

St Margaret's Church – Crick
Minutes of the PCC meeting
Wednesday 27th November 2024, 7.30pm, The Old School.

	Attendance: Rev Graeme, Rev Jo (Chair), John Rogers, Kent Polley, Dave Milne, Ian Jones, Andrew Hutley (for items 17 and 18 only).
1.	Opening Prayers: Led by Rev Jo.
2.	Apologies: Zona Dipple, Gemma Drakeford, Hazel Gault, Lyn Johnson, Jacqueline Smith, Ray Smith
3.	Minutes from 25/9/2024: Agreed as an accurate record
4.	Matters Arising not on the agenda: None
5.	Actions from 25/9/2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next steps for an installation of CCTV to be taken off the agenda. Ask Andrew how this might be taken forward at a future date.
6.	Rector's feedback: Rev Graeme spoke about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retirement from full time ministry is difficult because it is a big change in every sense. ▪ Rev Graeme spoke about the recent Safeguarding scandal that is creating a lot of damage to the reputation of the Church of England, and answered questions from PCC members.
7.	Children's ministry: Rev Jo spoke about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The application for grant to support children's work has been approved by the Gen2 team. The original grant application of £3835.50 had been scaled back to £3000. However, this was largely offset by a commensurate reduction in Barbara Brazier's first year accommodation costs of £900 instead of £1650. Rev Graeme agreed that the shortfall of £85.50 would be met from the Rector's Discretionary Fund. In 2025, the accommodation costs will be £1650. ▪ Rev Jo asked whether the PCC would provide Barbara with an allowance to buy books. Rev Jo to obtain an amount from Barbara and discuss at the next PCC. ▪ Rev Graeme commented that, including this grant, a total of £8350 had come into the benefice in the past 12 months for children's, families and youth work from sources other than church funds. ▪ Shine service in November, whilst a great act of worship, had no children attending. ▪ Rev Jo's 4-day placement at Crick Primary School went well and has further strengthened the relationships between the school and St Margaret's. One of the aims is to 'do church' where the children are most of the time, i.e. in school. The placement has led to requests from year-group teachers for visits to St Margaret's that make the connection between the curriculum and the lived experience of Christian life of our church members. In recent weeks, Years 2, 4/5 and 6 have or will have visited the church. Rev Jo is to become a governor.

8.	Churchwardens' Report:					
	1. <u>Sept/Oct services</u>					
	Month	Date	Service	Adults	Children	Comments
	Sept	1	Informal Morning Praise	23	2	
		3	Funeral	108		Wendy Jordan
		4	Holy Communion midweek	10	1	
		7	Wedding	86	7	Birchner/Davies
		8	Holy Communion	28		
		11	Holy Communion midweek	6		
		15	Shine	10	1	
		18	Holy Communion midweek	7		
		21	Wedding	105	5	Nealon/Hallam
		22	Songs of Praise	24	1	
		25	Holy Communion midweek	8		
		29	UB Yelvertoft	N/A	N/A	
	Oct	2	Holy Communion midweek	8		
		6	Informal Morning Praise	19		
		9	Holy Communion midweek	9		
		13	Sung Holy Communion	28		
		16	Morning Prayer	6		
		20	Shine	18	5	
		23	Holy Communion midweek	7		
		27	Songs of Praise	32	1	
		30	Holy Communion midweek	8		

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2. Maintenance of the fabric

During the heavy rains in September there was some ingress of water in two places in the north aisle: close to the projector and above the Little Saints cabinet. We will be asking Premium Guttering shortly to inspect the guttering and gullies on the upper roof areas and during this inspection we will ask the contractor to take a look at the pointing and flashing abutting the roof and clerestory wall on the north side.

Glen Smith has removed ivy from the gravestones by the sycamore tree and cleared the soakaways which had become blocked during the heavy rains. Our thanks once again to Glen for his time and expertise.

3. CCTV

Faculty required. This is the next step

4. Review of church opening

There are no issues to report.

5. Fire evacuation procedures test

The Headteacher of Crick Primary School has agreed to the school assisting us with the testing of our fire evacuation procedures at the end of the Christingle service on 20th December. We will produce a plan for this which will be shared with the school in advance so that the teaching staff and their SEND pupils are briefed. The principal purpose is to test our evacuation procedures, to learn how long it takes to evacuate the building when it's full, to brief our fire marshals and put our procedures into practice. We expect this to be undertaken annually in future.

6. Electrical supply contract

Noting for the minutes that Dave obtained renewal quotes from our broker, Green Energy Advice Bureau, from Total – our existing supplier – and British Gas. The contract is due for renewal on 1st March 2025. Dave circulated a paper to the PCC by email on 7th November and the majority decision was to remain with Total. Subsequent to his email, Dave contacted British Gas and Total direct and an improved price was obtained with Total at 24.9014p/kWh (Day rate), 17.4647p/kWh (Evening rate) and 874587p (Standing charge). This compares with British Gas 26.59p (D) 19.36p (E) and 45p (SC). Accordingly, the contract has been renewed with Total for 3 years. The change in our cost of electricity is 31% higher on our day rate, 7% higher on our evening rate and 9% lower on our standing charge.

7. Grant application to Crick Parish Council

An application has been made to Crick Parish Council for a grant of £1000 towards our 2024 insurance costs. The application goes before the Council on 18th

November. [Note: the Parish Council approved a grant of £709.01 being 25% of our 2024 insurance costs].

8. Past and future events

- **Ride and Stride 2024**

A letter of thanks has been received from the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust.

- **All Souls 27th October at All Saints, Lilbourne**

The annual All Souls service was hosted by All Saints, Lilbourne this year. It was a beautiful service and greatly appreciated by those who attended. The Lilbourne team provided a warm welcome and excellent refreshments. Around 45 people took part.

- **Remembrance Sunday 10th November**

We moved to a new time and format for this year's Remembrance Sunday service. The service was held at 9.45am and was attended by 136 adults and 90 children from our uniformed organisations. Members of the Scouts and Guides read the lessons and prayers. The offering this year was to the Royal British Legion and SSAFA (these charities were selected by Sean Brazier) and totalled £392 to be divided equally between them. In future years we will invite the Scouts and Guides alternately to choose the military charities to be supported.

The service was followed by the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial at 11am and was organised by Crick Parish Council.

- **Christmas services**

Our Christmas services this year will be:

Family Carols – Sunday 15th December, 3.30pm

Christingle Service for Crick Primary School – Friday 20th December, 10am

7 Lessons Carol Service – Sunday 22nd December, 6pm

Crib Service – Tuesday 24th December, 4pm

Midnight – Tuesday 24th December, 11pm

Christmas Day Holy Communion – Wednesday 25th December, 9.45am

An A5 Christmas flyer has been designed by Jacqueline and this will be used to print 1,000 copies for house-to-house distribution and for our website, Facebook and noticeboards. Thank you Jacqueline. The printing costs, including VAT and delivery, will be approximately £40.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ocho <p>Ocho, the a cappella group, will be performing again on Saturday 7th December. Tickets £10. St Margaret's will receive a fee for hosting the event of £250. We are hoping to also offer a raffle in aid of church funds.</p> <p>John, Kent and Andrew</p>
9.	<p>Safeguarding The PCC noted its thanks to Ray Smith for his continuing work as our Safeguarding Officer.</p> <p>Ray reported: CONCERNS & ALLEGATIONS: Thankfully we have no reported concerns or allegations, since the last PCC meeting.</p> <p>PARISH DASHBOARD: We are currently at Level Three 100% on the Dashboard. – There are several reports and policies which are coming up for review in January 25. These are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting a Healthy & Safe Culture.• Responding to concerns or allegations• Lone working• Appropriate Boundaries• Support for victims & Survivors.• Little Saints Induction & settling in period for volunteers and also Ongoing support and oversight of volunteers. <p>There are guidelines and recommendations, please see the attached downloads. The PCC need to be both aware and discuss these and then report acceptance in the PCC minutes.</p> <p>TRAINING & DBS CHECKS: Currently the following training courses are yet to be completed: - Church Wardens: Leadership Training. (one still outstanding) Currently we have one DBS renewal being processed. Tower Captain: DBS now completed and approved, the necessary training courses have yet to be completed. Together with the remaining Bell Ringers DBS and training Courses. I have reminded Nick Hyam and asked whether it would help if we were to have a meeting with the ringers. To discuss any concerns and possibly to have a joint DBS sign up session. This was several weeks ago and I have not had any reply.</p> <p>The PCC discussed and agreed the following:</p> <p>Worksheet 1a: Promoting a healthy and safe culture What are some of the strengths of our church culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team-based. Power doesn't rest in one person. Welcoming. Safeguarding is discussed at all PCC meetings. What are the main weaknesses of our church culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The risk of complacency that safeguarding issues won't happen in a nice middle-class village community. Worksheet 1a actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That our Safeguarding culture is discussed at every PCC.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding policies and contact information is accessible on: posters, on our church website and at every service on our rolling PowerPoint notices. • A commitment by all PCC members that compliance and leadership training modules are completed on time. <p>Worksheet 1b: Promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups</p> <p>What vulnerable groups do we have in our church?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal vulnerable groups are children and young people. This can be those taking part in our own PCC-led services like Little Saints or Shine, or liaison visits from Crick Primary School and members of our local Scouts and Guides. Also the infirm, those with mental health issues and asylum seekers. <p>How could those in leadership roles better engage with and promote their welfare?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders be they clergy or laity, exert considerable personal power through the way they engage with, speak to, or listen to people in a vulnerable group. Our aim is to never take for granted that our intentions are always positive and well-meaning and being curious about the consequences of our intentions through the way we behave. <p>Worksheet 1b actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As leaders, being aware of ourselves and curious about our actions. • Being watchful of others' actions. <p>Worksheet 4a: Victims and survivors of abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC discussed and agreed with the 'what good looks like' bullet points on the worksheet. Our aim is to develop a positive culture that makes sure our church is a safe place. Safe in a physical sense and safe too in an emotional sense. It's about remaining curious and alert to our culture all of the time and taking seriously those times when the culture isn't as it should be. <p>Worksheet 4a actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To always listen to, believe and take seriously all issues raised by victims and survivors of abuse. <p>Worksheet 5a: Supporting people in safeguarding roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges of your safeguarding role? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church communities have a shared sense of purpose. However, in any group of people, and churches are no different, there are a whole variety of human experiences some of which are positive in how they affect the culture and some that are less so. Clergy and lay leaders have influential roles in setting standards for others to follow through all types of interactions in group settings. • An understanding by others of the pressures on church leaders to be constantly attuned to Safeguarding. <p>Worksheet 5a actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through prayer • Being always curious and alert to our culture • Supporting leaders by making clear our collective understanding that Safeguarding is a shared responsibility • PCC meetings being a safe place at which leaders' concerns can be raised.
10.	<p>Little Saints: Zona reported: LS has been a little quieter of late. We're getting 3/4 children rather than 6/7 per week Hopefully we'll see more as Christmas approaches. Even when it's quiet though the Mums are still happy to sit and chat while the children play, which is lovely to see.</p>
11.	<p>Deanery and Diocesan Synod</p>

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	<p>Lyn reported:</p> <p>Deanery Synod Met on 3rd October. Chris Banks and Rev Graeme gave general updates and described the agenda for Bishop Debbie's visit to the Deanery. This was followed by a thought-provoking session on Spirituality led by Rev Dr Judy Peck. She reminded us that our faith journey was 'lifelong' and as our life circumstances change, we need to have an open mind so God can speak to us using different ways. She then led a meditation with some listening and sharing exercises. This was very relaxing!</p> <p>Diocesan Synod Met on 12th October and it was the beginning of a new season of freshly elected members of Synod. We had an internal election for both a Laity and Clergy Vice Chair. Chris Bank, our Deanery vice chair was elected as was Rev. Alison Twigg, also from our Deanery. This is an important outcome as our Deanery is the only one with all rural churches. Bishop Debbie is introducing refreshed and refined ways of working and is conducting a review of Diocesan services so she can decide the way forward. Finances were discussed at length because the diocese is asset rich and cash poor! Church attendance and giving was referred to. The average attendance is 20 adults and 1 child. Not a sustainable model.</p> <p>Emily Elliott is the new secretary at the DAC and she is trying to process applications more speedily. Much was said about that. Adam Clarke is the new Net Zero Programme manager, being shared with Leicester Diocese. He encouraged us to use the Energy Footprint Tool on the diocese website.</p> <p>Rev Graeme updated the PCC on the recent Diocesan Clergy Conference and his input, at the invitation of Bishop Debbie, to take about the challenges of rural ministry.</p>
12	<p>Crick Primary School Council request Letter received from Crick Primary School Council regarding there interest in projects in which we would welcome the School Council's support, or help with. The PCC welcomed the approach and it was agreed that we would invite the School Council to consider an eco-project in the churchyard. A response will be sent to the School Council.</p>
13	<p>Church fabric update - Prioritisation of the quinquennial: There has been nothing to report. KP still must speak to GS.</p>
14	<p>Treasurer's update – including Parish Share: Dave circulated the latest income and expense summary which shows a deficit of £1823.23. It was noted that income from the plate is down. The PCC agreed to pass baskets for the offering during all Christmas services and for service leaders to promote the use of the card reader.</p> <p>At the benefice meeting of churchwardens and treasurers on 28th October, the proposed split for 2025 (2024 % in brackets) would be St Margaret's 50% (47%), All Saints, Yelvertoft 38% (42%), All Saints, Lilbourne 12% (11%). Proposed by John, seconded by Dave. All in favour. The Parish Share for the Benefice for 2025 will rise to (2024 in brackets): £70,518 (£68,595). Therefore, Crick's share of this will be £35,259pa (£32,239.65) or £2,938.25 per month (£2,686.64).</p> <p>As a result of the rise in our Parish Share combined with a declining trend in regular giving by direct debit, and that income from this source will not cover our Parish</p>

	<p>Share, it places even more importance on our ability to raise funds by other means. Fundraising will be added as an agenda item at our next PCC meeting.</p> <p>Fees for Occasional Offices were discussed at the churchwardens' meeting on 9th October. Proposal for agreement by PCC by John, seconded by Kent. All in favour.</p>
15	<p>Stewardship update</p> <p>Planned giving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 30 members on the Parish Giving Scheme and 3 people who pay by standing order direct to St Margaret's. The Gift Aid on the latter is claimed annually. • 1 person has left the scheme since our September meeting. • 14 members on the Parish Giving Scheme have agreed to annual inflation increases. • Based on a rolling 12-month period the revised average monthly and annual totals, assuming no other changes, are now £2,899/month/£34,785/year. • Our Parish Share for 2024 is £32,239.65 <p>Card reader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our card reader has been live from the beginning of September 2021. • In 2021 there were 172 transactions totalling £1,290. Average of £7.50. • In 2022 there were 254 transactions totalling £1,688. Average of £6.64. • In 2023 there were 371 transactions totalling £3,574. Average of £9.63. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Sunday and Wednesday offerings there were 207 transactions totalling £1,625. Average of £7.85 ○ For fundraising events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mothering Sunday teas 23 transactions totalling £592 ▪ Coronation weekend BBQ 45 transactions totalling £326 ▪ Scarecrow weekend BBQ and teas 85 transactions totalling £830 ▪ Harvest supper 11 transactions totalling £201 • In 2024 to end of Oct there have been 190 transactions totalling £2005. Average £10.53 of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Sunday and Wednesday offerings - 83 transactions totalling £659. Average of £7.93. ○ For fundraising events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mothering Sunday teas 12 transactions totalling £335 ▪ Plant Fair 17 transactions £221 ▪ Scarecrow weekend BBQ and teas 78 transactions totalling £790
16	<p>Policies for review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct for Volunteers. Proposed by John. Seconded by Kent. All in favour. • Equality, Diversity and Inclusions. Proposed by John. Seconded by Kent. All in favour. • Complaints/Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures for Placement Student Volunteers. Proposed by John. Seconded by Kent. All in favour.
17	<p>Vacancy of the position of Rector. Next steps</p> <p>This item was dealt with separately after the PCC meeting had closed and Rev Graeme and Rev Jo had left.</p>
18	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for the services marking Rev Graeme's retirement. PCC agreed that there should be separate services in each parish to allow time for Rev Graeme to stay after each service. Agreed that this was an action for the benefice churchwardens to make a decision on. • Easter services

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	PCC agreed that Holy Communion should be celebrated in all 3 churches on Easter Day. To enable this to happen, we will attempt to find a locum to support Rev Jo. Action: John
	Dates of next meetings PCC 22/01/25, 26/03/25, 21/05/25, 16/07/25, 24/09/25, 26/11/25 APCM 30/04/25

The meeting closed with a prayer at 9.30pm