



## The Astwell Benefice

*Helmdon with Stuchbury and Radstone, and Syresham with  
Whitfield, Lois Weedon with Weston and Plumpton and Wappenham*

# Finance Committee – Minutes 1/12/25

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**PRESENT:** Alice Palmer, Philip Thompson, Ann Netten, Sue Timmis

**APOLOGIES :** Clive Johnson, Revd. Hugh White, Clare Bonner

### MINUTES

We agreed the minutes from 30/6/25

### MATTERS ARISING

- Advertising moneys sent from LSCF ongoing

### PARISH & BENEFICE ACCOUNTS

#### Benefice

*Benefice expenses* to date have been £6970, income from fees stands at £4715 but more is expected before the end of the year. Travel and Ministry costs are down but AP will be inviting Paul Stothard and Wiggy Smith to claim there expenses in due course. All payments will be covered but we are likely to have a reduced carry forward to take into next year.

AP explained that although the headline amounts for Let's Shine and LSCF show on the Benefice Balance Sheet, there are separate accounts for each.

The Benefice will not be able to pay the full contribution to the Parish Share this year but do expect to receive a little more from gift aid and the Wappenham Carol Concert.

#### Helmdon

AN asked if next year's final meeting could be later in December so that we have more idea of fundraising results.

Helmdon have held two successful events over the last couple of weeks, this will allow them to pay their full parish share. Final figure to follow.

Helmdon were very grateful to receive £12000 that will pay for their new organ, this will also be gift-aided which helps even more. The reorganisation of the interior to fit the new organ in the chancel is facing a few problems, the architect was visiting to resolve the issues.

Regular giving appears to be down on the current balance sheet but may well even out by the end of the year.

Following comments AN plans to look into eco friendly electricity provider.

#### Lois Weedon from CJ

We are currently hold total cash of £15,532.21 in our accounts. Whilst we have a split of £7,190.89 and £8,341.32 in our Restricted and Unrestricted accounts respectively, in

truth the Restricted funds are not actually restricted at this stage but will be used to contribute to required building repairs that are still in the pipeline.

Fund raising – a summer party raised £291; our Harvest Supper evening raised £752.41 (net); and village coffee mornings have raised £1,643.17 (net) so far. Hopefully we will be the recipient of December's Coffee morning event. No other fund raising events are planned for this year.

Regular Giving – we are averaging around £480 per month when annualising those who give annually and quarterly. This is a slight improvement on last year where the average was £417 per month. 7 of our regular givers use PGS, whilst 9 persist with payment by standing order.

Collections – on a par with last year.

Gift Aid - receipts are up in the main because we are receiving monthly payments via the PGS process. Currently, my calculations show that there is at least a further £2,129 to be reclaimed from HMRC but this will not happen until the new year begins.

Parish Share – we are delighted to have been able to support parish share to the full once again this year. Our final contribution of £834 to bring us to 100% of our allocation will be effected by the end of December.

Charitable Donations – The Poppy Appeal from our Remembrance Day service.

Fabric – We conducted a tree survey across the churchyard costing £540 which has, subject to a Faculty approval (on-line application pending with DAC), prompted some minor tree management to be conducted. The cost of the tree surgery work will be covered by our Friends.

We also undertook some drainage exploration costing £144 to assist with establishing the cause of the severe damp in the north wall of the church. Otherwise, all other costs relate primarily to alarm system management.

Utilities – We expect a further invoice of £288.26 before year end taking our annual cost for electricity to just slightly higher than the previous year.

**Overall** and on the face of it we are doing rather better than expected. However we must be mindful that we have a repair bill of circa £20,000 looming which will need to be contributed to from existing cash held, whilst hoping that in the main, we will also be able to obtain grants/funding from external sources to help cover the position.

Syresham from AP

1. We currently have £6777.63 in our account. of this £5568.22 is restricted for maintenance, cards and the Tower Fund leaving £1275 money in hand.
2. Fundraising: We didn't have a fete in the summer due to the closeness to Let's Shine and having sold so many raffle tickets we decided we couldn't sell more. We did however serve teas and lunches during Open Gardens raising £383 and welcome Note-Ability for a wonderful concert which raised £194.
3. Regular giving is £1115 per month 8 standing orders and 16 PGS.
4. Collections are down from last year, partly due to one member making their contribution by standing order now and partly due to less services,
5. Gift Aid and donations are up.
6. We are on a life edge with the parish share. We should get to within £300 but it all depends on our Fair on Friday.
7. Charitable donations are from Harvest, Remembrance a Benefice service and last years Christingle which was paid late.

8. Fabric We have accepted a quote for over £8000 for the remainder of the Quinquennial works and have leaks in the roof on top of that. We only have £5088 in hand but hope our Trust Fund will support us with the rest. The Steeple works were finished but there is still an outstanding loan of just under £13000.
9. Churchyards Our mowing bill has come in early this year so we have again asked for help with it £1825. We have had the Wildlife Trust round to do a survey and they will make suggestions.. We hope The Friends will help with this.
10. Utilities: I found we were paying a large amount for electricity this was increased by the floodlighting on the steeple works. We are now paying around £30 per month. We have also had two deliveries of oil.

We need to hold a reserve of £1000 in our general fund, our Share payment of £800 plus insurance payment will be taken at the start of January before any income is received.

#### Wappenham

As with other parishes regular giving is up and collections are down - partly due to folk transferring from collection to standing orders / PGS partly due to less services.

The only Fundraising income this year has come from the Wappenham Beer Festival, the team did not have the energy to run further events. However they did run a successful Carol & Bar evening with the Fawsley Singers, there will be a little profit from this to go to the Benefice.

The WPC are now funding maintenance of the closed churchyard. The church have received £500 towards tree work and a further £500 which will be used to clear wilder areas and plant wild flower seeds.

The money spent on the churchyard was preparing it for hand over to the council.

There is some fabric work to come and a new Quinquennial. Repointing is needed, especially in areas where gaps have been filled with the wrong material causing damp to build and mortar to fall out.

Wappenham have taken out a contract for £399 per year to cover all fire maintenance work.

#### Whitfield

As with other parishes Whitfield's collections are down, they are particularly affected by the increase in Benefice services where the collection is sent to charity. Regular giving has remained fairly steady, however they are unlikely to receive the December one off payment that is usually expected.

They should be able to pay a en extra £700 towards the Parish Share but this will still leave them almost £2000 short and not quite meeting last year's contribution.

The Friends of St John have again contributed hugely to paying for fabric work and the insurance costs of the building.

#### Parish Share.

Final figures for the parish share depend the outcome of the Syresham Christmas Fair and the Wappenham Carol Concert. The projection is that we will be able to pay 94% of the share, around £4000 short. The committee were of the view that even if some parishes could afford to contribute a little extra we could not fund the entire sum. CJ commented in his paper:

*"Looking at the numbers – and in the reasonable expectation the both Syresham and Helmdon will achieve 100% - the potential shortfall we face overall is going to be around £3,875 (i.e. just 5% short of the overall target (and I emphasise the word 'target').*

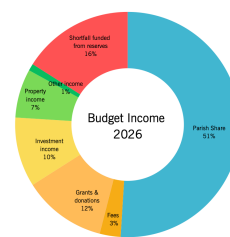
*So the question is : do we really need to make up this minor shortfall and how would the diocese react if we didn't?*

*If the answer is 'yes we do', then it can only be done using same equitable share allocation basis from the remaining 4 parishes, which on my 'back of a fag packet' calculations might infer an extra*

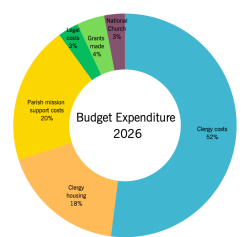
*Helmdon 1,518.28  
Wappenham 623.17  
Syresham 1,110.39  
Lois Weedon 623.17*

*For me (LW) that would be a reasonable figure ask, but I am not a voting member of the PCC and it would need to be their decision – but it would need I'm sure to be on an equal pro rata share across the parishes based on existing formula. A straight 25% split would not in my view be acceptable.”*

AN suggested each parish displays a breakdown of income and expenditure in pie chart format (similar to the diocese) to be displayed in churches to inform folk considering giving to the church.



	£	%
Parish Share	6,500,000	51
Fees	340,000	3
Grants & donations	1,578,692	12
Investment income	1,248,640	10
Property income	884,319	7
Other income	171,622	1
Shortfall funded from reserves	1,985,611	16
	12,708,884	100




	£	%
Clergy costs	6,727,613	52
Clergy housing	2,240,065	18
Parish mission support costs	2,498,567	20
Legal costs	422,770	3
Grants made	482,843	4
National Church	337,026	3
	12,708,884	100

It is clear to us that, unfortunately, as good as it is, there is a knock on effect from running Let's Shine with parishes being unable to run usual raffles and fetes and also the demise of the Social and Fundraising committee that did such valuable work in the past.

It is the view of the committee that those parishes who are struggling to pay their parish share should be able to keep collections from benefice services, (perhaps on the understanding that they are held until December and only used for Parish Share if needed and given away if not).

### Action HW

BENEFICE BUDGET 2026			
Expenditure			
	2025	Est 2025	2026
Mileage	£1,000.00	£734.00	£1,000.00
Office	£125.00	£230.00	£250.00
Printing	£550.00	£490.42	£550.00
Secretary	£3,800.00	£3,830.00	£4,000.00
Website	£330.00	£295.00	£330.00
Copyright	£200.00	£178.44	£200.00
Mission & Minis	£1,500.00	£700.00	£1,000.00
Church items	£500.00	£300.53	£500.00
Ministers	£210.00	£105.75	£210.00
Organists	£400.00	£400.00	£400.00
<b>BENEFICE</b>	<b>£8,615.00</b>	<b>£5,845.37</b>	<b>£8,440.00</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>£5,204.00</b>	<b>£2,904.56</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>
<i>Charity</i>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,819.00</b>	<b>£8,749.93</b>	<b>£11,440.00</b>

INCOME		
	Projected	Actual to date
Fees	£5,500.00	£4,715.00
Fundraising	£3,000.00	£1,455.37
CF	£3,000.00	£4,345.56
Giftaid	£210.00	£275.00
Share CF	£0.00	£421.19
Donations	0	0
		
		Balance
	£11,710.00	£270.00

**NEXT MEETING** : TBC 11am at Vine Cottage.