

MINUTES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at St Columba's Newman Room on 3rd March 2026 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Fr William, Fr John, Deacon Lawrence, Pauline Rourke, Ann McCarthy, Amy O'Donnell, Eileen Irwin, Sue Carr, Alicja Dale, Sue McCarthy, Carol Galvin and Magdalena Bukowska.

1.	Opening Prayer The meeting started with a prayer led by Fr William.
2.	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Nuala Keegan, Helen Connor, Carol Ingram and Tim Moore.
3.	To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2026 The approval of the minutes was proposed by Eileen, seconded by Alicja and agreed by all.
4.	Matters arising from the minutes. a) Surplus vestments: Fr William said that he had planned to raise the matter at the deanery meeting, but the meeting was very long and he had no chance to speak about it. He will try to raise the matter at the next deanery meeting. ACTION: Fr William b) Safeguarding meeting in Jan/February. It was said that Jane Walsh is still unwell and that PC needs to continue to wait for an update on that matter. ACTION: Fr William, Sue and Jane c) Live streaming of Mass: With Tim being absent, Pauline explained that since Tim was unsure how to proceed using Youtube, she had tried to gain some information from another parish but had not succeeded so far. She encouraged all the PC members to try and find churches who use Youtube for live streaming and to let Tim know if they do find any. ACTION: Tim and Pauline, all PC members d) Common Baptism form: Eileen and Magdalena reported that now there is one unified Baptism form for both churches. ACTION: No further action needed e) Eco Church Project: Ann said she had downloaded a lot of information about it and discussed it briefly with Pauline before the meeting. They think this would be a valuable project for when more pressing matters have been dealt with. Deacon Lawrence said he knows someone who might give us some advice and help us to start. Fr William asked if the Primary School children could be involved

and Ann replied it is not really to do with schools.

ACTION: Ann and Deacon Lawrence

f) **Item 7 Re-introduction of Communion under both kinds:** Lawrence/Fr William

Pauline thanked Deacon Lawrence for his very considerable work in response to the request from AGM that we re-introduce the reception of Communion under both kinds. She added that it has not been easy to arrange but matters are now in hand for the process to begin with a half day of Recollection next Sunday and asked Fr William to expand on that.

Fr William said that despite the difficulties with finding a convenient date, Natalie agreed to lead the Recollection on Sunday 8th March at 2pm and despite some objections to the date and time we need to push things forward. Fr William said he had spoken to various people personally both from St Columba's and St Theresa's and some of them will consider taking part in the Recollection Day.

There were no other matters arising from the minutes

To receive and consider activity reports – attached to these minutes.

The hard work done in preparing such detailed reports was acknowledged and everyone who prepared them was thanked.

a) Children's Liturgy - Nothing to report.

b) Social Committee – Nothing to report.

c) Youth Group

Report attached but Ann just added that The Youth Group will be meeting a Claire House representative to explain to the group what happens to the donations they had collected a while back. Claire House is the children's hospice on the Wirral. Fr William suggested that it would be good idea to invite a member of the Spiritan Youth Ministry Leaders who often visit schools and parishes, to talk to the Youth Group. Fr William will contact them.

d) Liturgy Group

Eileen gave a quick summary and said that Fr William will see Richard Curtis re altar servers. The Reconciliation Service is organised for 17th March and the date for the Sacrament of Confirmation has been established on 11th November. Deacon Lawrence also said it was announced in the Newsletter, that a few people are preparing to receive Sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass. The Indian Community have established their dates for Easter in cooperation with Fr William.

e) Communications Group – Nothing to report

f) Outreach and SVP

Sue had nothing to add to the report.

g) Churches Together in Upton

Ann just mentioned that on Friday at Upton URC there will be World Day of Prayer which used to be Women's Day of Prayer. It is now a service for all.

h) Buildings and maintenance St Theresa's

Eileen had nothing to add to the report.

c) Buildings and maintenance St Columba's

Pauline reported that the work on the new storage in the Altar Servers sacristy continues and the state of the storage room in the hall has been improved and the skip that had been ordered has been filling up quickly.

j) Finance Committee

Pauline said the finance committee meeting had to be postponed so there was not much to report but she added that no further information about the merging of the accounts has been submitted by the Diocese. Eileen said the Diocese assured us that they would take care of the whole process. Fr William added we should wait and rely on them since they have done that in other churches many times now.

Pauline has re-written the web-site item about Gift Aid.

k) Safeguarding

Nothing was added to the report

l) Report from Fr William - Nothing to report at this time

6. **Matters raised by parishioners**

a) Lighting in St Columba's Church

The issue is being addressed but for general information, one of the spotlights that points directly into the people's eyes who sit in the choir area will be fixed in the near future but for now the sacristan has been asked not to put them on for Sunday Mass. On Saturdays they need to be on as it is otherwise too dark. The electrician will attend to this at the same time as he changes the sockets to the heaters so that people would not be able to switch them off.

Fr William reported that the electric heater in the confessional is not working and it is very cold without it.

ACTION: Magdalena

b) Possibility of daily Masses in parish

Fr William began by pointing out that the parishioners should come to him directly if they have any suggestions or questions. He said that when he took over the Parish after Covid, he didn't receive any handover notes. People want more daily Masses at St Columba's but a while back they tried to have some Adoration and prayers on Tuesday at St Theresa's and only two people ended up coming, so it was stopped. Fr William was surprised that some parishioners find the Mass Intention table in the Newsletter misleading and he assured us that he says Mass privately for the intentions mentioned in the Newsletter on the days with no specific times. He added that during the AGM, when he wasn't present, people came with an idea to install a suggestion box as a way to communicate their thoughts and needs, but it has never been organised. He suggested that the secretaries could handle that and the suggestions could then be discussed in a

	<p>group. Fr William said that there would be no problem with having daily Mass but other factors should be taken into account, like the costs of heating, their commitments to Spiritan Fathers and poor attendance for some other events like Reconciliation Service (about 40 people from both churches). Fr William will organise a meeting with the chairs and Deacon Lawrence to discuss this matter further.</p> <p>In response, it was said that some parishioners attend weekday Masses in other churches on days when Mass is not offered in our parish but they would definitely prefer to attend at their own church. Pauline said there was a reasonable attendance at St Columbas when Mass was offered every day.</p> <p>Pauline said the suggestion boxes will be organised right away.</p> <p>ACTION: Fr William, Chairs, Deacon Lawrence and Magdalena</p>
7.	<p>Parish response to Pope Leo's description of a parish</p> <p>Pauline cited Pope Leo – that when, as bishop in Peru, he visited a parish he met with the Parish Pastoral Council. It might be a model for us as well so people could be heard. She also read from an item in The Tablet of 7.02.26 that the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales had released resources to help parishes create a 'culture of welcome and hospitality' in relation to Racial Justice Sunday on 1 February.</p> <p>Fr William added that we need to discern if we need to do anything extra. There is always room for improvement but we also need to be satisfied with what we have.</p> <p>Ann added that we need to encourage people to get involved. Deacon Lawrence recalled some ideas from the Recollection he attended with Fr William and Fr Peter a while back to look into your parish for people who might be 'on the edge', not engaged, losing interest. Perhaps we need to change our approach to Baptism. Many families asking for Baptism at St Columba's are from outside the Parish. We have a chance to do more to encourage them to come and join us. People "dip" into our churches for baptisms, marriage, funerals etc and then we never see them again. How do we engage/welcome them?</p> <p>Pauline asked if this matter could be passed to Communication Group and Fr William agreed</p> <p>ACTION: Pauline, Ann to refer to Communications Group</p>
8.	<p>Consideration of Lottery Bid for re-flooring St Columba's Hall</p> <p>Pauline explained that Anthony Timothy (Diocesan Mission Secretary) suggested that the church could raise funds for the hall floor renovation from a lottery bid. He could not give any more specific information about that, though he suggested a couple of possible contacts. Sue will see Fr David from St Werburgh's and might ask him if he knows how to get involved. Pauline also asked the PC members if they know anything about it and suggested we should ask around to try to gather more information from any organisations that gained Lottery funds. Perhaps the SVP may know more or local councillors?</p>
9.	<p>Planning for AGM</p> <p>Ann suggested that the AGM should be planned along the same lines as the previous year with Raffle Tickets, art competition, refreshments as this had proved successful in encouraging more parishioners to attend. The theme for the art competition chosen</p>

	<p>together with the St Werburgh's and St Columba's Primary School Headteacher would be 'Ecology and Care of Creation'. Ann said she will go to visit St Theresa's Primary School as well. Pauline added that the AGM would have the same format re sending the reports and a brief presentation of them at the meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>a. Deacon Lawrence informed the meeting that the Chrism Mass will take place on 1st April in the Shrewsbury Cathedral with Priests and two parishoners being invited by the Bishop to join. Deacon Lawrence said that he was unable to attend so one seat could be offered to a parishioner.</p> <p>b. Ann reported that she had recently given a talk on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching to the Friendship Group. As a result of this it was suggested that a short item on each of the principles could go in the newsletter – a bit like the "Thought for the Week". It was agreed to defer this to the Communication group for further consideration</p>
11.	<p>Date and time of next meeting.</p> <p>Dates of forthcoming meetings were confirmed as follows:</p> <p>7pm Tuesday 14th April 2026, Parish Centre, St Theresa's.</p> <p>7pm Tuesday 16th June 2026, Newman Room, St Columba's.</p>
12.	<p>The meeting concluded with a prayer and a Blessing given by Fr John.</p>