Meeting of the Parochial Church Council **Tuesday 24th February 2026 at 7.30pm** **In the Fitzhamon Room**

TEWKESBURY ABBEY

Members present: Fr. Nick Davies (ND) – Chair, Peter Ireland (PI) – Secretary, Elizabeth Charman (EC), Paul Charman (PC), Janet Davis (JD), Ben Foster-Smith (BFS), Linda Jeffreys (LJ), Julie Northcott (JN), Joy Pegg (JP), Peter Smail (PS), Les Stamp (LS), Liz Swift (ES), Rachel Walters (RW), Will Jones (WJ – COO).	
1. Welcome ND opened the meeting with Prayer. **2. Apologies** Mike Bristow (MB), Marcus Charman (MC), Rubin Hart (RH), James Lancelot (JL), Andrew Maynard (AM),	
3. Previous Minutes Minutes of the PCC Meeting 27th January2026 – all accepted as correct by all those present & Signed. **Matters Arising** None	

4. Vision, Purpose & Values
Over the last 2 years we have made a lot of progress with many changes, but have been largely responsive and not strategic. We haven't really considered a longer term strategy since the interregnum and the parish profile prepared then, and this is a vital thing upon which to base decisions and a yardstick upm which to measure them.
This is very much a starting point and will need further, wider, discussions, though steered by the PCC. ND has been discussing the possibility of support with the diocese: - a consultant may be offered free of charge; external facilitation would allow broader engagement and enable the Chair to participate fully.
At this point ND split us into 3 groups to consider 3 questions: -
1. 1 word to describe the abbey now;
2. To reach a vibrant future in 5 years what is the 1 thing: -
    a. we must stop doing?
    b. we must start doing?
    c. we must protect?
3. In 5 years how will our congregation and town be different if we are successful?
This provoked a wide range of answers on some questions, and a marked consensus on others, notably 3, where we wanted our congregation to be growing, increasingly diverse, inclusive and connected to the town. ND is to summarise this into a form that can be progressed with the wardens and to discuss the next steps with the diocese.
	ND

5. Abbey Lodge Options Paper WJ's paper made a good attempt to summarise our options for Abbey Lodge on a (provisionally) costed basis. The staff team need a clear guide as to what direction to proceed with this; it is clear that there is no general appetite to sell the property, nor can	

	we simply leave it as it is with only 2 flats let – council tax will become prohibitive, and some work on fire safety is essential. Several questions from the PCC: - JN – there is a housing crisis in the town so huge demand; is a mortgage an option? BFS said that this is problematic – the ownership is apparently unclear between the parish and the diocese, which adds further complication to the nature and condition of the property. JD – concerned that there is still no costed business plan; also that abbey staff time is considerable but not clearly visible in the accounts. PC – are there other issues not addressed in this schedule of work that may occur? BFS – concerned firstly that sitting tenants must be looked after; also that the building is of poor quality and previous work has also been poor, and that this will need far more money in the end. And we have none available. LJ – the almshouses are a good example of what can be done. LS – we have inherited a problem; this should be run by a separate company at arms length from the PCC (BFS – either through TAL or another company; this could be more tax and time efficient). Do we have the cash? Not in cash. We do have the reserves, but not within our current available trading limits, or not committed to the budget recovery. RW – could there be grants available? Unlikely. PC – at first look, the potential rent is very healthy compared to the cost, and makes a very strong case for going ahead. Payback could be withing around 3 years (though this needs some proper checking). PI – The council tax saving brings break even nearer to 2 years. BFS – We have a wage bill of £60,000 per month; We. Do. Not. Have. The. Money. We will be bankrupt by the end of the year if you do not start running it like a business. JP – do we have a value on reputation? This is why our vision and values sorted – this is both something with a big reputational potential as well as a huge risk. BFS – to prepare a returns plan with WJ. To summarise: we would like to proceed in principle with a £60,000 partial restoration of the 2 flatsto a rentable state; we need to agree an acceptable return on investment, talk to the diocese about a loan, and prepare a cost plan / cash flow for the work. WJ to progress this with BFS and Ian Bloom. **Proposed: ND; 2nd: LS ; passed by 9 to 3, with 1 abstention.**	**WJ/BFS/ IB**
6.	**Safeguarding Update** We have made a good improvement over the last 12 months; now no outstanding DBs checks on the PCC. We need to consider our vision for the future on safeguarding; JN to circulate links to the CE paper, listing and discussing the 5 standards we need to achieve and consider over **3** years. Suggested that we start by focussing on victims and survivors in the first year. This to be followed up with more discussion at our next meeting. Also to circulate the current position on the dashboard; we are currently at Level 2, with some work to achieve level 3.	**JN / PI**
7.	**Treasurer's Report** Circulated in hardcopy at the meeting (to follow with minutes); BFS summarised it. Noted that we are on the limit of our 3 month reserves policy. TAL has traded well; the shop is behind last year, possibly a combination of events in '25 and an unusually high number of funerals this year; the café trade is growing, increasingly in its own right and independently from the abbey. LS – can we cut costs anywhere? Not really, we have reviewed most regular items.	

PS – Should we reconsider the £50-60,000 going to DCS for choral scholarships? This is foundation money and not PCC. PC – We do need to get back to seeing monthly management accounts asap. BFS noted that there have been big problems with using the new accounting system; WJ hopeful that we may get these next month. PI – A significant part of our wage bill is for staff employed specifically to generate income, and income larger than their employment cost. If they are not achieving this then it should be questioned, and this should be visible in the accounts. ND noted that this is linked to HLF projects, and will need reviewing alongside that.	
8. **COO report –** circulated before the meeting; also separate project scoping paper. There is a project scoping meeting to progress this on Friday (27th), so a full update hopefully next month. EBD looks an encouraging start, with fewer problems than feared. PC asked if we knew how many at the £5 asking figure – to early to have data, but promising. Gift aid also appears to be much improved (at first glance). Vergers are currently short staffed following Tony Devlin's departure; reviewing work plans within current staffing levels rather than recruiting (LS offered to help). Events program is almost fully worked out for the year – to expand on this for next time. PS asked after the promised volunteers desk – agreed this to be by the font.	**WJ**
9. **APCM Preparation** Now scheduled for May 13th. Current make up of the PCC has been circulated; many are now at the end of our terms of office, so up for re-election if they so wish (there is a belief that there is a limit of 6 years in office before having to stand down for 2 years, but this is not required, other than for wardens, under the current rules. APCM could vote otherwise, but there is no record of us having done so). You are requested to notify the secretary or vicar of your intentions. We should also invite new members, possibly filling gaps in either skills or representation. We will remain on a similar maximum number of members as at present: 12 PCC, 3 Deanery Synod plus wardens. Following the APCM we will also need to appoint a new Electoral Roll officer, Marion wanting to step down after many years.	**ALL**
10. **AOB** • Amendments to our Privacy and GDPR policy have been circulated for approval. PC asked who should be contacted regarding this – initially COO; PI is now to be the named trustee. **Proposed: ND; 2nd: PC; passed unanimously.** This to be posted on the website and the revised policy circulated. • JD suggested that a booklet covering reports from all Abbey groups and organisations, as was custom in the past, would be a valuable addition to the APCM. ES agreed that this would be useful information filling a knowledge gap. PI noted that this might be substantial work but worth exploring what is involved; ND said to put it on next month's agenda.	
The meeting ended with the grace at 9.36 pm. **11.** **Next meeting – Wednesday 25th March @ 7.30pm.** **Approved as a true record:** **Fr. N Davies** **Chair;** **25/3/26** **Date**	