

**DRAFT MINUTES OF FINANCE AND ASSETS COMMITTEE of the  
ARCHBISHOPS COUNCIL held on 3 February 2026 at Diocesan  
House, Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury CT1 1NQ**



**Present:**

The Archdeacon of Ashford, Darren Miller (DM)
The Archdeacon of Canterbury, Will Adam (WA)
Tony Richter (Chair) (TR)
The Archdeacon of Maidstone, Estella Last (EL)
Jack Fellows (JF)

**In attendance:**

Iain Blythe (IB)	Diocesan Secretary
Natalia Olszewska (NO)	Director of Finance
Richard Braddy (RB)	Bishop's Chaplain (joined at 10.30)
Sara Endicott-Clarke (SE-C)	Head of Finance
Orla Garrett (OG)	Head of Media & Engagement

Items for Discussion		Action
-	<b>WA opened the meeting with a prayer</b> TR welcomed EL to her first F&A meeting.	
1	<b>Apologies for absence</b> +R Hudson-Wilkin, Quentin Roper, Caroline Highwood, Shirley Leslie	
2	<b>Conflicts of Interest &amp; Declaration of Interest</b> None declared.	
3	<b>Minutes of the F&amp; A Meeting held on 4 November 2025</b> The minutes were approved, subject to clarifications on Item 6 regarding Ignite funding requests. It was noted that the minutes should state that the Committee recommends for approval to Archbishop's Council for the extension of funding to Aylesham and new Ignite plants but cannot approve such funding directly.	
4	<b>Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of 4 November 2025</b> Natalia updated the Committee on the longstanding query regarding Church and Society funds. Rochester Diocese has confirmed the remaining funds belong to the Diocese and £10,000 is available for allocation. Committee members decided that we could allocate these funds to Social Justice Network whilst reducing the annual grant from CDBF.  St Paul's, Boxley – awaiting update from parish and carried forward to May meeting.	<b>NO</b>

<b>5</b>	<b>Proposal for a New Diocesan Website</b>	
	<p>OG gave a detailed update on the process of selecting a new website provider and how the decision has been reached. The review included consultation across all diocesan teams. Accessibility and security compliance were a significant criteria for the providers. Shortlisted providers included Creative Stream, Ink &amp; Water and The Developer Society.</p> <p>The recommended provider, Ink &amp; Water, offers industry-standard functionality, better flexibility, and lower cost with the chosen Option 1 of the proposal costing £27,600 inc VAT. Some concerns around search functionality and content management were raised but considered manageable.</p> <p>OG asked for The Committee’s approval to recommend the provider to be approved by ABC. Positive response was given.</p> <p>OG would report back at future meetings regarding the effort required from departments during implementation and working group.</p>	<b>OG</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Insurance renewals</b>	
	<p>A report had been shared of the Board’s Insurance Policies which had fallen due for renewal on 1 January 2026 with a breakdown of the policies and premiums due.</p> <p>Approval was agreed.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Property Update</b>	
	<p>IB provided an update on property management, staffing and structural changes.</p> <p>Michael Keeler- Walker will temporarily oversee property management, with a slight salary uplift to align with department-head level. IT is expected to move out of the department in future.</p> <p>Discussion took place about the various maintenance issues reflecting historic underinvestment, especially in long-tenured properties and the need for improved oversight and budget reporting with the establishment of a new Property Committee which would report to the Finance and Asset Committee.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Risk Asset Register</b>	

	<p>Committee reviewed updates to the register.</p> <p>TR raised the issue of Ransomware and Cyber-risk and the increasing prevalence and concern. Whilst this is currently covered indirectly under existing risk items it is not explicitly.</p> <p>Discussion took place including data redundancy, cyber-insurance, contingency planning, salary payment risk, and recovery procedures.</p> <p>The Committee agreed ransomware should be more explicitly addressed.</p> <p>The ICT Board would review the ransomware risk, recovery protocols, and propose whether a new separate risk should be added, or existing items strengthened. A possible IT presentation at the May Away Day was suggested.</p>	<b>NO</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	<p><b>November management accounts and cashflow</b></p> <p><b>Income</b> NO reported the November YTD deficit of £577k with £8,516k income and £9,093k expenditure. Overall, YTD November total income is £447k lower than budgeted and this is mainly due to lower than budgeted parish share offset by higher than budgeted residential rent.</p> <p>£894k of Linc funding came in January 2025 and £847k has been allocated to parishes with the remaining amount allocated at the end of the year.</p> <p><b>Expenditure</b> Overall, YTD November expenditure is £27k underspend to budget.</p> <p><b>Parish Share – December 2025</b></p> <p>£7,829k of parish share had been requested at the beginning of 2025. YTD to November £5,861k had been received, which is 75% of the full amount (11/12 would have been 92%) and in monetary terms it is £1,316k below budget for end of November.</p> <p><b>Audit timetable and update</b> NO updated the Committee explaining that subsidiary draft accounts are almost complete with minor checking ongoing. Access to the dashboard has been given so draft accounts can</p>	

	<p>now be uploaded ready for auditors to review. Main accounts are more complex due to labour-intensive expenditure reconciliations but it is planned that draft accounts will be circulated early rather than waiting for Synod and will be shared with the Committee at the Away Day. The Committee were advised of the progress for the de-registration of VAT.</p> <p>NO asked the Committee's approval to transfer £1.2m of funds held in CCLA General Fund back our current account when needed. Approval given.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Parish Share Review and Consultation</b>	
	<p>NO updated the Committee on the upcoming parish share consultations and a paper was shared giving details of the background to parish share and the aims of the two sessions to be held on 5 February and 16 April with the plan to have a proposal to present to Synod in July. The first session will be a review of the advantages and disadvantages of the current method and will focus on listening to the participants whilst the second session will look at the analysis offered by national church bodies and begin to consider an alternative hybrid system that has parish ownership.</p> <p>Members of Synod, Clergy, PCC and Deanery Treasurers and PCC members have been invited to attend two online meetings with the objective to improve Parish Share allocation across the diocese. High level of engagement received with 31 have signed up for the sessions.</p> <p>No explained significant disparities now exist between deaneries compared with 2020 baselines and there are risks of undermining collegiality if deaneries are left to negotiate unevenly.</p> <p>Discussion took place about the importance of clear communication about what Parish Share funds and avoiding systems that create competition between parishes.</p> <p>NO will update the Committee at the Away Day meeting in May following the consultations.</p>	<b>NO</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Governance Review</b>	
	<p>IB updated the Committee explained that the direction of travel for the Governance Review was approved at Archbishop's Council. The next step will be to report to Synod in March with focus on areas including representation, oversight structures and improved clergy input into property matters. Terms of reference for new structures are drafted.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	

	<p><b>Net Zero Funding</b></p> <p>The Committee was updated on the Net Zero projects and a paper provided details of the Net Zero grant funding and applications to support the work of this department in partnership with Rochester diocese.</p> <p>Net Zero Adviser will be invited to the Away Day in May.</p> <p><b>Removals Arrangements</b></p> <p>The benefits of implementing a removals policy with a preferred supplier (Bearsby) in conjunction with Rochester was outlined in a report provided to the Committee. The Committee requested clarity on the contract term, a break clause and the implications if one diocese withdraws.</p> <p>To be carried forward to next meeting.</p> <p><b>Clergy Pension Update</b></p> <p>The Committee were informed of the updates from the Church of England Pensions Board and discussion took place on the implications for diocesan finances, workforce planning and housing.</p> <p>Subject to General Synod approval in February 2026, significant improvements to clergy pension benefits are planned from 1 April 2026 which will be implemented without additional contributions from dioceses as the employer contribution rate will reduce to 21% of the current year's National Minimum Stipend.</p> <p>The National Pensions Board is introducing regional advisors and support resources including its commitment to provide ongoing retirement housing.</p> <p>The Committee discussed reinstating diocesan retirement seminars on 'ending well'. Further discussion highlighted benefits of improved retirement planning for clergy well-being and transition.</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> May Away Day</p>	<p><b>SE-C</b></p>
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