

St James the Great, Cradley

Minutes of PCC meeting – 5 May 2026

Held at Reafields, courtesy of Di and Chris Roberts

Items for action are marked in **bold**.

Present: Mike Hames [in the chair], Jane MacFarlane, Peter and Sue Warner, Sue Ronan, Chris and Di Roberts, Ian and Sue Bailey, Margaret Edgar, Eryl Copp, John Parsons

1. The meeting began with a prayer at 19.30
2. Apologies were received from Jenny Fleming
3. There were no declarations of interest
4. The date of the next meeting will be decided on 26th May at the informal meeting of Rosie Roberts with the PCC.

Rosie will be asked if a daytime meeting might be preferable for her.

5. The minutes were signed as an accurate record.
6. Matters arising:

Following a lengthy stalemate over the Nifty Lift issue, two people, who wish to remain anonymous, have shared the four-figure cost of repair. Amongst some incredulity, they were thanked for their gallantry and generosity. It was thought it might be preferable to hire a scaffolding tower in future.

Church chest: Mike thanked the 'manoeuvring team', and reported that the job will be finished on 6/5/26.

7. Reports

A] Fabric. See report

The Quinquennial Review should be signed off on 13 May.

Mike raised concerns about the unevenness and boggiess of the area to the S of the trench arch. **Further inspection of this should be made.**

The fire extinguisher inspection cost £80 + VAT, with the cost split between the Church and the Scout Group. The cost for replacing the two extinguishers amounts to £212.46 + VAT. This figure includes disposal of

the two old extinguishers and £80 for a further site visit. It was decided to keep the old ones for training purposes, and **Ian will look into obtaining the new extinguishers locally**, and fetching them himself.

Further quotes are forthcoming for the protective mesh for the St Francis window.

B] Treasurer. See report

Dr Webster Fund: Chris said that this fund will shortly be closed, and the balance put in the CCLA account.

Once the architect's completion certificate for our new WC has been received, the £6,000 from the Lottery can be claimed. The total cost of the WC now runs to £117,000. Various extra costs have been incurred recently, including the archaeologist's bill, and £10,000 in lost VAT reclaim, following recent tax changes. The team, which has worked so hard for many years for the WC project, was heartily thanked.

The Parish Share is £34k in 2026, and the diocese has suggested that this should be increased by £900 in 2027. The benefice has recently reduced its offer quite substantially in real terms, however, in view of the present financial position of the PCC, Chris felt we should keep our share to £34k for 2026. All were agreed. Ian suggested that a **benefice meeting should be convened** to discuss this matter.

Mike reminded us that we depend on regular givers increasing their personal giving each year, and it was reiterated that a stewardship campaign should be launched as soon as possible after Rosie's arrival. John said that, whereas pensioners enjoy a rise in income every year, the pay of many working people has dropped in real terms in recent years, and that we should be sensitive to this.

C] Churchwardens. See report

Ian was thanked for repainting the vestry.

D] O&E. See report

Chris and Ian were thanked for doing their recent scrap metal collection, and particularly for their remarkable 2-day project to disassemble a caravan and retrieve the metal chassis. They raised £300.

Peter confirmed that OneAchorD will give a concert in church on Sunday afternoon 15/11/26.

E] Eco Church

Mike raised the issue of the missing water butt for the WC building, and whether we'll need to finance this separately. Chris suggested that there is provision for this in the plan, and funds should be available.

We now have a green bin.

John said he'd asked some tree surgeons working locally to dump a load of wood chips by the yew, and he has spread it around the perimeter of the tree, which should help keep it happy for several years.

F] H&S

There was nothing reported in the book.

8. Churchyard

Tony was thanked for his ongoing work, despite his 'retirement', and for the list he's provided of yearly tasks in the churchyard.

John will ask Tony if any volunteers were forthcoming after the recent appeal in the Newsletter.

Squirrels have been seen on the church roof, underlining the fact that the limbs nearest the church of the Snake Bark Maple need to be lopped.

Peter will have a look and see if he can trim them with his chain saw on a pole.

Garden of Remembrance: Tony was thanked for his report. Mike and Ian have estimated that there are at least 20 plots remaining in the existing area, and that the issue of the new G of R should be examined again once Rosie has settled in.

9. Sub-committees

The Churchyard committee has not met for several years. It was thought that the net should be spread wider, to include non-church members.

Mike said he would ask Patrick Fleming if he might be interested.

Sue Bailey said that anyone engaged with work in the churchyard should read the Churchyard Risk Assessment and be asked to sign that they have done so.

The Standing, Fabric, Worship and O&E committees will continue with their present membership.

Glebe land committee: Chris Roberts [chair], Peter Warner, Di Roberts, Ian Bailey, Sue Bailey and Mike Hames.

10. Sidespeople

Last year's list has been reviewed and a few names removed as appropriate. No new names have been added.

An additional role will be for the sidesperson, during the Peace, to inform Chris how many communicants there are. Ian said he could also be ready to do this if necessary.

11. Member Trustee Eligibility Declaration

The form has been reviewed, and a completed form received from Jenny Fleming.

12. Rosie's Installation

Ian will liaise with the diocese regarding the liturgy and order of service, and start to draw up an invitation list. Ian and Di will join a small benefice committee [coordinated by Di] who will plan the event. Di will mention this to Mathon folk at the Rogation service there on Sunday 10 May.

There will be an informal social evening for Rosie to meet the PCC on Tuesday 26 May, 7.30pm, at Reafields. Nibbles will be provided and Chris will supply wine, supplemented by the odd additional bottle should a member be minded to bring one.

13. Organ

John has applied for grants to The Pilling Trust, the William A Cadbury Trust, and the Edward Cadbury Trust. He said that we don't qualify for many trusts [e.g. the ON Fund and the Church Care Trust] as we either haven't raised half the funds, or because the organ is not historic and *unaltered*.

He intends to produce a printed leaflet, a poster, and a Newsletter article to advertise the appeal and explain how people can donate. In addition, he has entered for a 10k run in the Birmingham Running Festival, and hopes that, as well as raising the profile of the effort, many in the church and village will sponsor him.

14. Safeguarding

All were in favour of Eryl Copp continuing in her role as safeguarding officer, and also of Wendy Long continuing as benefice safeguarding officer.

The safeguarding policy was reviewed and adopted. Last year's safeguarding poster will be used in the porch, rather than this year's, as it is clearer to read and the text is identical.

15. AOB

Herefordshire Histories: there are two weekends each in May and August. Mike will conduct guided tours of the church and the churchyard on each of these occasions.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 21.23

Signed.....

Date.....