

# St Erconwald's Parish, Walton on Thames

## Parish Finance Committee

### Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 29 April 2025

Stephen Speed (chair), Fr Ruslan, Emma Whitehead (Parish Treasurer), Kevin Kilburn (Gift Aid coordinator), Louise Speed, Maureen Dodds.

Fr Ruslan opened the meeting with a prayer for the committee's work.

#### 1. Parish Finances, including 2024 annual accounts

Emma introduced the parish accounts for 2024. The parish more or less broke even in 2024, with offerings increasing especially in the second half of the year. This represents a considerable and welcome improvement on forecasts from earlier in the year. In the first quarter of 2025, the parish similarly was heading for more or less break-even, once again, a welcome improvement on where we were this time last year. In addition to this the committee noted the considerable income that had been raised specifically to support the Sanctuary refurbishment project (see item 3, below).

The committee thanked Emma for all her work throughout the year in managing and supporting our financial affairs and producing the accounts. The committee agreed that the accounts, accompanied by a short explanatory slide set, and the gift aid report (see next item) should be published together on the parish's website as soon as possible. **Action:** *SS to gather the relevant documents and send to parish comms email.* It was also agreed that the PFC should make a short presentation at all Masses one weekend once the sanctuary renewal project is complete to update the parish on our general financial situation, to thank parishioners for their increased offerings over the last year and to encourage everyone to maintain and, as far as, possible increase support in the year ahead. **Action:** *Kevin to make presentations, probably in late May or in June.*

The parish is now benefitting from rental income from the presbytery and this income is being assigned to supporting our buildings maintenance and renewals.

The committee noted that Sunday Mass attendances continue to increase, especially at the 0915 Mass. The committee agreed that it would be helpful to get better and more reliable information about numbers attending weekend Masses. **Action:** *Stephen to discuss with Lucy (PFC) and the weekend Mass welcomer teams.*

Finally the committee looked at the finances for 2025 to date. Once again there is room for cautious optimism. In the first quarter, the parish was more or less on course for break-even. This compares with a significant deficit run up in the first quarter 2024.

The committee welcomed the start-up of the parish 100 Club and looked forward to membership increasing further when club reopens to new members in September. The 100 club will make a very welcome additional contribution to our annual income.

## **2. Gift aid report**

Kevin presented his Gift Aid report for 2024. In line with the wider financial position reported above, gift aid claimed by the parish rose by 11% compared to the previous year. Envelope donations were significantly down and the use of envelopes has now been discontinued as it is no longer cost-effective. The number of DONA contributions increased by around 20% and there was also an increase in the number of monthly donations made by standing orders.

## **3. Sanctuary renewal project**

Fr Ruslan reported on progress on the Sanctuary Renewal project. It had been hoped that the project would be complete in time for Easter. While the construction of new sanctuary dry-lined walls was completed by then, complications to do with structures lying behind the statue above the sanctuary meant that plans have had to be changed and work would now be completed in time for the first of our First Holy Communion Masses. As a result of these changes, Fr Ruslan reported, that the project is likely to cost a little less than the £28k budgeted.

## **4. Parish Safeguarding arrangements**

The committee has no direct role in safeguarding but is required by the Diocese to confirm annually that the parish has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. It was confirmed that that is the case and the committee, on behalf of all in the parish, would like to thank Tina O'Kelly for the excellent work that she does as our parish safeguarding officer.

## **5. Dates for future meetings in 2025**

The committee agreed to meet again on 7 July, 22 September and 8 December. Times and locations TBC nearer the time.

Fr Ruslan closed the meeting with a prayer.