

MUCH WENLOCK WITH BOURTON PCC

MINUTES OF MEETING

Thursday 29th January 2026, 7.00 pm



in Holy Trinity Much Wenlock

PRESENT:

Revd Preb Matthew Stafford (RevDM)
Mrs Caralyn 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

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Sue Gilling (SGi)
Revd Lisa Harper (LH)
Mr Andrew Ramsay (AR)
Revd Sam Rigby (SR)
Brendon Quinn (BQ)

ITEM	ACTION BY
<p>The meeting was opened in prayer by RevDM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Apologies – received as noted above.2. Approval of minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 13th November were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting – proposed by ML seconded by SCW, unanimously agreed and duly signed by the Chair.3. Matters arising from the previous minutes<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Choir stalls cushions: The churchwardens have measured up the choir stalls and priests' chairs today and an order will be placed tomorrow.2) Flag raising suggestions – as an interim measure Tim Ratcliffe has offered to raise the flag.3) Window cleaning (FCJ) – the window cleaners offered to clean one window free of charge, but as the money is not available for the rest (£2,000) this will be declined. RevDM has another contact he will approach, as does GD.4. Termly Update from the Director of Music The Director of Music was not able to attend but provided an update report.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organ is settling in well and receiving favourable comments from visiting organists. Minor adjustments will be made over the coming months as required, as part of the voicing and tuning process.• Two new choir members joined last term, one senior and one junior. The usual Christmas commitments were maintained including well received visits to the nursing homes in town.• The WOOFYT outreach workshop was a great success and well received by KS2 at Much Wenlock Primary. Funding for future events will be discussed by the Rector and churchwardens.• Choir members staffed a display during Gift Day and there were organ demonstrations, concluding with an excellent turnout for the 'Come and Sing' Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat.• A 'Come and Sing' choral evensong had a good turnout from singers young and old from around the county. Plans for two further events are underway and more participation from the team churches and deanery will be encouraged.	<p>REVDM/GD</p>

- The Saturday Live programme of concerts in Holy Trinity is nearly complete and there will be at least one event per month from March onwards, mainly short Saturday lunchtime concerts with a retiring collection, with some ticketed evening concerts.
- Pedals and Pipes, an introduction to the organ for young musicians, will be offered to local primary school age children. This will be a free event encouraging children to join in and have a go.

If BQ provides information on funding required for Saturday Live this will be considered by the PCC.

BQ

5. Holy Trinity Bourton

- A yew tree came down, which has been cleared up by Joffrey. There are two fir trees which could fall against the church in high winds. Joffrey suggested reducing their size by a third. ML will arrange an inspection.
- AC's son has cleared out the guttering. A few tiles on the roof have come loose, which he will attend to when the weather improves.
- Access down the footpath – two vehicles have tried to drive down the access footpath making a mess. ML suggested putting two posts by the lychgate should stop people driving down. A letter will be prepared and sent to landowners Carter Jonas.

ML

AC

ML/AD

6. Diocesan Year of Celebration

The Diocese is commemorating its 1350 years this year.

- The Lord Lieutenant will be attending Holy Trinity Much Wenlock on St Milburga's Day 22nd February along with the Bishop.
- The Bishop will be visiting again and following the pilgrimage trail on 19th September.
- A number of applications have been received for the Archdeacon role.
- Gareth Ingham has been appointed in Condovery deanery, the post being 0.5 rector of Condovery, 0.5 rural commissioner. RevdM will confirm the date for the licensing. There will be some secretarial support with the role, which can help with faculty applications. This administrator will also keep the 'church near you' up to date.

7. Team Vicar Children and Youth Update

Work with the schools has been very positive, particularly the Youth Drop-in on Thursdays in Holy Trinity which has been very well received. The young people are appreciative, polite and respectful and this new venture has been positively received in Much Wenlock. Up to 50 have attended with an average of 25-35 per session. The support of the PCC and the MVEC was acknowledged. Some donations have been received from non-church members and SR is exploring other funding.

SR

Cressage Primary School came to Cound church for Candlemass. Cound have offered to fund half the cost of the bus once a term (£335) to take the children to the church.

8. Loop System

New earpieces have been sourced for the clergy which give much clearer audio. Richard Hawthorne will be asking his sound engineer contact to come to identify where the break in the cable is so it can be repaired.

9. Church Walk

The Rector has submitted a letter to Shropshire Council objecting to the application for installation of gates and railings at Church House. ML's input into the report was gratefully acknowledged.

The Town Council decided to move the discussion to the full Council on Thursday 4th February. Attendees from church are encouraged, to give local views from long term residents.

ML pointed out that the right of way and the planning application are separate matters. He will continue to pursue the right of access from the Land Registry.

ML

10. Saint Milburga's Day

The Bishop will be attending along with the Lord Lieutenant.

11. Sabbatical Arrangements

The Rector gave assurance that a proper handover would take place prior to his sabbatical. Revd Lisa will be vicar in charge during his absence.

12. Finance

The Finance report was received in AR's absence.

The 2025 annual accounts are with the Independent Examiner and are expected to be approved shortly.

Donations have been received from the Christmas Fayre (£360) and from Much Wenlock Civic Society (£200), the latter being specifically for the Wenlock Herald.

Current issues:

- Consideration has been given to changing the old photocopier for something more modern and appropriate for our needs. The Finance Committee has decided to lease a modern machine at a cost of £42 per month.
- Snow damaged trees at both churchyards have been removed at a cost of £400 for Much Wenlock and £700 for Bourton. However, the large yew trees at Bourton still require urgent surveying by a qualified professional.
- Annual salary reviews are due for our two staff (Cleaner & Director of Music). The Finance team propose an increase in line with inflation and guidance from the RSCM.
- There have been some teething troubles with our new utility supplier, Octopus. Although smart meters have been fitted for electricity in both churches, we await the installation of one for gas at Much Wenlock. We have now received credit for over-charges on VAT for Much Wenlock on gas (charged at 20% instead of 5% for charities) and similarly a credit for Climate Change Levy. The overcharge had amounted to £290.
- New sensors have been installed throughout the church in Much Wenlock to measure temperature and humidity.
- New lighting is being installed in the bell-ringing chamber. The cost of £900 will come from the balance of the funds raised by the bell ringers for the refurbishment of the bells.

13. Fabric

- **Modification and re-ordering of pews in the North Aisle and update on the removal of pew doors** – further update at next PCC meeting.
- **Church boundaries and access** – ML following up with the solicitor
- **Trees, churchyard, area of contemplation**

A tree that came down was cleared up by Joffrey.

RevdM has received suggestions for the area of contemplation from Olivia Wayne which he will disseminate, and Julian Wayne has offered his support advising on green energy and renewables. RevdM will initiate a meeting with GD and PCC members.

REVDM

- **Quinquennial**

ML is planning various jobs with Tim Ratcliffe and work required on the church tower.

ML

- **Heating/Green agenda**

Spot sensors have been installed around the church at a cost of maximum £1040. The invoice is awaited. ML has approached the Diocese to see if any funding is available. The cost was discussed at the previous PCC meeting but not minuted. This was minuted retrospectively, proposed ML, seconded FCJ.

There is limited information available on the Diocesan website. ML will try to arrange a Teams meeting with Lee Wescott.

ML

14. Parish safeguarding

SGi sent a brief report in her absence. We are in the process of being able to use the new system thirtyone:eight. The thirtyone:eight organisation is a Christian charity committed to safeguarding, with significantly increased safeguards around their processes. LH, SGi and RevdM met at the end of last year and have offered to provide a hub for processing DBS checks at Much Wenlock. There will be clinics at appropriate times for signposting people and helping with completion of safeguarding forms when they are due for renewal. SGi will be in touch with those whose DBS checks are due for renewal. There are likely to be another 3 to 6 other members across the benefice.

There have been some safeguarding issues which are not church based but we are supporting.

There is discussion around training courses and what is needed, so if there are suggestions these are welcome.

Carl, the Safeguarding Advisor for the Diocese is off sick at present.

Any other business

- Memorial Book – FCJ has discussed with the calligrapher and there are several proposals for consideration. FCJ proposed she head up a small team of the two churchwardens, a representative from Bourton and two other church representatives to go through the proposals and come back to the PCC with a recommendation.
- Dates for 2026 meetings are listed at the end of the minutes.
- The Town Council would like to hold a family May Day event on the church green, 2.00 - 4.30pm on Monday 4th May. This was agreed.
- There will be a Heritage Day at the Wenlock Priory on 7th February.

FCJ

- There have been a number of funerals already this year, always a privilege for the Rector to conduct but acknowledged to take an emotional toll on the town.

15. Dates of next meetings:

Thursday 19th March 2026, 7 pm

Sunday 12th April, 9.30 am – APCM

Thursday 21st May, 7 pm – with termly update from Director of Music

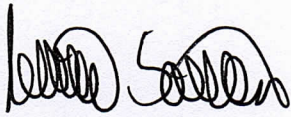
Thursday 16th July, 7 pm

Thursday 17th September, 7 pm – with termly update from Director of Music

Thursday 12th November, 7 pm

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm in prayer.

Signature:



Date:

19/3/26