



The Astwell Benefice

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

Finance Committee – Minutes 22/9/26

PRESENT: Alice Palmer, Philip Thompson, Ann Netten, Clive Johnson

APOLOGIES : Sue Timmis, Claire Bonner, Rev Hugh White

MINUTES

We agreed the minutes from 22/6/26

MATTERS ARISING

- None

PARISH & BENEFICE ACCOUNTS

Benefice

The Benefice finances are working well at the moment. The large number of weddings this year means that we are managing to keep on top of our expenses and should have enough to pay our costs to the end of the year.

The Parish Share contributions are shown below. We expect to have paid 69% of the total at the end of this quarter.

PARISH SHARE	Target	Paid so far	Owed	%	End of Q Prediction	
Helmdon	£27,000.00	£ 15,150.00	£ 11,850.00	56%	2500	£ 17,650.00 65%
Wappenham	£12,000.00	£ 8,000.00	£ 4,000.00	67%	1000	£ 9,000.00 75%
Syresham	£19,000.00	£ 10,750.00	£ 8,250.00	57%	2300	£ 13,050.00 69%
Lois	£12,000.00	£ 9,000.00	£ 3,000.00	75%	0	£ 9,000.00 75%
Whitfield	£ 3,500.00	£ 2,400.00	£ 1,100.00	69%	230	£ 2,630.00 75%
Benefice	£ 1,000.00	£ 971.68	£ 28.32	97%	0	£ 971.68 97%
SHortfall	£ 1,661.00		£ 1,661.00	0%		£ - 0%
	£76,161.00	£ 46,271.68	£ 29,889.32	61%	6030	£ 52,301.68 69%

Helmdon

Helmdon are topping up their Parish Share by £2500 taking them to 17,650, that is 65% of their target. Regular Giving is steady at present but collections are down. There is a raffle and Christmas Fair to come for fundraising. AN has plans to create a table showing the money spent on insurance and fabric so far this year, this will be passed to the Friends of the church to inform their decision on any contribution they might make to the church funds. AN is not confident of reaching the full £27000.

PT suggested that service leaders should not be shy about asking for money. We discussed having tap and pay machines in the churches. Helmdon tried having a plug-in tap and pay machine but the income received did no merit buying a new machine when theirs broke. We do, mostly, have tap and pay sumup accounts and use them at events. We also have QR codes available for making easy online payments.

Lois Weedon

Lois Weedon are stable financially at the moment, however the cost of four areas of work that are urgently required will significantly drain resources by the end of the year if the work is completed and cash expended in the intervening period.

They were grateful for £500 received from the May Day event which was allocated to the project work. They have set aside £10,000 of their own reserves towards the work and the Friends of the Church have pledged to contribute a further £8,000. This leaves a deficit of around £17,000.

It is possible that a single grant payment from the Laing Family Trusts has been approved which may cover all or a significant part of this shortfall, confirmation on which is imminent. CJ has also applied for various other grants. If all of these grant applications for funding are all successful, Lois may then be able to reduce its committed amount, thereby retaining some of their reserves, but this is dependent on a) the success of the funding requests and amounts and b) the terms under which any such funding is given.

Lois's full Parish Share of £12,000 has been allocated within its future cashflow and from existing reserves. CJ does not see that this will change and expects to be able to make payment of the residual committed amount at year end but is doubtful at this stage about Lois's ability to help others, if needed, to make up any shortfall at the year end.

Other expenditure of late have been the organ repair and fire check. Fundraising has been disappointing with one event being cancelled due to lack of interest and the Harvest Supper event also being cancelled after attracting interest from just 13 people.

The Friends of the Church have however organised a gala evening for 9th October in the church, which has attracted 40 folk all giving donations to attend. CJ confirmed that this fund raising event was for the benefit of the Friends and not the PCC.

Syresham

Syresham's regular giving and collections hold steady. They have paid 69% of their Parish Share and, thanks to their trusts, have been able to pay for a lot of quinquennial work and repairs to broken slates on the north aisle roof.

However the projected budget shows that, even assuming an excellent Christmas Fair, they could be over £1000 short of their full contribution unless they get some more income. (NB £500 was received after this meeting otherwise the shortfall expected would have been nearer £2000.

Wappenham

Wappenham are doing well at the moment, helped by few expenses this year. The work on the boiler house was fully paid by the insurance which helps. They received £2750 from the fete held in May and are looking forward to the Scarecrow folk group performing on October 9th. This will raise less money but is a good way to get folk into the church.

Whitfield

Whitfield are also doing well at the moment. Their regular giving is steady. Fundraising has gone well and the Friends have paid for the fabric part of the insurance.

They will be able to pay their full Parish Share assuming there are no calamitous extra expenses. They have been asked that if they receive their Gift Aid monies they could consider adding some of that over and above their planned contribution.

Cornerstone

AP talked about the Cornerstone initiative introduced by the CofE. There was some interest on what knowing our impact means but some scepticism about the project as a whole.

AOB - CAME UP DURING MEETING

CJ alerted us to the new faculty system

AN asked about electricity providers. Syresham are with Octopus, Lois with SSE (but standing charges are expensive) and Wappenham with Total Energies. AP had tried the Parish Buying system but they asked unanswerable questions before even providing a quote.

NEXT MEETING : AP to circulate dates for December.