

**MINUTES OF THE BELMONT ABBEY PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 13TH SEPTEMBER 2025**

Parish Pastoral Council Members Present:

Fr Augustine Primavesi – Parish Priest
Louise Wright, Chair,
Gabrielle Stanley - Co-opted Safeguarding Member
Jacqui Ramage Smith – Co-opted Finance Member
Jan Wyman – Minutes Secretary
Rob Corrigan
Jacqui Corrigan
Ellen Sarewitz
Michael Hall
Austen Ivereigh
Ray Rose – Seeking election
Jo Vials - Seeking election
Renata Schmidt - Seeking election
Martin Marston-Paterson - Seeking election

Fr Augustine opened the meeting with a prayer.

Louise Wright welcomed the attendees, reminded them that this meeting was for the Belmont Parish, not the Abbey/monastery which is separate, and took them through the agenda, and explained that the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) are currently working on a new PPC Constitution.

She thanked Abbot Paul for re-instigating the PPC after the COVID lockdown and thanked Andy and Helen Jenkins, Deacon Eddie and Jonathon Nichols, who have recently retired from the PPC, for their past support.

The Members of the PPC individually introduced themselves to the attendees and gave a brief reason why they sought election or re-election to the Council.

Louise then asked those present to vote with a show of hands 'on block' for the election and re-election of the PPC. The vote was unanimous and there were no objections. The vote was carried. Louise explained that the term of these elections was one year, until the new constitution came into effect at the next AGM.

Fr Augustine gave the **Parish Report**. (Available separately)

Jacqui Ramage-Smith gave the **Finance Report**.

Broadly, the Parish income is around £92,000 per annum and expenditure around £61,000 leaving a retained income of around £30,000. This has remained about the same for the last three years.

The weekly collection brings in most of the income. Standing Orders provide about 55% of the collection.

The credit card machine donations are increasing and now equal the plate collection. Active events are also another good source of income, as are grave fees for the Parish Cemetery.

Diocesan Levies and rent for both the Church and Parish Centre equate to around £32,500 per annum.

The rent to the Abbey for use of the Church and Parish Centre have remained constant for the last few years but may be subject to increase in the future.

The 150 club runs from January to December with monthly prizes of £40 and £20. Annual subscription of £12p.a. per single entry can be subject to Gift Aid which would raise another 25%.

Q&A on Finance

1. Approximately 50% of subscriptions are Gift Aided
2. The Card machine donations can be subject to Gift Aid but only up to £8,000. It is possible to sign up to Gift Aid donations made on the card machine. Please see Fr Augustine for details
3. The surplus for Gift Aid has been reached for the plate collection.
4. Any surplus from all collections is transferred into Belmont Abbey Mission Trust CIO and used to cover any extra expenses for the Belmont Parishes of: Belmont Abbey Parish; Our Lady and St Michael, Abergavenny; St Thomas of Hereford, Weobley; St Begh's Priory, Whitehaven and St Wulstan's, Little Malvern.
5. The members of the Finance Committee are:
Fr Augustine, Jacqui Ramage-Smith, Patrick Walesby, Julia Davey, Pat Burbage and Elizabeth Leahy.
6. There are currently no budgets available for individual parish groups. This will be something we look into as we develop the Mission Teams.
7. There is currently no budget for upkeep of the Parish Cemetery. Volunteers are of retirement age and need more support. The Parish Buildings and Grounds Mission Team will need to assess this.
8. How the work of the parish Mission Teams should be funded needs further thought and planning.
9. The 150 club would like more members to join in to support Parish Funds. John Hackman is currently running this and can provide application forms and standing order forms.

For transparency, the minutes of PPC meetings will in future be published on the Parish Website.

Chair's Report (Available separately)

Louise Wright gave the Chair's Report and Vision for the Parish. She said that the PPC had been working hard to implement all the things that came out of the Ears to Hear listening process that

we did as a parish in 2023. Everything we have done has been to help fulfil our four parish priorities:

1. Building a community of belonging
2. Forming ourselves as disciples
3. Deepening prayer and liturgy
4. Becoming a missionary parish

Louise then said we now need to look to the future together. Our vision is to 'enlarge our tent'. She introduced the eight Mission Teams to give parishioners genuine co-responsibility for the parish.

She explained that all parish activities fall into one of these groups. She invited everyone to look around the stations at the back of the hall to see what we do as a parish and to see where parishioners may like to be more involved. (The list of Mission Teams and Stations was printed on the back of the Agenda).

The Parish Handbook was introduced and copies handed to attendees. More copies are available in the Glass Porch at Church.

There was then a 30 minute session where parishioners were able to visit the stations around the room and have refreshments.

Louise then handed over to Austen Ivereigh to run a small group sharing activity.

Small Group Sharing

Austen explained that for the next 25 minutes parishioners were going to get into groups of 5 or 6 with their neighbours, to answer 2 questions in the Synodal method of listening:

- a) Where is the Parish called to grow?
- b) Where am I called to grow as a disciple?

Each group then fed back to the whole assembly with the fruits of that sharing and listening. Those groups are listed below:

1. a) Mostly happy with the functioning of the Parish, feel communication could be improved. Notably the Parish Newsletter and online presence of the Parish.
b) Our public commitment to the Parish is to service and our personal call could be to attend more services, e.g. vespers.
2. a) How can we encourage younger people in their faith? Two Suggestions: Silent Prayer Group and Spiritual Leadership
b) Working group for cemetery upkeep
3. a) How can we be more welcoming as a parish
b) Personal growth should be an individual challenge.

4. a) Where are the young people? Should there be a young person on the Parish Council?
b) We need to get to know our fellow parishioners better.
5. a) We should re-instate the Parish Magazine that reflects our total lives, not just Parish duties.
b) We need to be a “refuelling centre” like the chapel at the County Hospital is.
6. a) Human contact is important; we need to get to know other parishioners. We need more Parish support for young people and other communities, e.g. Ukrainians, Keralans and others.
b) We need more volunteers.
7. a) We need to find a way to engage with the Keralan families, who have young children.
b) A paid Youth Officer/Chaplain for the Deanery was suggested. Louise responded to this to say at the moment we are an aging Parish and therefore the subject of Youth will be addressed on a Deanery Level. It is on the agenda for future Deanery Meetings.
8. a) Disability of a mental or physical nature was not fully recognised. People with these disabilities can be made to feel intimidated by impracticality of getting to Mass
b) There is a gap in attendance at Mass and volunteering by working-aged people, specifically those aged between 30 and 55.

Austen Ivereigh provided the closing remarks on the small sharing groups exercise.

He asked if the attendees thought today had been good and most answered yes.

It was good to put names to faces but some felt that not many new faces had attended.

It was suggested that the station ‘board displays’ on show should be put up in the glass porch on a rolling basis.

It was suggested that in some small groups the listening process had not been properly adhered to.

Louise Wright made the closing remarks.

She said that she thought the event had been amazing for bringing people together and sharing with each other what we do as a parish. In future it should be an expanded, annual event. She reminded people that the PPC had shared their vision for the future of the Parish, elected the new parish council and launched the new Parish Handbook. She asked the attendees to please share with others what we do as a Parish and to go forward with God’s guidance.

Fr Augustine closed the meeting with a prayer.