

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes
Monday 13th December 2025

Attendees : Bernard Hunter, Fr Michael Copps, Robin Shearmur, Lorna Spears, Martin Sharkey, Donna Patros, Damian Atkinson, Patricia Jolly.
Also present for the Henrietta Suite item: Fr Patrick (walk-around only), Rob Fernandes.

Apologies for Absence: Peter Robson, Cynthia Oji, Geraldine Mansbridge, Suzie Wright

Actions:

- The PPC asked Bernard to discuss with Cynthia how best she can contribute to the Parish, given her considerable work commitments.
- The PPC asked Bernard to discuss joining the PPC as Secretary with Suzie.

The committee recorded their effusive thanks for Geraldine's support over the years.

Minutes

The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Matters arising

List of small grant recipients – Action: carried forward (Robin)

Henrietta Suite

Rob showed us round the suite, explaining what is yet to be done (shutters, countertop, some snagging, AV installation), and what 'extras' had been approved since the initial proposal (decorate foyer, levelling floor, skimming walls).

The committee was very impressed with the refurbished suite.

The final total cost will probably be very close to the expected £250,000, with an additional £7,000 on the tables and chairs.

The council building control manager will visit on Wednesday, after which it will be clearer when we can take occupancy. There seems every chance that at least use of the main hall will be possible for Christmas.

Patricia reported on Becket Centre committee plans for a formal re-opening event which was provisionally agreed to be Saturday afternoon 10th January.

Contractors and hirers to be invited in addition to parishioners.

BCC was given a free hand and an open budget for the event, and will make plans to cater for potentially large numbers wishing to attend.

Toilets: These were also inspected and met with high approval.

The total cost was just short of £25,000.

Sound system

Members had read the communication from Mike Murphy. Bernard gave an overview of the project and the current state of the system (he had led the project).

Clarity of sound was thought to be an issue, with many contributory reasons.

However, it was noted that those who used the microphones well had no trouble being heard clearly.

Fr Michael also noted that he experienced feedback on occasions, though this is not routinely recorded or reported.

After discussion, it was agreed that:

- a) We need to re-emphasise the need for all 'incidents' to be recorded so that they can be investigated and remedial action identified and taken.
- b) We will continue to push for a re-assessment of the speaker configuration, in particular whether the speakers should be angled (given that clarity is improved when standing as opposed to sitting)
- c) Fr Michael would trial the use of the headset microphone
- d) A clear way is needed for ushers to signal to the priest when there is a problem.
- e) A note "Please remember – speak slowly" to be put on the ambo.

Bernard to be responsible for all actions.

Review of recent events

Christmas Fair: Agreed this was, as usual, and excellent parish event.

The PPC expressed its gratitude to Jo and Simon who are stepping down after organising this event for many years.

Action: Bernard will meet them to discuss how best to continue it in coming years.

Bereavement service: It was reported not to have been well attended.

Adoration: sparsely attended on the Saturday afternoon, but good otherwise

Advent retreat: 7 organisers and 7 others attended and enjoyed the event, though the films were thought too long.

Ecumenical Advent Carol Service: slightly less well attended than last year, possibly weather –related, but an excellent service and a very well attended gathering upstairs in the Becket Centre afterwards.

Actions: It was noted that for all these events, and others, a post mortem to identify strengths and weaknesses and to assure continuity is very important.

Bernard to consider how to make that routine.

Future events

- Christmas masses being organised by Damian with help from Bernard
- Alpha course starting in January has few signed up yet. Being advertised further.

Any Other business

- Agreed to circulate Ushers' guide to PPC members once ushers had commented on it
- Support for schools item carried forward as meeting had overrun.
A report of past support and future needs will be produced by Damian and Bernard after liaising with the schools.

Next Meeting

This will be held on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.30pm