CONFIDENTIAL

CROMER CHURCH
LOVING JESUS – SHARING HIS LOVE

CROMER PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parochial Church Council held on Thursday 24th September 2026 at 7.15pm at St Martin's

Members present: Revd Will Warren (Chair), David Anderson, Judith Anderson, Anna Coghlan, Anne Cottingham, John Hodgkinson, Christopher Jacquier, Tracy Johnson, Ivan Kimble, David Loades, Sarah McCandlish, Alison Orsborne, David Orsborne, Doug Tuthill and Eileen Woodfield.

In attendance: Revd Iain Grant

P2609-01 **Bible study and Prayer**

WW led a short study on Ephesians 3v14-21 in which he highlighted the three 'steps' on our journey to greater maturity in Christ: we are strengthened with God's power (v14-17a), secured in his love (v17b-19a) and saturated with his fullness (v19b-21). We are a work in progress, and this is very relevant to us individually and as a church at this time of change and uncertainty. A time of prayer followed.

P2609-02 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Boyle, Hazel Mardlin, Jon Mardlin and Simon Purslow.

P2609-03 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest. WW highlighted the importance of understanding, recording, monitoring and reporting on this, especially in relation to major issues like the RRR Building Project.

P2609-04 **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the PCC meeting held on 23rd July 2026 were unanimously **APPROVED** as an accurate record of that meeting and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

P2607-06 - Details of the Awayday are still being finalised and will be circulated to members as soon as they are available.

P2607-06 - The Stewardship and Giving focus has been planned into the rota for 4th October and 1st November.

P2607-08 - Rob had withdrawn from the appointment, so there was no licensing.

P2609-05 **Chair's strategy briefing**

RRR building for people project

During the consultation period on the RRR building project, 17 meetings had been held with various user groups. Notes from these, together with the 50 forms, 21 emails and four letters that were received, had been collated and considered by the project

steering group at their August meeting. The response to the process had been "active and engaged" and feedback had been "generally positive". Some elements of the project had been warmly endorsed (new toilets, improved heating, consideration of ecological impact) but further questions had been raised about others (retaining the peace and sanctity of the building, managing multiple concurrent uses, designing, using and managing the kitchen space for a range of different users. The project team has identified some follow-up actions on these and will report back to PCC.

The sale of the Meadow Close property had fallen through, and the house is back on the market. There has been some recent interest.

The Planning Application for the Parish Hall is currently being processed by NNDC. It is likely to go to the full Planning Committee.

Discussion followed during which two further questions emerged: 'Has consideration been given to what we will do if the Parish Hall Planning Application is refused?' and 'Has any further feedback been received about the proposed reordering of the gallery space, particularly the relocation of the office?'

Staffing following the failure of the Associate Vicar appointment

WW noted that, in some ways, we are 'back to square one'. WW reported that he and IK and DL had met with Bishop Jane to discuss the situation and consider what might be possible moving forward. Several helpful ideas had been mentioned, including readvertising for an Associate Vicar, advertising for a different kind of post (possibly focusing on 'next generations' ministry), exploring other local models of ministry (e.g. at Weybourne or the Fountain of Life church), or some other course of action. Several members highlighted the importance of having more ordained staff to share the work of parochial pastoral and priestly ministry with WW and the active retired clergy. Members endorsed the view that additional ordained staff were a 'must'. Other areas potentially needing support were also noted: vision, strategic planning and direction, work at St Martin's, raising up new leaders, and administration. After discussion, it was **AGREED**: i) to explore other local models of ministry, seek clarification as to whether they would be supported for Cromer by the Diocese and bring this information to the next meeting, and ii) to devote part of the Awayday to consideration of these matters, In the meantime, members would pray and reflect on the circumstances, the needs and on what God is calling us to do.

P2609-06 **Safeguarding**

The PSOs' report was **RECEIVED.**

The INEQE safeguarding audit surveys are now live. They form part of the audit of Safeguarding provision in the Diocese of Norwich and are a crucial way of ensuring that the team hears as wide a range of voices as possible from across the diocese. EW will circulate the details, and members are asked to complete their own survey(s) and to encourage others to do so, too.

It is important that Health and Safety risk assessments and the Safeguarding Dashboard are kept up to date. The Parish Persons Dashboard is not to be used going forward as it is no longer 'fit for purpose'.

Safeguarding Sunday is 15th November.

P2609-07 - **Environmental Impact and Care of Creation**

The RRR project includes some significant proposals to improve this including the installation of solar PV, a heat pump and underfloor heating.

We've already taken other steps to support visitors who walk or cycle, and the Peregrine Project has made many visitors aware of our role in providing a secure nest site for this endangered species.

Cromer is signed up to the EcoChurch scheme. We need to identify someone to champion this and help us move forward with the awards.

Managing our use of resources by moving key information online and reducing our printing costs and paper usage is also something that we are exploring.

DL reminded members that there are many resources available to help churches.

WW will follow this up, including seeking to identify an Eco Champion. ACTION: WW

P2609-08 **Finance**

The Treasurer (DT) provided a half-year budget report which showed a healthy financial situation at this stage in the year. August figures for the bookstall and Cornerstone were very good.

The Repairs and Maintenance line is over-budget and is being kept under review.

Proposed Cornerstone opening hours between October and Christmas were **AGREED**.

Budget-holders need to submit their 2027 budget requests by 20th October.

The PCC's Financial Guidelines need to be revised. DT will undertake the initial work and plans to have a revised draft document ready by the end of October. This would come to PCC in November to be considered alongside the 2027 budget proposals.
ACTION: DT, Churchwardens

The Mothers' Union (Cromer Branch) account has now been closed.

DT proposed issuing a debit card to Faith Eckett in connection with her new responsibilities at Mustard Seed. After discussion, this was **AGREED** unanimously.

One consequence of the increased use of the Parish Church and the closure by the council of other toilet facilities in town is that we have spent over £1,000 so far this year on toilet paper and paper towels. Additional cleaning and servicing of the toilets is also required, increasing costs and adding to workload of already busy staff. Members recognised that there is a political dimension to this and felt that we are bearing an undue burden as a result.

To help manage this pressure, and to enable staff, churchwardens and others to have a proper break end enjoy time with their families over the Christmas and New Year period it was unanimously AGREED that the Parish Church would be closed after the 10.30 service on Christmas Day and remain closed until Sunday 3rd January 2027, opening only for the one service at 10.30 on Sunday 27th December.

Further consideration will be given to this matter at a future meeting, including finding ways of discouraging inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour when visiting the Parish Church.

The failure of the Associate Vicar appointment means that we need to revisit the issue of the Parish Share. Members were reminded of the background: Cromer has been

paying a significantly enhanced Parish Share since the introduction of TRIO (The Responsibility is Ours) in Norwich Diocese in 2014. The plan, at that time, was that Parishes paying Parish Share above the amount calculated under the TRIO process would continue to pay at that level until, over time, other parishes 'caught up'. That 'catching up' hasn't happened in the years since TRIO was introduced and we are still paying an annual share of £100,000 (or more) compared with the ~£70,000 requested of other parishes with one full-time clergy post.

One of the reasons for parishes like Cromer being asked to make the over-payment when TRIO was introduced was to support those parishes that could not pay the full calculated amount so that ministry could continue there until they were able to pay in full. That also hasn't happened, and the Diocese now routinely budgets for income of about 80% of the requested payments each year. It's also clear that there is some inconsistency in the way the rules are applied, and enhanced payments from parishes like Cromer support some parishes who have decided not to pay their share in full, as well as those who are genuinely working to grow and to increase their capacity to pay.

In discussion, members mentioned several other factors:

- the growth of central costs in the diocese;
- the long-term history of Cromer paying its share in full at the much higher rate;
- the apparent practice of holding vacant clergy posts to balance the budget;
- the use of central church funds on priorities other than parochial ministry;
- the lack of transparency in the way the share is calculated and how factors such as deprivation numerical size of the worshipping community are considered.

After further discussion, it was proposed by IK and seconded by several members that:

"Cromer PCC agrees to cap payment of its Parish Share at the cost of ministry received in the parish, currently £79,500, with immediate effect."

Votes: FOR: 8 | AGAINST: 0 | ABSTAINING: 6

The proposal was **CARRIED**. ACTION: WW, Wardens, DT

P2609-09 **Memorial at St Martin's**

After discussion of the request from Malcolm Hastings, it was unanimously AGREED:

- that the erection of the memorial plaque be approved;

- that the memorial be entered in the Terrier to be the responsibility of the Parish;

- that this decision should not create a precedent; future requests, if any, to be considered on their merits with the expectation that they memorialise those who have made an exceptional or particularly significant contribution to the life of St Martin's.

ACTION: WW

P2609-10 **Flags in the churchyard**

WW tabled a draft policy. The Secretary will circulate this for ratification. ACTION: DO

P2609-11 **Standing and Finance Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10th September were RECEIVED.

Matters arising
S2609-05 - The matter referred to in the **confidential minute** is in progress. There is nothing further to report at this time.

P2606-12 **Reports**

The Health and Safety Report was **RECEIVED**. There were no matters arising,

The report on the 2026 Organ Recital series was **RECEIVED** and the proposal to run a similar series on the same financial basis in 2027 was **APPROVED** unanimously. Tim Moon was warmly thanked for his hard work organising and fronting the recitals.

The Electoral Roll has increased by one since the previous meeting and stands at 255.

P2609-13 **Correspondence**

Tim Britton's visit to Uganda was noted. WW will discuss with him. ACTION: WW

Tim Moon's request to host a Young Organists' Masterclass with Julian Haggett (St Peter Mancroft) was **APPROVED** subject to a satisfactory risk assessment and Safeguarding arrangements. ACTION: DO, TM

Rachel Stirland's proposal for a 'Shine a light' event on 31st October at St Martin's and the accompanying risk assessment were **APPROVED**. It was **AGREED** that the event will be a church event for insurance purposes.

Lea Jamieson's note re expansion of the prayer ministry team was **NOTED**.

Provision of Warm Spaces at the Parish Church at St Martin's were **AGREED**. IK will register them on the official site. Members were encouraged to share the responsibility of looking after and monitoring use of the space. ACTION: IK, All

Tony Peacock's message re The Gathering was **NOTED**. WW proposed, and it was AGREED, to continue with the weekly service until Christmas. PCC will visit this again in October to decide the pattern for January-March next year. ACTION: DO, WW

P2609-14 **Review of the meeting**

Members agreed that the meeting had covered some important issues and been productive despite running over time.

The meeting closed with The Grace at 9.57 p.m.