

3 Churches Pastoral Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting of the 3 Churches Pastoral Advisory Council

Tuesday 25th November 2025 7:30pm Christ the King Church Hall

Present: Ray Sherry (Chair) (RS), Elizabeth Taylor (Vice Chair) (ET), Fr Andy Bord (AB), Deacon Christian Mahoney (CM), Sheila Roberts (SR). Ceri Facey Davies (CFD), Hadar Abdulahad (HA), Kieran O'Brien (KOB), Pedro Mariblanca (PM), Russ Wigley (RW), Carmel O'Grady (COG), Catherine Power (CP), Karen Sylvester (KS)

Apologies: Canon Matthew Jones (MJ), Ryan McLister (RML) – both due to illness, accepted

1. Welcome and Prayer

The Chair welcomed PAC members and thanked them for attending. Meeting quorate. ET advised that Luigi D'Ambrosio had stepped down as a Christ the King representative and a replacement would be sought. **Action MJ and ET**

Opening Prayer: led by AB

2. Approval of the minutes of meeting on 13th October 2025.

Approved as an accurate record subject to changing the recorded finish time from 9am to 9pm.

3. Matters arising

ET: Arrangements for reporting by individual links added to the agenda - see item 4.

4. Identification of individual links with Pastoral Areas

RS: The constitution provides for individual PAC members to link with the areas of 3 Churches Pastoral life listed in the constitution. Council members had been asked ahead of the meeting to contact him with their preferences. Some had done so but there were overlaps and gaps. He reiterated that the PAC's role is not to take over or run activities, but to link with groups and support them in their work.

Following discussion regarding expertise and expectations the following links were confirmed

Safeguarding: RW

Spirituality: PM

Catechesis: KOB

Outreach: SR

Engagement of Children and Young People: CFD

Social Activities: HA

Communications: RS

Links with Local Catholic Schools: CP

Ecumenism: ET

Identification of links for Evangelisation and Liturgy would be considered at the next meeting **Action Agenda 27th January**

Following discussion, it was agreed PAC members would offer effective support to their areas by:

- Making contact with existing groups in their link area – see papers circulated for the meeting on 13th October and the 3 Churches Directory
- Listening to group members
- Keeping in touch regularly to maintain relationships
- Asking group members how progress can be made and identifying any resources needed and gaps in activity
- Identifying challenges or barriers in discussion with group members to find ways forward

Action: All Members to make contacts and to report briefly in writing ahead of each PAC meeting on activity undertaken. Reports to be sent to ET for compilation into a single document to be tabled and noted at the meeting.

5. Links with the Finance and Buildings Committees of the Parishes

Links confirmed as

- Karen Sylvester St Paul's and St Brigid's
- Carmel O'Grady: Christ the King

The Committees report direct to MJ so no reports to the PAC required. Purpose of the links to keep the 3 Groups informed of each other's activity.

6. Proposed Development Priorities

Following discussion four main development priorities were agreed.

- Spirituality and adult formation
- Catechesis
- Youth and teen engagement
- Schools

KOB pointed out the need to ensure the wellbeing of and support for volunteers to avoid burnout. He also underlined that people are motivated by having a clear underlying purpose.

Spirituality and Adult Formation

PM commented that any resources we can offer in support should be rooted in Jesus — He is our reason for reaching out.

ET commented that this was an underdeveloped area of activity in our churches. There were one or two groups running in the areas of prayer and scripture study. At the recent Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, there had been a presentation on prayer, one of the key pillars set by the Archbishop for diocesan development. This and the subsequent discussion had offered ideas about possible prayer initiatives.

Action ET to circulate the prayer presentation and draft minutes of the Diocesan meeting.

Catechesis

The following points were made in discussion

- CM: commented that there had been a noticeable drop in numbers of confirmation candidates – previously identified as a concern by Christ the King PAC - strengthening links with the schools (especially Corpus Christi HS) a priority in this context.
- CP: mentioned that High Schools are heavily focused on GCSE preparation and remain deeply engaged in Religious Education, Prayer, and Worship, while also striving to nurture Catholic life and mission. Although the sacraments are taught within the school setting, parents remain the primary educators in the faith. The parishes should encourage and support them to take an active role in catechesis.
- ET: mentioned that the 3 Churches Liturgy Group had for some time raised concerns about catechesis – particularly around the training of and support for catechists, noting also the importance of parish celebrations of the sacramental programmes and the need to involve parents. She proposed a session with catechists early in the new year to hear about their experiences and explore the potential for development. She also shared information from a recent webinar on Baptism preparation which emphasised that parents are often not drawn into parish life and often “lost” after the baptism with no invitation to engage further – for example through pre-school friendship groups. Sacramental preparation programmes could be more joined-up, engage parents and better use available resources.
- KOB highlighted the importance of sharing faith when working with children and young people. Research indicated that an integrated approach is required as nurturing faith is most effective when strong links exist between home, school and Parish.

Action ET to support KOB in setting up a half-day session in the New Year for catechetical teams (baptism, first communion, confirmation, RCIA) to listen to their experiences, understand more about their needs and consider future development – particularly engaging parents.

Youth and Teen Engagement

The following points were made in discussion:

- HA: need to create engaging activities for parents and children, often easier with younger children. As children grow, schoolwork and other commitments take priority, and church life is less appealing to teenagers. If church is experienced as dull, young people will naturally look elsewhere. It is important that they come to know God through experiences of joy and fun. She shared information about the Orthodox Coptic Church and their success in bringing people of all ages together and would share contact information with RS so that he could explore their approach.
- KOB: Attracting people through fun activities and big events can be effective, but what truly sustains involvement is purpose. Engagement often fades once the event is over. The challenge is to work with clear purpose and to awaken values in children. When these values are nurtured, they will naturally be drawn to participate and parents are more likely to care and commit.
- The link between confirmation and spiritual growth was also discussed, with emphasis on helping parents understand their role in guiding their child's journey.
- ET: pointed out the current absence of focus in the 3 Churches on justice, peace and sustainability issues. CP: Agreed these were areas motivating young people.
- KOB: Mentioned the *Live Simply* initiative for parishes and schools as one approach.
- CM: Mentioned the long-standing success of the junior youth club at Christ the King, which has attracted large numbers of young people but the engagement has not been channelled into long-term faith-sharing. He also reflected that parishes such as St Peter's and St Joseph's which are close to the university and UHW, are blessed in having as parishioners' young adults who choose parish involvement over chaplaincy engagement and are able to find others to succeed them when they move on. Our parishes do not have such opportunities. He suggested inviting the new Diocesan Director of Youth Mission, Fr Matt Roche Saunders, to speak about his vision and how it might apply in our context.

Action: CM to invite Father Matt Roche Saunders to the next meeting to share his vision and how it might apply to our context.

Action: RS to explore what lessons might be learnt from the experience of the Orthodox Coptic Church.

7. Safeguarding

RS Informed the group that Safeguarding would be a standing item at every meeting because of its significance.

Members of the group agreed that safeguarding was everybody's responsibility and Archdiocesan policies needed to be followed.

RW would link with the safeguarding leads and members of the PAC should inform him of any concerns they had.

8. Communications

Website, newsletter, announcements, social media

RS advised had had a useful meeting with Simon Williams, responsible for the newsletter and website, about upgrading both. The website already held a lot of useful content which could for example be linked to prayer initiatives such as a “2-minute snapshot of prayer” on YouTube. Issues to be considered were whether communication was pitched at the right level and is engaging enough to attract people.

HA: Noted that people often listen more readily to those of the same age. Different age groups could be involved to make communication more accessible.

COG: suggested looking at Albany Road Baptist Church website which she felt was a good example in terms of accessibility.

KOB commented that communication isn’t just about presenting information — it’s about creating pathways for people. We need to ask: where are people, and how can we open different ways for deeper engagement? It’s about how people relate.

CM commented that short notices at the end of Mass are a direct way of letting people know what’s happening. Notices are given at Christ the King and St Pauls at the start of weekend Masses; there is no consistent arrangement at St Brigid’s.

Communication in relation to the PAC’s work

On the matter of communicating the PAC’s own activity, the following points were made in discussion

- ET advised that approved minutes of meetings would be uploaded to the website. She also proposed that after each meeting there should be a short synopsis of the key matters discussed included in the newsletter.
- PM suggested keeping in contact as a group to share notices, reminders for meetings and requests for help through a WhatsApp group.
- PM raised the question of how people would know who the members of the PAC are and what it does. RS responded that members needed to make contact with those working in the areas they were linked with.
- ET: commented that once the PAC’s website page was set up, members’ names and photos would be posted to enhance visibility.

Actions: CP to set up WhatsApp Group – PAC members to send their phone numbers to ct.power@btinternet.com

Action: ET to provide a synopsis for the newsletter of key issues discussed, after each meeting

Action: RS, ET and CP to work on setting up the PAC’s website page

9.. Diocesan Pastoral Council and Deanery Pastoral Advisory Council Reports

RS and ET had attended the Deanery PAC meeting on 22nd November.

Key issues discussed were

- delivery of baptism preparation across parishes in the deanery – lack of consistency and absence of preparation in some places were apparent – ET would work with a small group to pull together a report for the next Deanery meeting in January.
- use of the Welsh language, with encouragement to include some Welsh in communications and in the liturgy. A book of hymns in Welsh was provided for parishes to make use of. ET had approached Fr Peter to encourage him to use some Welsh language during his celebrations of Mass in the 3 Churches – perhaps MJ and AB could do likewise.

Minutes of the meeting would be circulated to PAC members once approved.

ET had attended the Diocesan Pastoral Council on 4th October – see agenda item 6 (Spirituality and Adult Formation) above.

10. Any other business

SR mentioned that in response to the invitation in the newsletter to parishioners to raise any issue they wished the PAC to consider, a parishioner had raised with her the growing need for older parishioners to have lifts to Mass. While recognising the need, the consensus was that this needed to be addressed by each church community in relation to specific requests for help.

11. Matters to be regarded as confidential None

12. Time and date of the next meeting

Tuesday 27th January 2026 at St Pauls Church 7:30pm

Future meetings

- Tuesday 24th March 2026 7:30pm at St Brigid's
- Tuesday 19th May 2026 7:30pm at Christ the King
- Tuesday 30th June 2026 7:30pm at St Paul's

Closing Prayer led by CM.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm