

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN GREAT BENTLEY**  
**Parochial Church Council Minutes**  
**Wednesday 10 June 2026 Church Room at 7.30 pm**

**Opening prayer**

- 1 **Minutes of the previous meeting from Wednesday 25 March 2026:** were agreed by those present and signed by the vicar.
- 2 **Matters arising:** updates on previous action points were briefly discussed. An Instagram page for St Mary's Church has been set up.
- 3 **Members of the Standing Committee:** will remain the same.
- 4 **PCC to vote on appointment to the casual vacancy:** a co-opted member was elected by the PCC until the next APCM election.
- 5 **Sharon's update:** a meeting has been arranged in July for attendees to ask questions about becoming a four church benefice. A new benefice arrangement would not affect parish share. Each church would continue to have their own PCCs and separate finances. It was clarified that church property was owned by the diocese but PCCs cared for it.

A visitation has been arranged in July at St James' Church, Clacton, where churchwardens will be sworn in and the vicar will be commissioned as Area Dean. The certificate of publication for the bell work has now been issued. Concerns were raised over the length of time the process was taking, the original date having being deferred. Once the faculty had been approved, arrangements for the repair work could be made; however some grants may need to be reapplied for, with the associated risk that costs might rise the longer work was delayed.
- 6 **Financial report:** The May Fair was very successful and raised over £2,300 and as it was also Christian Aid week, they received £230.00. The PCC will need to consider which charities should benefit from money raised at next year's coffee mornings. The baked potato lunch was also very successful, with £550 raised, thanks to all involved. The flower arranging evening was also well attended, and raised welcome funds. No news has been received about plans for the porch.
- 7 **Safeguarding:**
  - the PCC have read section 2 of the e-manual 'responding well to survivors of abuse' and have agreed to follow its guidance and understand that safeguarding

was everyone's responsibility. Bishop Roger has written safeguarding guidance which will be circulated to all PCCs. Issues of bullying and harassment will be managed by a separate diocesan team. Digital resources will be expanded in the coming months with more useful links and services.

- progress on recruiting a children's worker was discussed.

- 8 **Health & safety:** following a recent incident, the lower steps of the stairs have now been marked.

A tea towel was left on top of the cooker hob while the oven was on standby and posed a fire risk. Those using the kitchen will be reminded about potential fire hazards.

- 9 **Music/organist:** a rota of organists has been prepared for the next three months in partnership with St Osyth Church. Fees for weddings and funerals and the scope of permissions under the current music licences were discussed. Current hymn choices aimed to offer a mixture of old and new. Suggestions were welcome. It was suggested a band be invited to accompany hymn singing for a future service.

- 10 **Update on obtaining burial land:** it was thought the churchyard would be full within the next eight to ten years. The parish council has advised that they were not under obligation to provide land for a future cemetery and to date, there has been no news on the possibility of purchasing a locally identified parcel of land. Some areas of the graveyard could not be used due to the proximity to a public footpath, or underground pipework. The idea of re-purposing graves was raised (after 100 years) and a suggestion that building developers be approached to donate land. It was agreed that the search for burial land should continue.

- 11 **Issues with the electrical supply:** the contractors have advised that they will be sending out a revised (cheaper) quote for the necessary work.

- 12 **Year 6 booklets:** have been purchased and are waiting to be dedicated and distributed.

- 13 **Vicarage upkeep:** the PCC are willing to contribute to the cost of laminate flooring materials.

- 14 **Any other business:**

Pastoral care was discussed. Attendees were asked to get information about forthcoming events to the website administrator ahead of her three month sabbatical. The Events Sub-committee will be meeting in June to review the May Fair and undertake planning for future fund raisers. A member has offered to

present a one hour dementia awareness session with the aim of supporting the church to become more dementia friendly. Bishop Roger's question session for young people went very well.

Bishop Guli's visit to Little Bentley Church was not widely publicised. The vicar will be attending a Launchpad event looking at how to engage young people into the church.

**15 The date for the next PCC meeting** will be on Wednesday 9 September 2026 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm