PARISH OF ST STANISLAUS, DULVERTON

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Committee held at Burston Farm, Dulverton on Wednesday 29 October 2025 at 6.00 pm

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Present:
Mr Simon Rous (SR) (Chair)
Rev Rajesh Abraham (RA)
Mrs Lindy Head (LH) (Vice Chair)
Mrs Angela Levenson (AL)
Mr Martin McNeill (MMcN) (Secretary)
Mr Benedict Williams (BW) (Treasurer)

RESOLUTIONS

- To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2025 (Minute 2.1)
- To transfer £15,000 from the current account to the deposit account (Minute 4.4)
- To contract with EE for a SIM card to be used to facilitate the management of the church heating (Minute 4.4)
- To approve the implementation of financial procedures as set out in the Diocesan Administration Manual (Minute 4.5)
- To approve payment of Morwena Stephens' final invoice of £3,336.49 (Minute 4.6)

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1. Welcome, introduction and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Georgie Mitchell (GM) and accepted. The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate. The Chair outlined the matters to be considered at the meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1. The Committee agreed to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2025 and that they be signed by the Chair.

<u>5 October 2023 Minute 2.3 West Somerset Catholics website</u>

2.2. MMcN reported that he had now been trained in the management of the website and would shortly be updating the Dulverton section.

<u>21 February 2024 Minute 3.5 Matters arising (collaboration)</u>

2.3. MMcN reported that the Minehead parish had now established its own Pastoral Council. It was agreed that there was no need for Dulverton to establish a separate Pastoral Council at this point: RA would seek advice on pastoral issues as necessary from the members of this committee. Asked about the role of the Pastoral Assistant, RA told the Committee that this was a deanery-wide role.

2.4. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that an occasional (possibly annual) meeting between Minehead and Dulverton representatives to discuss issues of common interest would be helpful. RA offered to arrange such a meeting in 2026.

20 November 2024 Minute 2.4 Matters arising (vestments and altar furnishings)

2.5. The Committee agreed to address this issue under Item 5b on agenda of this meeting, and that this action item could be closed.

20 November 2024 Minute 5.2 Deanery jubilee celebrations

2.6. The Committee noted that a jubilee tea party and bluebell walk had been hosted on 27 April by Paola and Robin Wight and attended by a large number of parishioners and guests from neighbouring parishes. The Committee asked for its thanks to Mr and Mrs Wight to be recorded.

2.7. The Treasurer reported that, thanks to the generosity of parishioners who had provided food and drink, it had not been necessary to draw on the £500 set aside for jubilee celebrations at parish level and this money had instead been used to help defray the costs of the deanery-wide event in Taunton on 12 July.

20 November 2024 Minute 6.3 Services and liturgy (availability of text)

2.5. The Committee repeated its request for a Sunday Bulletin including, in addition to the entrance and communion antiphons, responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation, the full texts of all the scripture readings appointed for the day. Like the current Sunday Bulletin, the folded A4 sheet would be blank on the reverse to allow parish details to be printed (as now). RA agreed to take this forward after consultation with Minehead parishioners.

19 February 2025 Minute 3.4 Finance (parish budget)

2.6. The Committee was pleased to note that a revised budget had been presented to the Parish AGM on 16 March and approved.

19 February 2025 Minute 4 Liturgy, music etc

2.7. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the Good Friday liturgy led by Deacon Vincent, which had been well attended.

19 February 2025 Minute 5.1 Sacristy duties (appointment of sacristan)

2.8. The Committee was pleased to note that Michael Rous had agreed to take on the role of sacristan.

19 February 2025 Minute 5.2 Sacristy duties (holy water stoup)

2.9. The Committee noted that discussions around the provision of a custom-made holy water stoup had not been fruitful. A brass stoup had kindly been provided by a parishioner for which the Committee expressed its gratitude.

19 February 2025 Minute 6 Annual Parish Meeting

2.10. The Committee noted that all parishioners had been advised of the agreed date.

3. Parish AGM 2025

The Committee received and considered the approved draft minutes of the annual parish meeting held on 16 March 2025 and attended by 15 parishioners, noting that there had been no developments in the last six months requiring a further meeting.

4. Finance

4.1. The Treasurer presented the management accounts for the first nine months of 2025, which showed receipts slightly lower than in 2024 and payments (as budgeted) significantly higher. He drew attention to the increased income from feed-in tariffs which had largely offset a higher electricity bill, the small reduction in offertory income, and the additional expenditure of £2,167 on the maintenance of Bridge House that had significantly reduced net rental income. The accounts now also included (from 1 April 2025) a £15 monthly payment to support the ongoing costs of the deanery.

4.2. Looking ahead, the Treasurer forecast that total receipts and payments for the year were likely to be close to budget. Receipts in October had included £2,000 in Gift Aid tax relief, but there had also been additional property maintenance costs of £535 and costs of £1,111 related to the conservation of the dossal, while £1,800 had been spent on a plinth for the tabernacle. As a result, the £805 surplus shown in the September management accounts had been significantly reduced, and the additional costs of dossal conservation (see Minute 4.6 below) would cause payments for the year as a whole to exceed receipts, as originally budgeted.

4.3. Committee members observed that, while the overall deficit should be in line with budget, much of the provision for new altar frontals (which had not yet been commissioned) had been absorbed by the additional costs associated with the dossal conservation project, and any saving on 'other sundries' was likely to be offset at least in part by additional property costs (including the new lighting). Nevertheless, the overall financial position remained strong.

4.4. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that £15,000 should be transferred from the current account to the deposit account, taking the total on deposit to £65k. The Committee also approved a contract with EE at a monthly cost of £10.00 (rising to £12.50 from 1 April 2026) to enable LH to manage the church heating.

4.5. The Committee then considered the arrangements for authorisation of expenditure, noting that, while robust financial controls were in place, some aspects of financial management could be improved to ensure that the Committee always had a clear view of past and expected future receipts and payments. It was agreed that in future all payments should be processed by the Treasurer before being executed by the Parish Priest (or exceptionally by one of the other two signatories – currently MMcN and LH), as set out in the diocese's Parish Administration Manual. For payments over £2,000 a second signature would be required. For payments exceeding £5,000, the consent of the diocesan trustees must be sought; RA assured the Committee that this did not normally present a problem.

4.6. The Committee went on to review a report on the conservation of the dossal, which was now complete, with an analysis of the reasons for the cost over-

run of £2,790. It was agreed that, although this had been a costly project, the results were very pleasing and the parish could now be assured that the life of this valuable artefact had been substantially extended. Approval was given to paying the outstanding invoice for £3,336.49.

5. Proposals for further enhancements

5.1. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the work that had been done to investigate options for the installation of a sound system but agreed that this was not currently a priority.

5.2. LH reported on her conversations with Andrew Penson of Penson Ecclesiastical Arts, who had supplied altar frontals for many churches, including St Teresa's, Taunton. She explained that discussions with Luzar (who had supplied the new vestments) and Watts & Co had not been fruitful; Penson, however, could supply four altar frontals in colours that would closely match those of the vestments.

5.3. The Committee considered the fabric samples provided and agreed that LH should continue her conversations. Based on an estimate of between £1,200 and £1,700 for each frontal, a provision of £8,000 would need to be made in the 2026 budget if new frontals were to be commissioned. Thought should also be given to how the frontals not in use could be stored.

5.4. The Committee agreed that a decision on commissioning matching tabernacle covers should be deferred until the new altar frontals were in place; there was a danger that covers would detract from, rather than complement, the new plinth.

6. Pastoral matters

6.1. The Committee discussed the pattern of sung and said Masses and agreed (with RA's full support) that it would be desirable to have Missa de Angelis (excluding the Kyrie) sung with accompaniment on the fourth Sunday of each month, when an organist was available; those Masses would also include two hymns. We would also sing Missa de Angelis (again, without the Kyrie) unaccompanied on the second Sunday of the month. The Pater Noster would be sung at those Masses only on request, and subject to adequate notice to enable copies to be made available for all those attending. All other Masses (those on the first, third and, where relevant, fifth Sundays) would be said in English.

6.2. Committee members asked whether, given RA's other commitments, including his commitments to the Syro-Malabar community in Taunton, he would be able to continue the custom of offering two Christmas Masses in Dulverton. Both Masses, at 6.30 pm on Christmas Eve and 9.30 am on Christmas Day, had attracted a good congregation in recent years. RA said that he would endeavour to maintain this custom.

7. **Other business**

   It was agreed that there was a need to maintain a register of parish documents, including those relating to the Church building and its contents. MMcN was asked to explore setting up such a register on Google Docs or elsewhere.

8. **Date, time and venue of next meeting**

   The Secretary was asked to seek members' agreement to a date in February 2026 for the next meeting of the Committee, to be followed by an annual general meeting of parishioners in March.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Martin McNeill
Secretary

Confirmed as a correct record at the meeting held on 4 March 2026

and signed by Simon Rous (Chair of that meeting)