

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 3rd February at 7.00pm

Venue: Community Room, Wavendon

Opening Prayer was led by Ian Pearce.

Present: Mandy Sleight , Matt Trendall, Steve Potter, Ian Pearce, Jonathan Bailey, Alison Drury, Charles Robertson, Ruth Maxey, Stephanie Warren, Rosie Neale.

Apologies: Glynis Keeler, Klaus Reidel, Carolyn Sanderson, Clare Veal

Minute taker: Rosie Neale

1. **Approval of all previous minutes and matters arising from these minutes not covered elsewhere:**
 - Minutes were unanimously approved.

2. **Matters arising:**
 - Gift for David Harbey: This had not yet been actioned. **Action: Ruth to purchase a gift.**
 - URC Synod: The date for this is 21st rather than 14th March as previously thought. Ruth would like another person to attend with her. Mandy may be able to go, and Stephanie volunteered to go if she is unable to make it.

3. **Finance:**
 - Finance policy including Reserve Proposal: Thanks were expressed to Clare for her thorough and professional work on creating the policy, which has already been signed off in principle by the clergy team, and includes the Church Without Walls finance policy.
It was suggested that point 2.6 be slightly amended to say that **at least** 3 people should have access to the Barclays account. The policy was accepted with this small change. Proposed by Matt and seconded by Jonathan and unanimously accepted.
The policy did not set the percentages of WCP funds to be distributed between lower risk, lower return funds and higher risk, higher return. It was proposed that a small group, composed of Matt, Clare, and Rosie meet separately to look at the options and make a proposal to the council, which can be voted on via email. This was proposed by Ian, seconded by Ruth, and unanimously agreed. **Action: Matt to arrange meeting.**

4. **WCP Events/joint activities**
 - Pilgrim Walk: The turnout was lower than had been hoped but a large proportion of walkers stayed on to share lunch at the end. We were blessed with good weather and people from all congregations attended and enjoyed spending time together. Refreshments at Christ the King were excellent. It was agreed that we would look at a different type of event for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity next year, with the focus on it being easy to prepare, since it comes so soon after the Christmas season.
 - Quiet Day: This had been planned for March but now needs to be postponed, due to issue with booking the venue. It is essential that we have a venue with facilities for the disabled. It will

take place later in the year. **Action: Ian to look at suitable dates and venues before next meeting.**

- Practicing the Way course: It was felt to be very positive that all our churches were participating and sharing in the learning, and many people had signed up, including people new to our congregations. Most groups begin this week, but Ruth had already successfully begun. Almost all the books have been sold and most of the booklets taken. It was agreed that individual churches would bank the money for the books and transfer the appropriate funds to the WCP account later.
- Ash Wednesday: There will be a communion service including ashing at 10.30am. There was some discussion of a possible evening service at Christ the King as usual, but it was felt that this would clash with too many of the Practicing the Way sessions. **Action: Ian to inform Catholic clergy that there would be no joint evening service and stress that it would be for this year only.**
- Youth and children's updates: Thanks were expressed to all those who lead youth groups across the partnership.
 - Big Basics: Big Basics: Faith Confirmed has just begun in a new venue – Milton Keynes Village Hall. This course may lead to baptism or confirmation if attendees wish. One new person attended having seen information on Facebook, reflecting the different ways outreach is happening.
 - Zoom Kids: Numbers are rather low currently, partly due to the weather and time of year. There is capacity to take more in, and a good team of leaders.
 - Relax Teens: This group is going well. Ruth was happy to have recruited another male leader. It remains a priority to expand the group somewhat to extend friendship groups. Some are going to attend the URC Youth Assembly. The group is grateful for a donated pool table.
 - Youth Alpha: This has now finished and Ian felt there was no need for a follow-on group, since the material was being covered at Big Basics. He is, however, happy to offer another course in the future if there is a need for it.
 - Children's Choir: Again numbers are lower currently. The leaders are engaging in reflection about the direction of the group going forward.

5. **Safeguarding updates:**

- Nothing pressing has been reported. The dashboard has been upgraded and Jo Yates added as safeguarding lead for St Mary's. All congregations now have their own lead, although Church Without Walls needs a leader to take on the more bureaucratic aspects of the work. It was suggested that Rachael as WCP safeguarding officer might oversee the work of safeguarding leads across the partnership, so that Christ the King would need to appoint a congregation-specific safeguarding lead.

6. **Ministerial updates:**

- Matt's Sabbatical: Matt expressed his thanks to those who took on extra duties during his Sabbatical. He spent the time in much needed rest and reflection. He has realised that he needs to slow down and pace himself better, focusing on three main areas: wisdom, discernment, and unity. He spoke of the importance of leading out of weakness, with gentleness, kindness, and patience. The council expressed its support for this and encouraged him to put rest and reflection times in his calendar, so that they are not always swallowed up in urgent tasks.
- Diocesan Investment Opportunity for Milton Keynes: The new bishop of Buckingham, Bishop Dave, who will be moving to Milton Keynes, is keen to have money released for the area and the

application for funds will be made soon. They are looking to invest in the LEPs (Local Ecumenical Partnerships), providing 3 or 4 funded posts for 3 – 5 years.

It was decided that the WCP needs to gather a core group to look at what the needs are in this area, given our congregations are growing and we need further ministry support. WCP needs to take the time to look at this carefully and think strategically, not only for the immediate future but further ahead. It was agreed that we would commission the clergy team to come together and consider how this group should be constituted and who should be asked to take part, in addition to key figures like the churchwardens, Steve, and Mandy. This was proposed by Steve and seconded by Jonathan, agreed unanimously.

7. Congregational Round Up:

- CtK Community Church: Christmas services went well, and included two local schools and a combined carol service with a choir including members of both congregations. There were 2 baptisms in January including one person completely new to the faith. They are creating a resource hub in the narthex including a cosy corner. The Catholic church owns 51% of the building and has done a recent survey of the church and community centre, which is likely to lead to necessary works such as the installation of a new heating system. This has cost implications. Unfortunately, there was no formal interdenominational structure created at the outset for capital costs, which creates problems when asking for contributions from the various denominations involved. Finances are stabilising with a probable loss of £2,000 in 2025 and an aim to break even in 2026. Children's and youth church sessions will be a little less frequent going forward, due to a lack of leaders. There have been requests for a men's group and Ian is keen to set one up, which could be open to the whole partnership. New people are attending and it is clear that God is at work.
- Church Without Walls: CWW had a good Christmas, including Carols at the Pub, joint carol singing with All Saints at the Christmas Fayre in Broughton, and a new family attending. The core team are managing services well when Ruth has commitments in Newport Pagnell. There are many challenges ahead, but it is important to keep in mind that this church is reaching out to people on the edge and will therefore experience different issues.
- St Mary's: Christmas went very well and numbers are continuing to grow, with many new people attending. The church has set up a new 20s and 30s group which is already almost at capacity. It is important to provide something extra for this age group, particularly since a number of young men are now attending. Regular activities such as the coffee morning and language café continue, alongside the challenges of settling new people in and providing new welcome pathways and pastoral care.
- All Saints: All Saints is also picking up numbers, with many new people attending and becoming involved. The congregation is becoming much better at welcoming new people and social links are developing, including a group regularly going to the pub together after services on Sunday. There was expected to be a shortfall in funds this year, but the congregation stepped up and filled the gap.
- Roman Catholic Church: Will report back at the next meeting.

8. Denominational Round-up

- URC: As previously mentioned, the synod will be on March 21st. The denomination is struggling with a lack of ministers and many challenges. Ruth will report on the Joint Public Issues initiative at the next meeting. URC's excellent online offering was mentioned.
- Deanery: See DIO update point 6 above.
- Baptist: The denomination is also short of ministers, with very few presenting for full training each year. However, many more are going through the Locally Recognised Ministry route, like Ian, which is encouraging.

- Methodist: The area circuit is also short of ministers, but Christ the King is now on the circuit, which will provide a preacher once a quarter.

9. **AOB:**

- WCP officers (Chair and Treasurer) will be elected at the AGM.

10. **Date/Time of Next Meeting :**

AGM will be held on **Tuesday 21st April 2026** at **Christ the King**. **Action: Clergy team to invite congregation members.**

Next WCP meeting either **16th June** or, if necessary, **14th July 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)

Matt chaired.

1. Approval of Notes to last meeting 11th November 2025: These were approved without alteration.

2. Matters arising :

- Update on Gardens of Rest at St Mary's and All Saints: St Mary's is largely complete and now being used. MK Council has some funds to add some planting. All Saints is now unlikely to add a new section, but there is the possibility of looking at a possible site at St Michael's, now the the Open University is not moving.
- Quinquennial Inspection updates: Phase 1 at All Saints is currently underway. St Mary's QI is booked in for summer 2026.
- Audio replacement work at All Saints: This is now ready for the final phase to improve the quality of the microphone coverage. See proposal paper from Barny.
- All Saints requested 2 resolutions: 1) The PCC approved the resolution passed by All Saints Stewards' Council to proceed with the work according to the proposal circulated. Proposed by Jonathan, seconded by Stephen and unanimously agreed. 2) The PCC approved the installation of antennae at All Saints, subject to diocesan permission and agreement of the best locations for these. Proposed by Jonathan, seconded by Stephen and unanimously agreed.

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

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm with the Grace.