

Walton Churches Partnership Council

Our Vision: Seeking, Sharing and Celebrating the Abundant Life of God

Our Mission: Thinking small: Generous hospitality: Involving everyone

Minutes of meeting on Tuesday 11th November at 7.00pm

Venue: Community Room, Wavendon

Opening Prayer was led by Steve Potter.

Present: Mandy Sleight , Steve Potter, Ian Pearce, Jonathan Bailey, Klaus Reidel, Alison Drury, Charles Robertson, Ruth Maxey, Glynis Keeler, Stephanie Warren, Carolyn Sanderson, Rosie Neale.

Apologies: Matt Trendall, Clare Veal

Minute taker: Rosie Neale

1. Approval of minutes to the last meeting 8th September 2025 and Matters Arising from these minutes not covered by the agenda:

- Minutes were unanimously approved, with clarification of one name.
- It was noted that St Mary's needs a second representative for WCP.

2: Matters arising:

- WCP 40th Anniversary report: The event went very well. There were fewer people attending than had been hoped, but there was a good even mix across the different congregations. Some newcomers to the churches were there, as well as more established members. Alison gave feedback that younger people liked seeing people from different styles of church come together and would like to see more of this. Ruth has some photos which she will share. Ann McKinnon had produced an excellent PPT showing WCP through the years. This could be useful for the different congregations and events. **Action: Ruth to share PPT and photos.**
- Youth Weekend Away report: Some of the young people received a small subsidy from WCP. Some were accompanied there on the train by Ruth. Very positive reports were received and it was an excellent occasion for growing the faith of the young people.
- Christmas Flyers: Ruth brought these to the meeting and distributed them among the congregations.
- Confirmation: WCP has no candidates this time, but potentially a good number in the pipeline, to include some baptisms. These will possibly take place before next November. This year's service is at 6.30pm on Sunday 16th November at Servant King Church.

3: Finance:

- Presentation of budget for 2026: Thanks were expressed to Clare for her clear and helpful report. There was some discussion of the budgeted amount for Youth and Children's work, which is unlikely to be sufficient once Big Basics is fully established and no longer relies on donations. It was suggested that the budget be doubled to £1,000 for 2026. This was proposed by Stephanie, seconded by Ruth, and agreed unanimously. The budget for Twinflower may also be subject to change, and there was concern over whether the correct council tax was being paid, given it has been empty for some time now. **Action: Steve to follow up council tax situation with MK council.**

- Question 2 on Finance report: This concerned whether Newport Pagnell URC should continue to contribute towards the cost of the Broughton manse. It was unanimously agreed that this should continue.
- Question 3 on finance report: This concerned the lower contribution requested by MK Deanery and how we would use the £8,421 involved. It was unanimously agreed that this would be used for Kingdom work and the request for details of what it would be used for was noted.
- Question 4 on finance report: It was noted that WCP has considerable reserves currently and the investment of these and other finance policies would be reviewed once Matt has returned from his sabbatical.
- Update on the report of the Independent Examiner: The WCP is extremely grateful to David Harvey for his work with Clare on this, and for agreeing to act as Independent Examiner for 2025. A token of our appreciation will be passed on to him. The Council agreed to accept his report, proposed by Steve, seconded by Ian, and agreed unanimously.

4. WCP Events/joint activities

- WCP Quiet Day: There was some discussion of timings. Ian will lead the day, which will take place on 14th March, during Lent, which was felt to be a suitable time. He will need others to promote it, since he will be away for 4 weeks up to 8th March. **Action: Ruth to create and circulate a poster with details.**
- Alpha Course: Ian was pleased to tell the Council that there are 10 active participants on the Wednesday course, of whom at least 3 have come to faith during the course. It was felt that it was too early in their faith journey to look at confirmation this time, but progress is encouraging. Feedback has been very positive and the group will continue as a study group once the course is complete. Some who started were unable to continue, because evenings were inconvenient, so Ian is intending to run a day time course beginning after Easter. Some more reserved people found the environment difficult and requested a Zoom Alpha. Ian aims to run this before Christmas, but attendance will be by recommendation and invitation rather than public, in order to keep the group small for those who need a quiet environment. **Action: All to pass on any recommendations for Zoom Alpha to Ian as soon as possible.**
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Ruth suggested that we repeat the Pilgrimage which took place last year and was very successful. The same route, from St Mary's to the pub in Broughton via Christ the King and All Saints and the option of St Lawrence, will be used, with refreshments provided at Christ the King. It will take place on Saturday 24th January. **Action: Ruth to produce poster, Ian to provide photos for the quiz.**
- Youth and children's updates: Thanks were expressed to all those who lead youth groups across the partnership.
 - Big Basics: Alison updated us on progress. The group has 20 names on the list, with an average attendance of around 11, drawn from across all the churches, and including some with particular needs. A solid friendship group is developing and it is a joy to see them working together. The team of leaders is learning with the young people. It is exciting to see a number of the young people attending All Saints. Alison mentioned that she is able to draw on what she is learning from Big Basics in approaching her work with young adults.
 - Zoom Kids: Ruth mentioned that there is room for more children to attend. It is based in Broughton and there is space for parents to stay on site, while the children engage in the sessions. In general, this is aimed at very young children from the age of beginning to attend school.
 - Relax Teens: Strong relationships have developed within the regular group, which is positive but can become a little exclusive. There is an overlap between this group and

Big Basics. Group is drawn from all the churches except All Saints currently. Ruth would like to see more younger teens attending from Year 7 and above.

- Youth Alpha: Ian explained that this was an experiment, using adapted versions of the 6 sessions of the normal Alpha course. It takes place on alternate weeks when Relax Teens is not on. It began with 4 young people attending but 2 left after the first session. The 2 who remain have enjoyed it and will be encouraged to move onto Big Basics.
- Children's Choir: This is open to children across the partnership. They will be singing at the All Saints Christmas Fayre on 15th November and at the Nativity Service. Ian asked whether they would be willing to come and sing at other churches in services. **Action: Alison to ask Rachel whether the choir would sing more widely across the partnership.**
- Carol singing at Broughton Pavilion: A group will be singing carols at the Broughton Community Christmas Cracker from approximately 5.15pm on Saturday 29th November. All welcome.

5. **Safeguarding updates:**

- No update was received. Rachel is not receiving WCP emails. The query about DBS systems arose because WCP uses the Baptist DBS system, but the policy is Anglican. **Action: Mandy to ensure that Rachel is added to the email list.**

6. **Ministerial updates:**

- CtK and Ian's position: Stephen updated the Council on the congregational meetings which have been held at CtK, chaired by Lisa Kenny, the ministry team leader. Members from All Saints and St Mary's attended the meetings and their contributions were appreciated. This resulted in a proposal, which includes 2 sections: the first, to extend Ian's contract as Interim Pastor for a further 2 years on a 60% FTE basis, and the second to withdraw from the Baptist Union settlement process and not look for another minister until CtK is in a better financial position and could consider a full-time position. This proposal was accepted by 82.1% of the congregational meeting. There was considerable discussion of this proposal, with reservations expressed about the mention of a full-time minister in the future. In reality, not only is this unrealistic financially, it would also go against the situation for all other ministers across the partnership and the city. It was agreed that it would be necessary to manage the expectations of the CtK congregation and that it was a WCP decision in any case. The Council agreed to the proposal with these reservations. It was proposed by Steve, seconded by Klaus, and agreed unanimously, Ian having recused himself. The contract will need to be amended from 50% to 60% FTE and a start date (probably 1st January 2026) agreed. **Action: Mandy, Clare, and Ian to meet as soon as possible to arrange the contract.**
- Matt's return: Matt will be back at work from 22nd November.

7. **Congregational Round Up:**

- CtK Community Church: The church has naturally been preoccupied with the ministry proposal. There has been increased attendance and membership, but also some churn with people moving on, which has had a negative financial impact. The church has agreed to increase its share by £1,000 next year, but this may be difficult. Activities within the church are going well and Ian is keen to implement his creative ideas. Several Anglican and Baptist speakers have addressed the congregation seeking discernment and the membership has been very supportive. However, the church still needs more sermon cover from within the partnership, since there are fewer people able to preach within the CtK congregation.
- Church Without Walls: Ruth reported that numbers attending on Sunday are erratic, and generally down on previously. The community is involved and supportive, but does not necessarily see attendance at a Sunday service as essential. However, it is inspiring to see different people leading services and groups within the congregation and the level of creativity

they show. A rota of different service patterns may encourage irregular attendance, there are many vulnerable families within the community, and there is a seasonal impact including the football season. However, attendance at evening communion at St Lawrence has increased.

- St Mary's: Numbers are buoyant and activities such as coffee morning and the Thursday and Saturday language classes are continuing. Many thanks go to Alison for all the services she has conducted, as well as baptisms, school assemblies etc. The new choir venture from Oscar and Cristina, Advent Voices, will be going around the local area singing and praying in outreach over the next few weeks. The church is now left open 3 days a week, after services or group meetings. This is aimed at attracting in outsiders or passers-by, or parents waiting to collect children, and people are coming in. The building does not need to be attended. Precious items are locked away and the insurance company actually favours it, since vandalism is often reduced when the building feels part of the community.
- All Saints: It is very pleasing that young people from Big Basics come to services regularly and say that they come because they value the peace and time away from screens. They appreciate the structure and a certain level of formality. Children's Church is also thriving, and has been awarded £500 from the Deanery Mission Fund. The vestry is already undergoing changes to make it a more usable and welcoming space for them. It is good that the congregation has so many people able to lead services and take communion – it has helped a great deal during Matt's sabbatical.
- Roman Catholic Church: Numbers are holding up well and include many young families and a young adults group. The children from St Bernadette's school came to help with a service, which was extremely well attended. The First Communion programme has started and will run through to June.

8. Denominational Round-up

- URC: It would be very good if we could have a WCP rep to go with Ruth to the next URC Synod on 14th March. The URC has unusually held a second General Assembly of the year, looking at restructuring. Many churches are closing and 50% of national staff lost their jobs over the summer. The organisation is looking to use its resources wisely. One idea is having eldership across several churches, since the church elders have a great many responsibilities as trustees and it is difficult to find sufficient people to take that on.
- Deanery: It seems that we will not be receiving money from the Church of England centrally since they are focused elsewhere and it is not clear whether the Oxford Diocese will distribute money to Milton Keynes. The new bishop of Buckingham, Bishop Dave, is very aware that our area is very poorly served on the ground in terms of clergy and is looking at ways to help, such as rebalancing LEP parishes. Unfortunately, there is no new archdeacon currently, but they are currently recruiting and have shortlisted 4 candidates. There is a temporary archdeacon, who is an expert in buildings, should we need their support.

9. Date/Time of Next Meeting :

Tuesday 3rd February 2026

AGM will be held on Tuesday 21st April 2026

Walton PCC

Notes to meeting on 11th November 2025

Note: members of Walton PCC are:

- *those WCP Council members affiliated to the Church of England and/or who have joined the Electoral Roll – namely Rev. Matt Trendall (chair), Rev. Alison Drury, Jonathan Bailey, Carolyn Sanderson, Charles Robertson, Steve Potter, Stephanie Warren, and Mandy Sleight plus Walton's churchwardens – Pat Sawyer, Barney Daley, Roger Hancock (and Jonathan Bailey – already a WCP Council member)*

Jonathan chaired.

1. Approval of Notes to last meeting 8th September 2025: These were approved without alteration.

2. Matters arising :

- Deanery news: See point 8 above.
- Update on Gardens of Rest at St Mary's and All Saints: St Mary's is largely complete.
- Pinfold Monument: Repairs are now complete and paid for.
- Churchwardens' meeting: All 4 churchwardens will meet on Monday 24th November following Matt's return.
- All Saints requested a resolution: The PCC approved the first phase of work identified in the report. Charles proposed, Carolyn seconded, and it was unanimously agreed.

3. Date of next meeting – as per item 9 above.

The meeting was closed at 9.12pm with the Grace.