



Diocese of Nottingham: The St John Paul II Nottingham Parish Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15th December 2025

In attendance: Julie Blazewicz-Bell, Martin Foulds, Michael Gemson, Philip Martin, David Staiano, Oliver Wastell and Canon Philipp Ziomek (Chairperson).

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Canon Philipp.

2. Welcome to new member

A warm welcome was extended to Julie Blazewicz-Bell, who was attending her first meeting of the committee.

3. Apologies for absence

There were not any absences to report.

4. Minutes of the meeting on 18th September 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will now be posted on the parish notice board and website. **ACTION 24/25: Philip** to action accordingly.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

- a) Parish contribution to diocesan central support services costs-** it was explained that a letter had been sent to the Bishop following the discussion with David Lawes at the committee's last meeting, detailing the committee's concerns about the application of the new diocesan quota arrangements to the parish's set-off account which is intended to help fund the impending building project at Good Shepherd Church. A response from David Lawes on behalf of the Bishop had subsequently been received. The response reiterated what had been said by David at the meeting and advised that the committee's concerns would be considered as part of the diocesan review of the new contribution model which is to take place at the end of the financial year.
- b) Parish finances 2025/26 update-** it was reported that the diocesan accountant, Jonathan Gamble, had advised that the diocese was awaiting receipt of the annual financial return from the former parish of Southwell and Calverton before advising about the transfer of 24% of the balance of funds from the now defunct parish which it had been agreed would be attributable to St Anthony's. Canon Philipp reported that he had a subsequent discussion with Canon Michael O'Donohue of the parish of St

Francis of Assisi, Sherwood about the transfer of these funds and understood from Canon Michael that his parish's annual financial return had now been submitted to the diocese. It had been agreed that Canon Michael and Canon Philipp, along with representatives of the two parishes, should meet in the new year to discuss this in more detail. It was suggested that Philip, Martin and Michael should attend the meeting on behalf of the committee. **ACTION 25/25: Canon Philipp** to advise when a date for the proposed meeting has been agreed.

6. Parish finances 2025/26-update

Philip provided an update on the parish's current finances:

- There was a credit balance of £18,319.70 in the parish's current bank account at 13th December 2025.
- The parish's separate interest-bearing set-off account, held by the diocese, is currently in credit to the sum of £339,450.25. Regular transfers of £3,950 into the set-off account continue to be made from the parish's current account.
- There have been several large costs incurred by the parish since the committee's last meeting, including:
 - 1) A charge of £3,458.27, for the transfer to the diocese of the parish's required 2.5% quota contribution on the balance of funds over £150,000 held in its reserves at the end of 2024/25.
 - 2) An annual insurance premium of £4,285.87 for building and contents cover for the parish's two churches and their related premises (£3,851.04 for the Good Shepherd and £434.83 for St Anthony's).
 - 3) A bill for £4,266.62 to restore and improve internet connectivity in the parish administrative suite and the parish centre.

It was recognised that the balance in the parish's current account is less than might have been expected, given it includes income of over £10,000 generated by the Good Shepherd Christmas Fair 2025. It is the policy of the diocese that parishes must not overdraw their bank accounts and that the reserves held by each parish should normally be equivalent to at least one year's operating costs after taking into account the cost of outstanding property maintenance work. It was agreed therefore that the parish should monitor its cash flow situation carefully to ensure the current account remains in credit to a reasonable sum to cover routine and unexpected bills. **ACTION 26/25: Canon Philipp** to action accordingly.

7. Good Shepherd Church building project – update

Canon Philipp advised that grants totalling £35,000 had recently been secured by Sarah Benedeck on behalf of the parish from the National Churches Trust (£25,000) and the Wolfson Foundation (£10,000) towards phase1 of the Good Shepherd building project, involving the repair of the church bell tower which is in urgent need of repair owing to cracking and falling concrete. This phase of the project is estimated to cost in the region of £50,000. The committee expressed its appreciation for Sarah's excellent, ongoing work in securing funding for the project. **ACTION 27/25: Philip/Canon Philipp** to advise Sarah of the committee's appreciation for her work to date.

Canon Philipp also mentioned that the parish had secured an earlier grant of £5,000 towards the overall project. **ACTION 28/25: Philip/Canon Philipp** to ensure this funding is reserved within the parish set-off account and is identified as such to ensure it is not captured in the calculation for determining the parish's new diocesan quota contributions.

The parish is currently working with Historic England on Phase 2 of the project which involves replacing the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the external church building. Consideration is also being given to the possibility of replacing the clear glass in the mullions by stained glass which would accord with the original design plans for the church. It was recognised that this could increase the overall cost of the project but it was hoped that Historic England's involvement will enable the parish to secure additional grants to help cover the costs. The diocese has also agreed in principle to provide the parish with a loan at preferential interest rates to cover any shortfall. Additionally, the parish will look to recover some of the VAT involved, through application to the government's VAT recovery scheme for listed places of worship, albeit this scheme is currently capped at £25,000 per annum per application and its long-term future is not yet known.

ACTION 29/25: Canon Philipp to keep the committee informed of progress.

8. Parish Autumn and Christmas Fairs 2025

It was reported that the profit for the Christmas Fair 2025 at Good Shepherd Church had totalled a record £10,704.98.

The annual Autumn Fayre held at St Anthony's had generated a profit of £1,002.20 to date, with the possibility of more post-event income to come.

It was understood that the profits from the event at St Anthony's are to be shared on a 50/50 basis between the parish and the Calverton Core Centre community hub charity. It was agreed however that, in accordance with diocesan expectations, the parish finance committee should in future be consulted in advance for its agreement about how any such profits are allocated. It will be important in this context to ensure that the use of such funds does not in any way compromise the diocese's charitable status and reflects the funding priorities of the parish. **ACTION 30/25: Martin** to explain the committee's position to the event organiser (Bernadette Carter) in order to inform future practice.

9. Analysis of income 2025/26

Consideration was given to the report circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that Mass attendance at our churches continues to increase- at Good Shepherd the total current average attendance at the four Masses each weekend is 788 (a 10.2% increase on 2024/25), whilst at St Anthony's the average attendance is 59 (an increase of 9.3%).

Current projections suggest that the parish's income for 2025/26 from the measurable sources covered by the report will total £183,459- a net increase of £18,763 (11.4%) on 2024/25. When inflation (currently running at 3.6%) is factored in, the increase in real terms is estimated at about 7.8%. If correct, that still represents a considerable improvement on the two previous financial years, when real terms reductions were experienced.

It was agreed that the position should continue to be carefully monitored and to that end updated reports should be brought to each meeting of the committee. **ACTION 31/25:** Philip to action.

10. Parish Centre- review of hire charges for 2026/27

Consideration was given to the report circulated with the agenda.

After discussion, it was agreed that:

- a) the charges for hiring the centre should be increased by an average of 3.6% in line with the annual CPI increase as at October 2025;
- b) the increase in charges should take effect from 1st April 2026 so that reasonable notice can be given to our regular hirers;
- c) the range of discounts set out in the report should continue to be available to those hirers who meet the eligibility criteria;
- d) the position should continue to be reviewed on an annual basis in the light of inflation and levels of use of the centre facilities.

ACTION 32/25: Rosemary Mahoney/Philip to follow up accordingly.

11. Any other business

- a) ***St John Paul II Youth Foundation-*** Julie explained that the parish had established this foundation to provide financial support for young people from the parish who attend the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes as volunteer helpers for elderly pilgrims and those with mobility problems. The fund is also available to support young people from the parish who wish to attend the annual World Youth Day events, inaugurated by St John Paul II. There is currently £2,713 available in the fund. Grants are normally made to assist with 50% of the young people's costs and total grants of £1,200 were made in 2025 to support four students from Christ the King Academy who went on the Lourdes pilgrimage as volunteer helpers.

It was agreed that the parish should publicise the fund more actively within both its churches and that specially designed envelopes would be produced to enable any donations to be Gift Aided where appropriate. Canon Philipp advised that the envelopes could be produced in-house by the parish- Philip to provide an appropriate formula of words to satisfy the Gift Aid requirements. **ACTION 33/25:** Canon Philip/Philip to action.

12. Dates of the next meeting

The dates for the committee's meetings in 2026 were agreed, with the committee's next meeting to be from 7.00-8.30pm on Thursday, 12th March 2026. It was agreed that future meetings should normally start at 7.00pm as this is the most convenient start time for the committee membership. **ACTION 34/25:** Philip to note for future meetings.

13. Closing Prayer

The meeting was closed with a prayer led by Canon Philipp.