

Draft Minutes of the BEACHAMWELL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**held on Tuesday 5th May 2026
at 6.00pm in the Beachamwell Village Hall.**

Present: Cllr Diana Lambert, Sarah Hunt Parish Clerk.
Five residents of the Parish.

1. Diana Lambert - Chairman of the Parish Council – welcomed those present to the meeting.
2. The minutes from the last Annual Parish Meeting on 11th March 2025 were AGREED as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.
3. Reports:
 - 3.1 Mr Peter Berendt – an update on the works at St Mary's Church.
There is a faculty application in with the diocesan chancellor that will take the refurbishment to completion. Historically it was envisaged that faculties would continue to be applied for on a phased basis, but following instruction from the chancellor all works have now been applied for.

This was suggested as a way forwards to streamline the process as historically the Chancellor's office received a few objections on subjects that were not the subject of the application before them, thus creating repeated delays.

The main issue addressed by these objections to a faculty was the desire of those objecting for toilets to be provided within the fabric of the church.

This project continues to be driven by members of the Parish freely giving of their time, the Parochial Church Council has been meeting

more than once a month to drive the project forward, which is a large commitment for all members.

There are 7 reported objections to the current application and the PCC are waiting to hear from the diocesan registrar regarding the detail. The PCC will have 28 days to rebut the objections. The chancellor will then make a judgement on the faculty before him.

During a visit in April 2025 the insurance company (Ecclesiastical Insurance group), were accompanied by a Kings Council lawyer (KC) to provide them with legal advice. He confirmed that in not providing modern facilities within the church no Statutory Acts are being contravened. This remains the restoration of an ancient building rather than a new build.

The KC went further and wrote a letter of support of the PCC's plans as part of their application, quoting many cases where objections on such a basis had been overruled. As soon as the faculty is obtained work can recommence.

The internal plastering will take some time to dry out, slowly – with an estimated 6 tonnes of water needing to evaporate.

Should the faculty be approved before the end of summer 2026 it is envisaged that the Church will be completed within a 2-year period.

79 people attended the 2025 carol service and the electoral role for the Parish has now doubled and it has 34 members – the attendance of the monthly Saturday morning service has increased by 2 regular members.

There has been considerable work to address disabled access which, within the small footprint of the church, has been a challenge. The preferred solution has been to raise the whole floor and the sanctuary floor by 250mm. The issue of covering the feet of the columns has been overcome by leaving them at the original depth, with space around them and Perspex covers over that area so they remain visually accessible.

The electricity is being reconnected to a temporary box to enable the contractors to access mains supply.

Windows: The plain glass is done and is awaiting fitting (once plastering cured) – the stained glass windows have not yet been constructed as the East windows are part of the current faculty, it will take 6 months to construct each window and then some 2 weeks

onsite to fit each. The windows cannot be fitted prior to the lime plaster drying as this could slow the process.

The bench pews will be moveable, and there will be carver arm chairs at the rear of the church. The pulpit is not being replaced (it was Jacobean and originally a donation from another church) – Prince Charles (as was) is the last person known to have used it (in 1999). The pipe organ is not being replaced as it was considered too big for the space. Savings on such items are being approved by the Insurers EIG to offset other costs/improvements to the refurbishment.

The new altar will be a simple table with seasonal cloths as before and all woodwork will be of light oak colouring.

The base of the tower will continue to be the 'not vestry' and storage area.

There will be a new ladder in the base allowing access/viewing of the bell tower and roof trusses – this will allow tours for interested persons.

The old font did not survive – a new font will be fashioned by stonemasons, but will be sited by the South west Side window No.5 so that the light bathes the font – it is hoped in time this will be replaced with a stained glass window giving a coloured light onto the font.

- 3.2 Mr Malcolm Warner – a report on behalf of the Village Hall.
The hall continues to be used regularly by village and out of village groups.

Last year we invested in 3 new easy access benches and were given 2 more new benches for outside which are well used at pop up pub and other summer events. We had to close the play area due to its poor rospa report, it is 20 years old and past repairing.

We have recently started consulting villagers and users of the play area as we will need to gain grants for its replacement which will cost £40 to £60k. Justin is spear heading the grant process and once we have enough data to support past and future usage he will be submitting grant applications, we are grateful for him doing this challenging task.

We need to maintain the structure of the building for future users so recently the hall floor was sanded and refinished and next Sunday we will be repainting the interior walls of the hall so please bring a paintbrush and roller and come and join us. We will also be replacing

the curtains and some updating to the front of the bar area over the summer.

Pop Up Pub continues to be popular and some committee members are putting on more events with outside catering and music. We also have organised an evening with a local medium and recently a days painting lessons which were both well attended.

The fete will be coming up in September and as usual we will need the support of the village in the set up , running and coming to this event.

Lastly we desperately need a treasurer and a secretary. Neither position have been permanently filled for many years and this cannot continue.

4. To note that open gardens is 7th June 2026 from 12 to 4pm.

The meeting closed at 6.46pm.