



The Astwell Benefice

*St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury & St Lawrence
Radstone St James the Great Syresham,
St John the Evangelist Whitfield,
St Mary and St Peter Lois Weedon & Weston with
Plumpton St Mary the Virgin Wappenham*
www.astwellparishes.org.uk

Minutes of the Benefice PCC Meeting Monday 6th October 2025

The meeting opened with a prayer

1. **Apologies:** D Billingham F Mason S Timmis P Bonner and S Rudkin
Present: M Streten, K Brunning, C Bonner, H White, P Stothard, W Smith, F Hunter, S Warren, C Netten, G Rodger & A Palmer
2. **Approval of minutes of previous BPCC meeting** held 14th July 2025 – these were approved unanimously.
- 3.
4. **Matters Arising:** *Parish Share & Single Parish; services; Community fund all in agenda.*
 - a. CN – Discussed with Brackley Town Council professional event organisers, it would cost a lot of money to get someone to organise things, £5000. There is a website called BARK whose umbrella organisation are a Christian group to help organise events. GR has many years experience of event organising, he is happy to organise but would need help getting communities together to attend the event. We accept his offer to lead a group but need to find some people for him to work with. GR will come up with a plan and share with the BPCC and then discuss how to take it forward. AP will supply details of the amount the Benefice needs.

Action GR AP
 - b. Social media was discussed. FH may have some contacts to give advice.
 - c. SW has spoken to Jane Mordue about Citizen's Advice but has made no progress as far as the Benefice is concerned, she suggested they might be invited to speak at a Benefice service.

Action HW to consider
 - d. AP commented that the Benefice scheme, as adopted by the Bishop's Council in October 2022 states that parish church councils still have responsibility for their churches, churchyards, local charity trust funds and fundraising. She will recirculate the document.

Action AP
5. **Committee Reports by Committee Chairs and Astwell Benefice Church Reports:**
 - a. Wappenham is doing a fundraising event rolling in with pub night on 28th of November. Pub night starts at 5pm concert is at 6:15, in church led by the Fawsley singers, pub night then continues after the concert.
 - b. Parishes should endeavour to review posters for events to ensure there are contact details when advertising across the Benefice.
6. **Confirmation of services from September to January:** Next year look at change of times for Helmdon services and try to avoid two benefice services in a row. Otherwise as circulated.

7. Community Fund management update & Parish Nurse:

- a. PS talked about Parish Nurses to enhance pastoral care, give advice to parishioners. They are trained nurses and can be volunteers. PS sees main role as help with the elderly, PNs being able to spend time to listen and talk. There are online sessions that can answer some questions to get further details. HW asked if it worth pursuing the PN idea – do we have the need? Perhaps the Pastoral team could investigate online. If we decided to go further we would need to think about how to fund it and could we apply to the Community fund for that. CN wondered if a Parish Nurse might work across several Benefices and thus a wider area. WS & PS to discuss finding out more and invite others to join if they want to.

Action WS & PS

- b. KB asked if something for farmers would be more useful. We were not sure how many lonely farmers there are in this area. CB will look into this further and possibly speak to Celia Parks about it. PS asked if we could find out how many farmers there are. The Rogation Committee have quite an extensive list.

Action CB

8. Benefice governance: PS and HW are going to meet with the Archdeacon to investigate the process for changing to a single parish. There was some discussion about where we had come from and the process we went through becoming a Joint Benefice using rule M37. An open meeting with Witney representatives will be on November 15th possibly at Weston Baptist Church.

9. Looking to the Future

- a. HW has been granted two more year in the Astwell Benefice. It might not be two years and might be longer. HW wants the Benefice to continue to turn out towards the community and beyond as with a Parish Nurse and Benefice speakers. HW would also like us to look at employing a Youth worker. Also HW would like us to consider the possibility of a curate. He floated the idea of a curate using the vicarage.
- b. What would we like? KB people who are confirmed coming to church. FH Lois used to have a pantomime using people from the schools he wondered if this could be done in Syresham or Helmdon. PS enjoyed his licensing service – a band played the music – Bishop Debbie was superb – there was a feeling of change less stuffy embracing new and difference. He was encouraged that we had spent more time talking about things outside the church. GR was impressed by the Wappenham harvest lunch. It was very much a community lunch. SW commented that folk don't come to Breakfast Church because of the word church. They (Wappenham) might try having a community breakfast to see if that makes a difference. There was further discussion about community and inviting people in.

10. Any Other Business:

- a. A Safeguarding talk by FM would be best in the new year.

b. Christingle resources required for Helmdon and Whitfield same as before.

11. The Grace was said and the meeting ended.