



**Minutes of the meeting of
The Seven Towers Joint Council**

**Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7.30 pm
at Nature in Art**

Present: Rev Joe Knight (Chair), Simon Trapnell (Benefice Warden & Norton), Ian Donald (Benefice Warden & Down Hatherley), Janine Smith (Stav/Bodd), Jean Smith (Norton), Carolyn Wright (Sandhurst), Tony Crawshaw, Andrew Wilkins, Derek Wright.

Co-option of Mission Team leaders & Appointment of Safeguarding Officer

Rev Joe welcomed those present to the meeting and received agreement to co-opt the Mission Teams leaders on to the Joint Council: Worship Team – Ali Moseley, Prayer Team – Lynda Chan, Rev Philippa Donald – Pastoral Team. Gareth Moseley was also appointed as the Benefice Safeguarding Officer.

Present: Rev Joe Knight (Chair), Simon Trapnell (Benefice Warden), Ian Donald (Benefice Warden), Janine Smith (Stav/Bodd), Jean Smith (Norton), Carolyn Wright (Sandhurst), Tony Crawshaw, Andrew Wilkins, Derek Wright, Ali Moseley (Worship Team), Lynda Chan (Prayer Team), Rev Philippa Donald (Pastoral Team), Gareth Moseley (Safeguarding Officer).

Apologies: Phil Cotton (The Leigh), Hazel Cotton, Ellie Stevenson (Down Hatherley), Graham Limbrick, Joan Howard.

Derek asked co-opted members and the safeguarding officer to send him their personal details so they could be added to the list of trustees. Previous members of the JC have been removed from the list.

Action: Ali, Rev Philippa, Lynda & Gareth to send personal details (name, address & mobile no, dob and email address) to Derek asap.

1. Welcome and opening prayers

Rev Joe welcomed everyone and led the meeting with Janine in prayers for a purposeful gathering.

2. Appointment of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Standing Committee

Lay Chairperson: Simon Trapnell (took over chairing the meeting at this point), Secretary: Lynda Chan (Rev Philippa offered to step in if Lynda is unable to minute meetings at any time. Carolyn remains Benefice Administrator.), Treasurer: Derek Wright, Standing Committee: Rev Joe, Simon, Ian, Derek, Lynda, Ellie and Andrew Wilkins (Janine stepped down).

3. Approval of minutes Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025 were approved.

4. Approval of draft minutes of APCM It was agreed that the minutes were on track and would be submitted at the next APCM in 2026 for approval.

5. Matters Arising None.

6. Clergy Report

i) Parish flyers

Rev Joe and Simon have produced a series of locally-based flyers for each church, detailing the opportunities for gathering to worship there. Good to see these being handed out and available in church buildings.

ii) Benefice Focus Points

These are: Embedding Eco-church, Enriching Worship and Embracing Mission & Outreach.

Rev Joe focused on Embedding Eco-church for this meeting. This covers 5 categories: worship, buildings, land, community engagement and lifestyle. A policy has been drafted based on good practice elsewhere. We need a team to develop and lead implementation of this policy in our parishes, i.e. "Eco-champions". Our five Parish Reps were duly appointed – Ellie, Janine, Carolyn, Jean and Phil. A meeting will be called soon to take this forward. While Parish Reps will take the lead, they were encouraged to invite others

with a passion for this area. We look forward to using the policy as a framework to live out our life together and, in so doing, work towards achieving a silver award.

iii) Shape of Ministry

A detailed diagram was presented showing how we work together as a Joint Council and how we all fit in. A request was made to identify the elected members also, and Rev Joe agreed to amend the diagram accordingly. Rev Joe was grateful for all the members of the JC in all their different roles and their attendance at this first meeting of the new year, BUT everyone should immediately start thinking who they are going to give their job to – who can we train and inspire to do what we are doing now?

A question was asked about the leadership of the CYP team and the absence of that role on the JC. Although Kim Knight is in effect leading the CYP work currently, she doesn't want to represent it on the JC and other volunteers are not ready to do so yet, and so there remains a vacancy for this on JC.

Reminders were given of the structure for elections on to the JC. Each elected member is elected for a 3-year term and will then retire by rotation and is eligible to stand for re-election. For the first 3 years it was agreed that two members (Derek Wright & Graeme Hunter) would retire after 1 year – places taken at APCM by Derek and by Joan Howard, two members (Graham Limbrick & Tony Crawshaw) would retire after 2 years and the other two members (Hazel Cotton & Andrew Wilkins) would retire after 3 years. The term for co-opted members lasts until the next APCM. There is no limit to how many times they may be co-opted but note point above about journeying with and training others.

Action: Rev Joe to amend diagram.

ALL JC members to start working with someone who could take their role in the future.

7. F & PC/Treasurer's Report

Issues raised/discussed:

- Figures for years ending 2023 and 2024 were similar but income predicted for 2025 appears significantly lower, e.g. fees down by £6,000. Only 3 weddings planned so far this year, compared to 8/9 in previous years. Funerals down also – 9 so far this year compared to 13 in same period last year. Can we be more proactive in encouraging weddings at our churches? Definitely something that we can consider for our new website. Couples are often keen to be married here, especially where there is an attractive venue nearby for wedding receptions, e.g. Hatherley Manor, but it can be tricky due to qualifying connections.
- Charity collections are also down – again a lot comes in from funerals.
- In outgoings, the amount allocated for mission activities has doubled - £500 p.a. to each of our mission teams.
- Legacies: careful wording on information is important to encourage people to give to work of church and to the benefice as a whole. Andrew agreed to work with Derek to produce something suitable. Nature in Art has something that seems to work well.

Action: Andrew & Derek to draft legacy wording.

- From 13 May, Lloyds bank are charging £8.50 p.m. for holding an account with them as our annual turnover exceeds £50,000. In addition they will be charging 1.5% for depositing money as well as other charges such as £0.85p per cheque deposited. Discussion arose around options to avoid this charge. The FPC had agreed we would use the Sandhurst PCC account for cash deposits as currently no charges on that account. StavBodd and Norton accounts remain open and could be used for other items such as the magazine but Derek is wary about drawing attention to these accounts in case LBG "link" them and start charging. We do not want to close LBG completely for fear of losing some donations but could consider opening an account with another bank which has no charges for charities, e.g. Co-op Bank or Metro Bank for depositing cash, cheques etc. F&PC will consider further.
- Easyfundraising: following discussion about this at the APCM, Derek has produced a card with QR code that can be distributed to encourage people to use this. We can also include something

in the magazine. The suggestion was made that we can proactively seek out green suppliers when shopping online as part of our progress within eco-church.

8. School Governor Appointment

Following Carolyn standing down after six years of service, JC agreed to put forward Ali Moseley as next Foundation Governor. Tony remains Chair of Governors. There will be safeguarding training for all governors in July.

9. Matters arising from Parish/Team Reports to APCM

Organ at Sandhurst: repair is behind schedule and the timescale isn't clear.

10. AOB

- Still some slots available for the coming weekend's 24 hours of prayer.
- Our Eco-church policy doesn't restrict us to "Fairtrade" products. Comparable certification is fine, e.g. Ethical Addictions.

The meeting closed at **8.45 pm** with the Grace.

Dates of next meetings: **Wednesday** 9th July, Tuesday 9th September 2025.