



Minutes of the meeting of The Seven Towers Joint Council

**Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 7.30 pm
at Nature in Art**

Present: Simon Trapnell (Chair & Benefice Warden), Ian Donald (Benefice Warden), Rev Joe Knight, Carolyn Wright (Sandhurst), Jean Smith (Norton), Janine Smith (Stav/Bodd), Ellie Stevenson (DH), Tony Crawshaw, Derek Wright, Lynda Chan (Prayer Team), Phil Cotton (The Leigh), Hazel Cotton, Andrew Wilkins, Ali Moseley (Worship Team), Rev Philippa Donald (Pastoral Team), Gareth Moseley (Safeguarding Officer), Graham Limbrick, Joan Howard.

1. Welcome and opening prayers

Simon welcomed everyone and Rev Joe led the meeting in prayer.

2. Approval of minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2025 were approved.

3. Matters Arising A query was raised about the new welcome boards. Rev Joe welcomed feedback from the previous meeting and said their development was ongoing.

4. Clergy Report

a) Pewsheets

- A working party will be set up to discuss how the pewsheets may be improved. After some discussion, it was agreed that this will consist of Rev Philippa, Graham, Ali, Carolyn & Lynda.
- There was discussion over whether or not the pewsheets should be available on the website. It was suggested that those who had previously read it there could be invited to be added to the pewsheets email distribution list. Mention of the website led to further discussion about the events page and its ease of use. Those organising events were encouraged to ensure details were posted on the website and to ask for assistance if needed.

b) Benefice Christmas Card

Rev Joe confirmed that this would be produced again this year.

c) Priorities for 2026

- Discussion arose about how our priorities can be measured.
- There was also discussion about what actions individual parishes can take to fulfill the priorities. With regard to Embedding Eco-church, Rev Joe suggested referring back to the Policy for Creation Care and Celebration that was agreed at the last meeting and deciding on actions to fulfil those objectives. These could be included in Parish Rep reports. Parishes were encouraged to help each other with their priorities.
- Mission and outreach: as mentioned in the report, it had been hoped that all the harvest events would provide significant opportunities for mission as we all thought about who we could invite. The Christmas events provide a similar opportunity and we were all encouraged to think again about who we could invite, in particular to the “And is it true?” event. JC members were also encouraged to think about volunteering for the interactive benefice advent calendar. Finally, we were all reminded that, irrespective of particular mission events and initiatives, we are all involved in daily mission.
- The Bereavement Course due to start in January was highlighted.

5. Review of benefice policies

With the exception of the Safeguarding Policy, names should not be included in these documents. Reviewed policies will be uploaded to the website.

a) Magazine & Advertising

- While the previous policy was limited to the advertising in the magazine, the new policy covers the content too, including any inserts.
- How do we appoint the magazine printing company? It was recommended that the Advertising Manager should present quotes annually to JC for approval.
- Two spelling corrections (Severn) in paragraph “Any fee paid to the...”.
- Amendment: “The Article does not intend to cause offence.”
- To add: “Articles written by the incumbent or other clergy will always be accepted.”.

Action: Derek to make amendments for next JC meeting.

b) Safeguarding

- Link at top of policy needs to be changed.
- Change wording in first sentence: “the following policy”.
- Policy should include information about how we will support anyone who reports an issue.
- Policy should include specific information about training.
- Posters displayed in all church porches giving information about Gareth as Safeguarding Officer should also include option to take concerns straight to the diocese.
- Amendment: Policy to be reviewed annually or as required.

Action: Gareth to make amendments for next JC meeting.

c) Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Based on diocese templates.
- The first paragraph could be shortened.
- Amendment: “All staff must understand and express sympathy with the Christian ethos of the Benefice Council and ...”
- Amendment: “The ~~Seven Towers Benefice~~ Joint Council accepts responsibility to ensure this policy...”
- Discussion about having wheelchairs generally available in all our churches. Could be problematic and there may be additional liability. Perhaps better to use them only in case of illness.

Action: Gareth to make amendments for next JC meeting.

d) Social Media

- Delete reference to Skype.
- YouTube account: we still have one but it needs to be checked. Also Jordan should be contacted for passwords etc.
- Although we no longer have a benefice Zoom account, private (free) accounts which may use the benefice name may still be used.
- Mobile phones: only the incumbent currently has one.
- Posting music on our platforms: agreed to only share from original source.

Action: Ali to make amendments for next JC meeting.

6. Benefice Legacy Giving

Simon presented a leaflet that Nature in Art have produced. We could set up a team to look at this in the future and bring proposals to JC.

7. F&PC/Treasurer's Report

- 5th Sunday collection on 30th November will go to Gloucester City Mission.
- Co-op bank has now provided account number.
- We'll buy a portable card machine to trial taking around churches for donations.
- Easy Fundraising: although money is being spent for this, suppliers are slow to give funds. Large amounts may be generated by buying car/home insurance from Ecclesiastical (where JC members can also claim discount).

8. Matters arising from Parish/Team Reports

Worship Team

- Taizé gatherings: Ian is happy to advise Parish Reps organising these. Music can be provided via Spotify. There will be no gatherings in July or September at Boddington or Staverton. Katie has offered to prepare a "Service of Light" at Staverton at some point during the year if appropriate.
- New Year's Eve Gathering: There is not much time to gauge support for this around the benefice in order to put an announcement about it in the December magazine. A quick survey around JC members revealed only one person was very keen, so the idea was dropped.
- Celebrate: Janine reiterated that those of the farming community and local families who had expressed interest in this had in fact not been able to attend, so unfortunately it would not continue into the new year. JC offered its thanks to Janine for all her hard work with this over this year.

9. Safeguarding

- Gareth will attend leadership training in January and Mental Health First Aid Training in May.
- Information is still awaited from previous Safeguarding Officer.
- Sunday 16th November is Safeguarding Sunday.

10. AOB

- Sandhurst organ is almost ready.
- Joan confirmed Atlas Tower Group don't consider churches to be suitable locations for phone masts.
- Elie reported that the DH roof project is progressing well.
- There may be a meeting about service patterns in the new year.
- Reminder that part of Down Hatherley Lane is closed between the church and Frogfurlong Lane. Access will always be provided to the Village Hall from one end or the other.
- **Rev Joe announced that he will be leaving the benefice and his last Sunday will be Sunday 4th January. Simon offered some words of thanks and appreciation.**

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Dates of next meetings: Tuesday 13th January and Tuesday 10th March 2026.