

# MUCH WENLOCK WITH BOURTON PCC

## MINUTES OF MEETING

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 7.00 pm



in Holy Trinity Much Wenlock

### PRESENT:

### APOLOGIES:

Revd Preb Matthew Stafford (RevdM)  
Mrs Carallyn Benbow (CB)  
Mrs Francine Coulson-Joy (FCJ)  
Mrs Ann Craig (AC) (Bourton)  
Mrs Susan Crooke-Williams (SCW)  
Mrs Gill Davis (GD)

Mrs Alison Dixon (AD)  
Mrs Sally Grant (SG)  
Mr Mark Laws (ML) – Vice Chair  
Mr Andrew Ramsay (AR)  
Revd Sam Rigby (SR)

Mrs Sue Gilling (SGI)  
Revd Lisa Harper (LH)

ITEM	ACTION BY
<p>The meeting was opened in prayer by RevdM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Apologies</b> – received as noted above.</li><li><b>2. Approval of minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting – proposed by SCW seconded by SG, unanimously agreed and duly signed by the Chair.</li><li><b>3. Matters arising from the previous minutes</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Memorial book – FCJ has contacted a supplier and is awaiting a response.</li><li>2) Flower Guild funding – the Flower Guild shared donations from the floral arranging at the Gift Day and the Finance Committee agreed to give them a donation to help with Sunday flowers.</li></ol></li><li><b>4. Holy Trinity Bourton</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On one occasion the lights were mistakenly left on but no harm was done. It in fact led to community interest in the church and some extra attendance.</li><li>• The Gallery Singers plan to come for a concert next Spring.</li><li>• Brockton School held a Harvest Festival service which was well attended by pupils and parents.</li><li>• There will be a Christingle for Brockton School on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 1.30 pm.</li></ul></li><li><b>5. Diocesan Year of Engagement</b> A first joint initiative with English Heritage was held on All Souls Day. It was attended and appreciated by many, some of whom would not normally attend church services. Funding was given by the Much Wenlock Ecclesiastical Society (MWEC). Next year RevdM will review whether to combine activity at the Priory with a more formal church service too.</li></ol> <p>Russ the carpenter has offered a discount for work on adapting the church doors. Isobell Buschell is preparing some design work for the entrance area.</p> <p>The MWEC has also given funding for a weekly youth drop in church on Thursday afternoons. The first session was held today and was attended by a number of students from William Brookes.</p>	

The Remembrance Service was well attended and appreciated, held partially outside then inside church, and positive feedback has been received. RevdM expressed thanks to all involved.

A Remembrance service also took place by the war memorial at Cressage, followed by refreshments in the village hall. There were about 50 attending including some children from the primary school who laid a wreath. A Christmas event is planned in the school.

The Archdeacon of Ludlow will leave her post on 6th January to move to a new position in Taunton. Revd Sam will be the local representative until a replacement is appointed.

We await further instruction from the church commissioners regarding Cressage church, following handover of the churchyard by the Raby Estate to the Diocese.

The final notice has been put up for Berrington, following which it will be handed over to the Churches Historic Trust.

Takings from soup lunches are 50% up on last year. The soup lunches fund has donated to Lendwithcare which is now supporting activity in 7 countries with loans.

#### 6. Internet Host Responsibility

RevdM has a Zoom meeting tomorrow with ISM in Bridgnorth and it is intended to appoint them to look after hosting our internet. Revd Sam and SCW will also attend the zoom.

#### 7. Confirmation 23<sup>rd</sup> November

There are three candidates from our group of parishes and another two others from the Diocese. Sessions were held at Brockton and Cressage primary schools and there was some interest in confirmation which will be followed up, though no candidates have come forward this year.

#### 8. Christmas Arrangements

Arrangements are confirmed on the calendar, including:

- 9<sup>th</sup> December Angel Fest with the Salvation Army
- Carols for All led by Revd Lisa and Revd Sam on 12<sup>th</sup> December
- The Carol Service on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 6.30 pm
- The Much Wenlock crib service was noted in 2<sup>nd</sup> place after Canterbury on a list compiled by Gareth Malone in Country Life Magazine. Further attention will be given to plans for this year's crib service on 24<sup>th</sup> December to ensure safety of the high numbers expected.
- Christmas Day All Age Communion at 9.30 am led by Revd Sam
- School carol concerts will be held for William Brookes on 15<sup>th</sup> December, Cressage primary school on 18<sup>th</sup> December and Much Wenlock primary on 19<sup>th</sup> December.
- There will be an Advent service at Easthope on 30<sup>th</sup> November at 6 pm.

Arrangements are in hand for the Christmas Fayre on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

#### 9. Finance

A positive finance meeting was held on 11<sup>th</sup> November. Total assets remain at the same level as at the beginning of the year. Exceptional items such as a significant VAT refund and £7,500 from the Friends of Holy Trinity when it closed are helping with funds. Parish Giving is below last year, though service collections remain steady. Contactless donations have more than doubled to £5,500 year to date.

Gift Day raised almost £4,000 including a single £1,000 donation. The Herald remains on track to contribute a profit of over £3,000. Fees for weddings and funerals have risen slightly, as has bank interest.

The long dry summer meant we spent half our usual amount on churchyard maintenance while the trees have benefited from extensive work. Insurance costs have risen by over 10% and there has been additional expenditure on items for the organ installation such as scaffolding and electrics. Our total costs for printing (of posters, envelopes, etc) have risen considerably.

The new energy contract with Octopus is just beginning to show benefits. It is planned to have notes highlighting church running costs in the pews on a monthly basis to increase awareness.

It was suggestion we invite sponsorship of the new pew cushions. Pew cushions will also be ordered for the choir stalls. The PCC agreed to supply 4 new cushions for the choir stalls and 2 for the vicars' seats. SCW will get quotes to bring back to the next PCC meeting. It was noted that the chosen supplier supports employees with disabilities. The current runners can be repaired as back cushions if the choir wishes to arrange and fund back runners.

SCW

RevdM has been looking at alternatives in other churches for the flagpole following Nick Matthews' retirement later in the year. It was proposed we seek advice from a health and safety perspective to ensure the ongoing safety of flag raising, e.g. with a pulley system. ML will ask Tim Randall to arrange for an engineer to assess and give recommendations for a safe solution.

ML

**10. Fabric**

- **Modification and re-ordering of pews in the North Aisle and update on the removal of pew doors**

SCW will speak to Stephen Chandler to arrange a visit.

SCW

- **Church boundaries and access**

ML following up.

ML

- **Trees, churchyard, prayer area**

The scouts came to help clear up and filled a skip. The PCC made a contribution of £50 to the scouts. It was agreed ML should proceed with pruning and tidying up the remaining lime trees and hiring a chipper (approx. cost £200).

ML

- **Quinquennial**

Work on the external stonework will be required next year with roman plastering and/or replacement over the next few years. ML will discuss with Tim Randall, also regarding insulation around the internal doors for draught proofing.

ML

ML will follow up regarding road closure for the tower walkers next year.

ML

- **Heating/Green agenda**

The flue requires cleaning and ML is following up on two small repair items.

ML

ML is looking into options for fitting heat sensors for a period of time to record data. ML and GD will put together a summary of research done over the past year or two into heating solutions.

ML / GD

RevdM proposed getting together a separate group of objective individuals to review requirements over the next few years to bring back recommendations and engage with the town. He will make enquiries with local people involved with green energy.

REVDM

**11. Parish safeguarding**

SGi will be sending out details of some online training available and an update on the DBS system in the coming weeks.

SGI

**Any other business**

- Window cleaning: initial enquiries for cleaning the windows were cost prohibitive. FCJ will investigate further to see if a local solution can be found to have windows cleaned on a regular basis. Cleaning by hand is required.
- FCS will also look into having the light bulbs cleaned. Effective new lighting has been installed in the chancel.
- Repairs to three small holes in the Lady Chapel were agreed at a cost of £390, proposed by FCS, seconded by Revd Sam and unanimously approved.

FCJ

FCJ

**12. Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026, 7 pm

The meeting closed at 20.20 pm in prayer.

Signature:

Date:

29/1/26