

**St John the Baptist Church, Old Sodbury**  
**Annual Parochial Church meeting held in Old Sodbury Church**  
**on Sunday 4th May 2025**

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**NOT YET APPROVED**

**Minutes**

**Present** - Revd. Chris Butler (Chair), Chris Cooper, Edna Cooper, David Fussell, Joy Fussell, Richard Gilpin, Linda Hore, John Leah, Sue Leah, Richard Purdom, Ros Runcie, Helen Sherwood, Peter Veale, Ann Ward, Mike Haskell (Treasurer), Richard Hore (Secretary)

1. **Apologies** - Revd. Jane Jones-Williams, Karen Hunter, Stephen Hunter, Shane Ratcliffe, Hannah Saunders, Lynne Watts
2. **Minutes of APCM held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024** - The draft minutes of the APCM had been informally approved at the PCC meeting held on the 11th June 2024. Formal agreement of the minutes as a true record of the 2024 APCM was Proposed by Linda Hore and Seconded by Edna Cooper. By a show of hands there were no objections and the minutes were accepted as formally approved.
3. **The Rector's report** - Revd. Chris Butler opened by expressing her thanks for all of the work that people do for the Church in their different roles, some seen, and others unseen, but all appreciated. The APCM was a great opportunity for everyone to get together and see just how much is happening.

She noted that her particular highlight from the past year was joining with the Village for the Carol Service. Looking back at the year is important, but so is looking forward to see how our Church can continue to be an asset for ourselves and the wider community, and how we can celebrate our unique spiritual heritage together.

Over the last year she had been listening to various comments about the Church. Recently many of the congregation had filled in a questionnaire inviting their thoughts on Church Improvements. Preliminary results had been put on display for the meeting (attached to these minutes). Over the coming months the PCC will be looking at all of the comments in more detail to consider a way forward. In particular she highlighted that we need to do something to stop or minimise condensation and we also want to see if it is possible to make the space in the Church more flexible without spoiling the parts we all love. As this was still early days, she encouraged people to continue to share their thoughts and concerns, and to continue to pray that, as a PCC and a Church, we will hear God's voice.

She concluded by thanking Richard Purdom and Joy Fussell for their work as Churchwardens and for being willing to stand again for another year. She also thanked the PCC for their work and for Richard Hore as secretary for his humour and efficiency. She also particularly thanked Shane Ratcliffe for his past work on the PCC as he had now stepped down from the role. Finally, she wanted to thank everyone for all they did and for who they are. She said that it was a pleasure to be involved in Old Sodbury and that she was excited as to where God will take us in the future.

So for 2025 she prayed that we can continue to work on the balance between being a community of the Church and being part of a bigger worldwide community, and that above all, everything we do will bring glory to God.

4. **Comments and questions arising from reports** - The reports below had previously been published on the church website <https://svbcofe.org.uk/os/apcm/> and supplied in hard copy for the meeting:-

Electoral Roll dated April 2025	Safeguarding report
PCC Proceedings report	Churchwarden's report
Financial statements & Audited Accounts	Health and Safety report
Fabric report	Friends of Old Sodbury church report
Deanery Synod report	Together Group report

It was noted that the Electoral Roll stood at 49 last year and was again 49. Seven individuals had left the Roll and there had been seven new additions. It was also noted that the PCC Proceedings report and the Financial statements & Audited Accounts had been reviewed and approved by the PCC on the 4th March 2025 in advance of the APCM.

- a) **Electoral Roll** - Helen Sherwood was thanked for her hard work in creating the new Roll which was entirely new this year in accordance with the six year cycle.
- b) **Finances** - Mike Haskell was thanked for his hard work in maintaining the accounts during the year.
- c) **Safeguarding** - Hannah Saunders was thanked for her hard work in providing advice, documentation and support to the Parish during the year.

The Revd. Chris Butler invited questions and comments on the reports from those present.

- a) Richard Gilpin noted that the Gift Aid claim was larger this year than last. Mike Haskell replied that was simply a phasing issue of when the claim was submitted.
- b) Linda Hore noted that the Friends team was suffering from a lack of volunteers for the committee. Ann Ward recalled that in the past there had been about a dozen in the team and that currently there were only 5. It was suggested that some villagers, perhaps a number of the clock winding or key rota teams, may be prepared to volunteer.

There were no other questions so approval of the reports in column 1 above was Proposed by Richard Purdom and Seconded by Linda Hore. By a show of hands there were no objections and the reports in column 1 above were formally approved. The reports in column 2 above were noted by the meeting.

5. **Election of laity to the PCC** - There had been no nominations for election to the PCC. As a result there remained three vacancies for lay positions on the PCC.
6. **To confirm the Independent Examiner (Financial Auditor) to the council** - Kirk Munn (AAT Licensed accountant regulated by ATT under licence number 1001786) had carried out the examination of the financial statements for the year ended the 31st December 2024 as Independent Examiner to the PCC. He is happy to continue for another year and it was Proposed by Mike Haskell and Seconded by Joy Fussell that he should be confirmed in that role. By a show of hands there were no objections and Kirk Munn was confirmed for the coming year.
7. **AOB**
- a) Linda Hore noted that the Pastoral Care Team was now in operation following training during the year. A report on the activity of the team will be provided at the next APCM in 2026.



- b) It was noted that the Bible Story Tellers (formally Open the Book) was very active in Old Sodbury and was apparently well liked by the school. A report on the activity of the team will be provided at the next APCM in 2026.
- c) Lynne Watts was thanked for the new banners which she had made to provide a bright and colourful welcome to the Church.

8. The meeting was closed with The Grace.

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### **Results of the Church Improvements Questionnaire April 2025**

There have been 20 responses - all were thoughtful, high quality and useful

Below are the main areas that were reported. Many other good points were raised but do not fit directly into the most popular categories. All points raised will be given full consideration in the next phase.

#### **Layout and comfort of the Church**

- Removal of some of the pews, but done in a sensitive way retaining the historic feel – 14 for and 5 against (3 of the 14 suggested removing all the pews).  
The font should be moved and comfortable chairs and tables provided
- Replace or improve the sound system – 14 for. Ensure clarity of sound throughout the Church
- Use of video screens for services and events – 5 for
- Damp and ventilation improvements – 11 for. Seen as a very serious problem.  
Redecoration when resolved
- Heating system improvements, if possible, or keep it on for longer – 9 for
- Handrail at the chancel steps – 3 for. This is a good safety improvement
- Better lighting along the path up to the Church – 2 for. A safety improvement
- Storage area for chairs and tables

#### **Services and welcome**

- New notice boards, better welcome booklets, and brighten up the church
- Improve the children's area and make it more useful and welcoming – 5 for
- Different Morning Worship and support for more accessible services
- 6 against the Iona Morning Service and 5 for a Children's Service

#### **What next?**

- Discuss at the APCM and at the PCC
- Consult the village (such as an open meeting with cheese and wine)
- Consult the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Have a conversation with the Architect
- Create outline costs and timeline plan
- Ongoing consultation with the congregation