

**Minutes of the Parish Annual General Meeting
St. Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green**

Sunday, 20th July 2025

Item 1: Welcome

Father Michael welcomed 28 lay members and 4 Priests of the parish to the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

He thanked the parish for their goodness and generosity. He particularly acknowledged the work of Peter Robson who led the accompanied prayer session which offered spiritual direction which he felt was important and necessary. He also acknowledge the young Vinnie's and the contribution that the leaders were making to their life's and the life of the parish.

He pointed out that in July 2026 there would be a provincial chapter which may lead to more changes and more pressure on priests' time that we should prepare for.

He formally opened the meeting with a prayer.

Item 2: Minutes of the last AGM (2024)

The minutes of the previous AGM held in 2024 were approved.

Matters Arising

No matters arising were discussed.

Item 3: Finance Committee Chairman's Annual Report

Brian Martin, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented the annual report. The formal statement of accounts is available on the notice board and has been published on the parish website.

He made the following comments:

- He outlined the work that the finance Committee do throughout the year in ensuring the due diligence of all payments. Analysing the accounts at certain stages throughout the year and generally making sure everything is in good order and Diocesan mandates are followed.
- Income has been stable and with the completion of some projects e.g. car park, fire doors and the redecoration of the chapel there is a small deficit in year of £10K.
- Looking forward the reserves have been earmarked for the Henrietta Suite refurbishment and when the tender process is complete we will look at the affordability of the planned works.
- There is a slight amended to the income and expenditure in the published booklet – in that the administrative costs are now correct at £79K.

Questions and Comments

A question was raised as to why the smart TV had not been installed in the Henrietta Suite. Bernard said that it was part of the refurbishment project and would not be dealt with separately.

A discussion took place about how gift aid could be promoted, particularly for those who donate by the loose plate. This amounts to 25% of our income. Options were considered as to how to promote gift aid and this would be looked at further by the Finance Committee

Item 4: Chairman's Annual Report

Bernard in presenting his report echoed Fr Michael's comments about the good and generous parish community that we have. He highlighted that there was more we could do but there is a gap in those volunteering which limits the offerings which can be provided.

Questions and Comments

Fr Brian suggested that there was a need to focus on non-practising Catholics concentrating on evangelisation and synodality.

Lesley asked if more newsletters could be published

The issue was raised about why the AGM had to be on a Sunday afternoon, which is normally a family time. It was suggested that the meeting could be offered on a hybrid basis and be held in the evening. With perhaps more engagement with the parents at our Catholic schools. This option was favoured by a great majority of those present.

Mention was made about the spiritual life of the church and introducing things like the Alpha Course was seen as a benefit. It was also noted that when parishioners were approached to get involved it was likely to be more successful than a call for volunteers in the newsletter. There was discussion about engaging the youth and a suggestion to bring back Sunday evening mass. The PPC will look at options for getting more people involved in the life of the parish.

Item 5: Proposed changes to the PPC Constitution

The proposed change was approved after discussion about whether there should be any limit on continued PPC membership, and the non-specific definition of 'long-standing'. There were 18 in favour of the change, 6 against, and 3 abstentions."

The proposed changes were approved.

Item 6 Questions and Comments

Sheila asked that mass intentions be announced at the beginning of mass to provide a comfort to the person that made the request. She was advised that in accordance with the constitution, allowing such a significant point without 21 days notice was at the discretion of the Chair, to give time for considered debate and responses.

The question was allowed and discussed. Friars explained the practical and administrative difficulties we have, compared with a one-priest parish. Bernard advised that this was not a matter for the PPC but for the Friars, who should be left to consider the request.

A request was made for more printed copies of the newsletter to be available each week.

Item 7: Nominations

Lorna Spears was nominated and elected to the parish council.

It was noted that Damian, Donna, Peter and Cynthia would be invited to be co-opted on to the PPC until elections can take place next year.

Closing Prayer – Fr Michael