Paul invited Sue Mudge to speak about her item.

1. Sue suggested that it would be good practice to send out Minutes within 3 weeks of a meeting. At present they tend to be sent with the next agenda one week before the forthcoming meeting. This is not helpful for members who missed a meeting, nor for those who need to be reminded of actions. This was agreed. **Action: Secretary**
2. General housekeeping needs attention. On 5th July, at least 2 members did not know that there was a meeting on the 13th. She suggested that an email following the APCM would have been helpful, in the absence of the Minutes. The PCC meeting was not in the newsletter – although the APCM had been – and thus not mentioned in prayers, nor was the pavilion booked for the 13th. This is not meant as criticism of the Secretary who is currently somewhat out of action due to work commitments.
3. The PCC page on the website is still incomplete. Tom had updated the PCC members and shown dates of future meetings. Other minutes and annual reports are missing, despite the statement saying that they were shown below. Records should be available for anyone to see. She suggested that it is hard to encourage other members to stand for PCC if there is no indication of what the PCC does. **Action: Secretary & Wardens**

PCC 2026/27 Dates: September 14th, November 9th, January 11th **2027**, March 8th

Deanery Synod dates: 4th November 2026 (Sawston), 7th April 2027 (Great Shelford) at 7.30pm

The meeting closed with prayer.