

Walton Churches Partnership Council

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 21st April 2026, at Christ the King Community Church, Kents Hill at 7.00pm

Present: Mandy Sleight (Chair), Rev. Matt Trendall, Pastor Ian Pearce, Rev. Ruth Maxey, Rev. Alison Drury, Julian Drury, Rachael Jenkins, Glynis Keeler, Elaine Maries, Rosie Neale, Klaus Reidel, Charles Robertson, Carolyn Sanderson, Pat Sawyer, Clare Veal, Stephanie Warren

1. Opening Devotions & Remembrance for Ann

Matt led us in remembering the life and immense contribution to the WCP of Ann Beaton, our former chair, to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. He shared a reading from John 15 and we sang her favourite hymn.

2. Welcome

Mandy welcomed everyone and expressed particular thanks to the ministers who serve our congregations for their work this year.

3. Apologies for Absence: Jonathan Bailey, Barny Daley, Cindy Ho, Steve Potter, Alise Trendall

4. Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting of 30th April 2025

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true record. *Proposed by Ruth, seconded by Stephanie and approved unanimously.*

5. Matters arising not covered by the agenda - Walton LEP's registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Ruth brought us up to date about the requirement for the LEP to become a CIO in the next few years, and shared the work which had been done previously on the process and rationale. There are a number of challenges which arise as part of this process, including the need to harmonise accounting practices across the congregations, which now seems more feasible. Congregational representatives would become trustees of the charity. We would be obliged to hold 3 meetings plus an AGM across the year and, with our increased overall membership, a quorum of approximately 55 members would be needed. However, if that could not be met, another meeting called within 2 weeks would be considered automatically quorate, which could ease the problem.

It was suggested that we consult other LEPs like Watling Valley who have already been through this process, and that we might combine social and spiritual occasions such as the WCP barbecue, joint services, etc with official meetings. This will be discussed in greater depth at the next WCP Council meeting in June.

Ruth proposed that we trial working as if we were a CIO over the course of the year, in order to find a method of meeting the requirements which is successful and not too onerous. *This was proposed by Glynis, seconded by Elaine, and agreed unanimously.*

Action point: Ministry teams to consult other LEPs. Matt to work with Clare on setting up appropriate accounting processes.

6. Confirming Congregational Representatives to WCP (2 per congregation) and other WCP Council Officers for 2026-27

Congregational Representatives:

All Saints

Carolyn Sanderson and Charles Robertson

St Mary's

Jonathan Bailey and Cindy Ho

Christ the King Rachael Jenkins and Stephanie Warren
Church without Walls Glynis Keeler and Elaine Maries

Election of Chair We are grateful to Mandy Sleight for agreeing to continue as Chair. *Her election was proposed by Matt and seconded by Carolyn, and agreed unanimously.*
Election of Vice Chair This will be considered at the next WCP council meeting.
Election of Secretary Rosie has agreed to continue as Minutes Secretary.
Election of Treasurer We are extremely grateful to Clare for her work so far and very happy that she is willing to continue this year.
The above elections were proposed by Ruth, seconded by Pat, and agreed unanimously.

7. Finance Update and Receipt of 2025 Accounts

Clare gave a report on WCP accounts and the current financial position. The accounts are currently with the external examiner and will be available shortly. We made a small surplus with an income of £135,000 and expenditure of £132,000, and a closing balance of £168,000 in the bank. The council approved the budget for the next year at the last meeting, and our first quarter accounts are tracking well to meet the budget.

a. Walton LEP Housing Limited – approval of 2025 accounts

Matt explained the basis for the accounts and these were approved. *Proposed by Pat, seconded by Charles, and unanimously agreed.*

b. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Our current Independent Examiner has kindly taken on the 2025 accounts but is unable to continue after this. Any possible suggestions should be brought to the WCP Council. Rachael mentioned a possible candidate.

c. Investment proposal

Our funds are currently on deposit at the bank. The proposal is for 2 accounts to be opened with CCLA (which works with many charities and other churches). 1/3 of funds to be invested in the Ethical Investment Fund, which brings a higher return, at slightly higher risk. 2/3 to be invested in a bond with a lower return but correspondingly low risk. The money will remain accessible and performance of CCLA over the years has been very strong.

In order to open the accounts, certain resolutions need to be minuted:

1) That WCP will open investment accounts with CCLA

2) That the following trustees are authorised to sign the CCLA Account Application Form (Section 3) on behalf of the charity, and their authority to act for the charity is confirmed:

- Matthew Trendall
- Rosemary Neale

3) The trustees delegate day-to-day operation of the account to the following authorised signatories, who will be listed in Section 5 of the application form:

- Clare Veal
- Matthew Trendall
- Rosemary Neale
- Amanda Sleight

4) The trustees approve the appointment of the following individual as the CCLA Digital Portal Administrator (Section 4):

- Clare Veal

5) These resolutions are recorded for the purpose of CCLA's compliance and account-opening requirements.

These resolutions were proposed by Charles, seconded by Glynis and unanimously agreed.

Action point: Clare to pursue opening the necessary accounts.

8. Safeguarding Updates: appointment of Parish Safeguarding Officer, and approval of current policy – <http://www.wcpmk.co.uk/children-and-young-people/safeguarding>

Rachael explained that she had completed a major review of the Safeguarding Policy, which has been approved by all 4 denominations. One key addition is a complaints procedure, which follows the Church of England procedure. A shorter consent form has been included for situations where the parents remain on site. All contacts have been updated to ensure that they are correct. There is a new risk assessment template and training requirements have been updated. The Church of England training includes a section on domestic violence, which can be problematic, and Rachael proposes to risk assess individuals where this is the case. All congregations have Safeguarding Leads and Responsible Persons. *The updated policy was approved, with Stephanie proposing, Ian seconding, and all in favour.*

Thanks were expressed to Rachael for taking on this major task so effectively. She has agreed to continue as Parish Safeguarding Officer. *Her appointment was proposed by Matt and seconded by Ruth, with unanimous approval.*

9. Mission and Ministry Updates:

a. Brief Summary of WCP activities

These are wide ranging and include Big basics, Zoom kids, Relax Teens, the 40th Anniversary party, Lent groups, Alpha groups, and the Pilgrimage walk for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, among other things. It is pleasing to see so much cross partnership activity.

b. Diocesan investment

Matt explained that the Oxford Diocese is looking to invest significantly in Milton Keynes, with a first tranche in 12 months and more in 5 years. It is probable that we may be the recipients of some of this investment, to fund a full-time ministry post for the benefit of the whole parish. This post would come at no cost to us for the first few years, with our parish share then increasing commensurately after 2 – 3 years, so that there remain longer term financial implications, although if we were unable to meet the additional costs the post would simply be withdrawn after 7 years. Matt is part of a committee looking into this and a proposal is going to the Diocesan Finance Committee soon. He emphasised that Alison's position within the team is non-negotiable, as she looks to commit her future, as a self-supporting minister, to the partnership once her training comes to an end.

Matt agreed to help to clarify the situation for the congregation at Christ the King, where there is some dissatisfaction about their lack of a full-time minister going forward, despite all the other congregations having part-time ministers. Ruth recommended that we put out something in writing to all the congregations in the near future, explaining this exciting proposal, and encouraging a shift in understanding of our giving and how it funds the growth of the kingdom across our partnership area. Our ministry team feels that our ecumenical identity and the way we work together, including financially supporting congregations when they are struggling, is a prophetic and powerful witness to the love of God and its outworkings in the church.

Action point: Ministry team to consider how best to communicate this proposal to the various congregations.

c. Brief highlights of ministry and mission from each congregation

Church without Walls – Glynis reported on progress at CWW. The congregation has coped well with the change to sharing their minister with URC Newport Pagnell, and a team of volunteers is now leading Quiet Church and Forest Church. In the autumn, there will be a workshop to expand skills in leading Forest Church, open to all. Numbers are consistent, with some new connections and 4 baptisms. Community groups, started by Ruth, now run independently with CWW members involved. Discussion groups and Breaking Bread are, for some, their only connection with church. Glynis emphasised the importance of CWW's welcome to everyone regardless of ability, sexuality, gender, or race, including those on the edges of the community.

All Saints – Matt updated us on an extremely positive year for All Saints, with a growing energy within the increasingly diverse congregation, and more members willing and able to take on additional roles and responsibilities. It has been particularly pleasing to see the increase in younger people attending and the interest in baptism. The church is growing in faith and building on its new vision. The stewards' council is being restructured to better reflect our vision and more effectively serve a larger community.

Christ the King Community Church – After an up and down year, Ian feels that the congregation is now more stable and ready to forge ahead. Numbers are increasing slowly and there are many exciting new initiatives, including a Saturday advice and information hub, a Life group online, a new Men's Group, a Remembrance service for those we have lost, and a Christian Book Club. Ian feels strongly that if the church is called a community church it needs to be in the community, for example as he acts as a governor for 3 local schools. He is looking to create continuity and build other people into taking on more roles within the church.

Christ the King Catholic Church – Numbers are strong and Klaus also felt that the congregation had stabilised this year, with a core of regular attenders creating more of a community.

St Mary's, Wavendon – St Mary's has also had an encouraging year, consolidating the growth which began several years ago. A number of people have come to faith, and the church is building a loving, diverse community. Existing initiatives like the language classes continue to thrive and there is a new 20s group. Matt aims to involve more of the congregation in the development of a vision for the church going forward.

It was felt that it would be of benefit to the whole parish if activities could be shared more widely across all congregations. A quarterly list of activities across the partnership could be publicised to each individual congregation, providing more opportunities to develop initiatives more widely.

Action point: Ministers to liaise to support the production of a quarterly WCP activity update.

10. Looking forward to the coming year, including:

a. Youth and children's work (and review)

Zoom Kids continues for primary age children with strong leadership. Relax Teens has a good number attending, particularly boys, who have made a strong bond and engage in discussion well at the end of the sessions. Big Basics has developed considerably from its beginnings and now has regular attenders from all congregations, some of whom are considering baptism or confirmation. Now there are adults asking for Big Basics too! Mandy expressed our thanks to all who lead the youth and children's work and felt that we should celebrate its effectiveness across the partnership.

b. WCP BBQ @ Wavendon Rectory 26th July

Date to be confirmed, but this is provisionally in the diary.

c. Week of prayer for Christian unity 18th to 25th January

The walk of pilgrimage has worked well for the last 2 years, but there was some discussion of what could replace it in 2027, such as a joint service. This will be discussed further at the next WCP council meeting and be decided in the autumn.

d. Lent groups

Everyone was keen for these to be repeated in 2027. The mix of groups and timings was much appreciated. Easter is very early next year, so preparations will need to be made in the autumn.

Mandy has set up a suggestion box, for the upcoming year, and encouraged everyone to contribute.

11. Any Other Business

a. URC synod rep

Mandy has agreed to represent us. *Her appointment was proposed by Ruth, seconded by Clare, and unanimously agreed.*

Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting for Walton, Milton Keynes

PCC Attendees: Rev. Matt Trendall (Rector, Chair), Rev. Alison Drury (Curate), Pat Sawyer (Churchwarden), Clare Veal (Treasurer), Charles Robertson, Carolyn Sanderson, Stephanie Warren, Mandy Sleight.

Other attendees: Rev. Ruth Maxey, Pastor Ian Pearce, Rachael Jenkins, Glynis Keeler, Elaine Maries, Julian Drury, Rosie Neale, Klaus Reidel.

Apologies from PCC members: Jonathan Bailey, Barny Daley, Roger Hancock (Churchwardens), Cindy Ho, Steve Potter.

Apologies from others: Alise Trendall.

1. **Minutes of 2025 APCM** – no amendments were suggested. Ruth Maxey proposed and Stephanie Warren seconded and these minutes were approved nem.con. as a true record of the previous APCM.

Matters arising:

- a. St. Mary's new Garden of Rest is finally complete – it's been eight years since planning began! It looks great.
2. **Note about individual churches' Annual Reports** – copies of individual church reports, including St Mary's Wavendon and All Saints MK Village, are available for other congregation members who wish to read them. These are posted on the individual church websites.
 3. **Note about 2025 accounts** – since the parish bank accounts are managed by the Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), our accounts are scrutinised and approved by the Partnership's Ecumenical Council. There has been a delay in getting final accounts ready for the AGM – these will be completed and presented as soon as possible.
 4. **Note about election of churchwardens** – following established protocol, St Mary's and All Saints elect their churchwardens at their respective AGMs (although fully ecumenical, these congregations meet in the two Anglican church buildings, so it is most helpful to have parish wardens sited in these two locations). Therefore, the meeting enthusiastically noted the elections of:
 - Roger Hancock & Jonathan Bailey (St Mary's)
 - Pat Sawyer & Barny Daley (All Saints)

Matt thanked all four wardens, who are doing an excellent job!

5. **Note about election of PCC and Deanery Synod reps** – to align with the composition of the Ecumenical Council, the PCC constitutes the Anglican members of that Council, plus Churchwardens, Anglican Clergy and WCP Treasurer as ex-officio members. The only change to PCC membership since last year's APCM is that Cindy Ho is now the second rep for St Mary's, replacing Ann Beaton, who sadly passed away last summer. Jonathan Bailey and Carolyn Sanderson have kindly agreed to stand again as Deanery Synod reps for the new 2026-29 triennium. Two further synod reps need to be appointed – this will be addressed by the time of the next PCC/LEP meeting.

NB Only elected PCC representatives can vote on item 6:

6. **Delegation of specified functions to the institutions of Walton Churches Partnership** – as is customary, day-to-day management of the Partnership is devolved from the PCC to the Local Ecumenical Partnership Council. This is presented to the APCM for their agreement each year. The PCC still meets occasionally (usually immediately after the Ecumenical Council) to discuss any specifically Anglican business – all other matters related to mission and ministry are covered by the

Partnership Council.

The resolution – that the day-to-day running of the parish is devolved to the WCP (Ecumenical) Council – was proposed by Pat Sawyer, seconded by Carolyn Sanderson, and agreed unanimously.

7. **Safeguarding update and approval of 2026 policy** – since Safeguarding is managed at the LEP level and overseen by the ecumenical WCP Council, the full update, re-appointment of Rachael Jenkins as Safeguarding Officer and approval of 2026 policy was effected at the LEP AGM, which immediately preceded the APCM. The full policy is on the Walton Churches Partnership website for anyone to scrutinise.
8. **Broughton Trust Report** – Matt presented a short report as Treasurer of Broughton Trustees. The aims of the charity are to support mission, education and other charitable work within the Parish of Walton. The strong financial performance of our investments (thanks to CCLA) means that we are now able to award significantly more in grants – rising from £7-10k a decade ago to £20-25k in each of the last three years. More than 80% of the funds we award support community projects, including grants to Bridgebuilder Trust, Broughton Youth Club, Walton Community Support Project and Xtra Special Families; just under 20% goes to applications made by all four of our congregations (each of which we have supported in the last few years). We welcome new applications. Matt thanked Steve Potter and Rosie Neale for their excellent work as fellow trustees.
9. **AoB** – there was none.
10. Date of next PCC Meeting – 16th June 2026 at 7pm, to follow the main Ecumenical Council as normal.

The meeting closed with the grace at 8.50pm.

Matt Brendall