

CROFT with YARPOLE & LUCTON APCM Minutes

17th MAY 2026 at 4pm: St Leonards

Present: Rev. Matthew Burns, Jane Higgins, Morwenna Lloyd, Rose Jenkins, Miriam Graham, Val Ainsworth, Carol Clare, David Nightingale, Gordon Ewing, John Vaux, Richard Fletcher, Sue Smith, Caroline Seaman

Apologies: Anna Morley, Peter Russell, Sue Russell

A service was held prior to the meeting

Annual Meeting to Elect Churchwardens

Minutes of the 2025 meeting were accepted.

Nominations for the re-election of our Churchwardens Jane Higgins and Anna Morley carried. Proposed by Sue Smith & seconded by Caroline Seaman.

However, Anna would like to step down, but will carry on until a successor is found. Likewise, Jane has health issues. A discussion followed whereby Matthew stated that Church wardens don't need to be at all the services as sacristans are present to cover them and fill out the register, in the vestry etc. MB will speak to AM.

Croft Church has an on-going issue with the plaster falling off and the inevitable workload associated! Further discussion needed.

The rota of services is produced by the Deanery.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2025 APCM were accepted as an accurate record

2. Electoral Roll: 33

3. Annual Report of APCM presented and accepted. Attached as Appendix A.

4. Treasurer's Report read by Sue Smith and presentation of accounts. Accepted and attached as Appendix B (also posted on Yarpole Group website). Thanks given to SS.

A discussion followed as to how to raise awareness of need both for regular givers and community help, to carry out jobs/roles; there is no requirement to be a church goer! RF reminded us not to forget Lucton. Also a suggestion by CC, to ask for legacy in wills. A "Friends of Croft with Yarpole and Lucton" was another idea. All these could be advertised in The Parishoner and Parish website. Further discussion needed.

5. Election to the Parochial Church Council all members re-elected. Val Ainsworth, Richard Fletcher, Miriam Graham, Jane Higgins, Anna Morley, David Nightingale, Caroline Seaman & Sue Smith (who would like to retire as Treasurer, this year).

Gordon Ewing continues as SLM rep to the PCC. Eligibility forms have been signed.

6. Election to the deanery Synod Richard Fletcher, elected unanimously.

7. Appointment of Financial Examiner for 2026 John Langley has agreed to serve another year and was approved unanimously.

8. Election of Lay Co-Chair Jane Higgins, approved unanimously.

9. Safeguarding Report Jane Higgins reported that all on the PCC have been DBS checked and initial training has been completed. There have been no safeguarding issues reported. We follow the Church of England Safeguarding Policy.

10. AOB

- Carol Clare asked for all 25/26 PCC minutes to be posted on the Yarpole Group website. CS will forward them to RJ.
- Carol Clare advised us that she, Mike and Helen Norris have been documenting the graves in the church graveyard (some have no demarkation), as well as updating the burial ground. This hasn't been done since 2007. Research through Hereford Archives has resulted in a "Yarpole Burial Register 1813 - 1877" which is on the bier in St. Leonard's Church. This links in with 2 folders already there, plus the vestry burial records. MB will ask the Diocesan Office to about land given by Sarah Guerling and Steven Challenger. CC was thanked for her efforts.
- APCM closed at 5:10pm

Appendix A

Parish of CROFT WITH YARPOLE & LUCTON PCC ACPM 17th May 2026

Annual Report 2025-6

1. Aim & Purpose

The Purpose of St Leonards PCC is to further the mission and outreach of God's Church in our Parish, as both an Inclusive and an Eco Church.

2. Objectives and Activities

These continue to be:

I. Support the Vicar, Deanery and Diocese in their Mission

II. Maintain outreach in the Parish through the sharing of our facilities with all members of our community, shop and café.

III. Provide channels for worship and spiritual communication for our community

IV. To raise the required funds to stay operational

3. Achievements and Performance

I. There has been a full programme of services across St. Leonard's in Yarpole and St. Michael's at Croft. This has included Clergy led services on 1st – 3rd Sundays and Community led 4th Sunday services every month, plus seasonal services. This year there has been an additional clergy led Celtic worship on the afternoon of 3rd Sundays

II. St. Leonard's Management continues to run and enhance the fabric and facilities of the Yarpole Church. The PCC works closely with SLM; Gordon Ewing is their representative who attends PCC meetings.

III. The PCC has had a full membership of 11 for most of the year, however Sandy Ewing has resigned for personal and health reasons and has been thanked for her support of the PCC; we wish her well. We have welcomed Anna Morley, as Church Warden, to work alongside Jane Higgins.

IV. Outreach activities have included: 1. Cafe Church discussion groups on 2nd and 4th Monday evenings in the Cafe 2. Be Still reflections taking place on the 1st Weds of the month which has been well supported and facilitated by a rota of volunteers, to whom we're very grateful 3. We have continued to liaise with Orleton and Eye Parishes with shared courses and better communication 4. A Lent course was run by Matthew.

4. Other events

- Vida Vojic, with glass harp concert, was well attended
- Mine Advisory Group (MAG) table top sale raised £450
- The Crib Festival was supported by many/varied crib donations and a huge success with viewers
- "Made in HR6" was well supported in terms of stall holders (stalls in St. Leonard's and The Bell) plus plenty of customers
- Carol singing was held in the "The Bell" pub, due to adverse weather conditions.

5. The Churchyard is professionally mown March to October and this is jointly financed between the PCC, SLM and the Shop. In addition, plant maintenance and clearing is provided by two groups of volunteers on each side of the main path. The Burial Ground is also professionally mown March to October with the Parish Council making a significant financial contribution towards the cost of this. In the Burial Ground the Adopt A Grave scheme members undertake care of neglected graves. David Nightingale continues to oversee the care of each site.

6. Financial review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £25500, a decrease on 2024 of almost £1700. This in the main is due to the reduction in monthly covenants, standing orders and in turn the reduction on the HMRC Gift Aid funds.

- I. Income from Regular Givers was £6225, down on the previous year, and representing 24% of our unrestricted income. Funds from donations through the contactless machines totalled £4120 with 75% (£3092) being from Croft and 25% (£1028) from St Leonard's. Cash donations totalled £3789 with the split 16% St Leonards, and 84% Croft. Gift Aid is recoverable on these donations and the total HMRC Gift Aid and Gasds refund amounted to £4063, including Gift Aid recoverable on Regular Givers donations. HMRC recoverable Gift Aid and GASDS was down on 2024 by £500, in part as a result of reduced regular givers.
- II. Unrestricted spending amounted to £22241, with the main outlay being Parish Offer and Team Ministry expenses amounting to £9722. An additional £2000 was paid out to SLM in support of the automatic doors.
- III. The net result for the year on unrestricted funds was a plus of £5259. Restricted income amounted to £8646 with £2090 being designated. Restricted expenditure was £7541.
- IV. Held in the current account are restricted and designated funds for Croft totalling £2894 and further restricted funds totalling £8139 leaving £12248 for general expenses.
- V. We will look to transfer further funds into the deposit account while interest rates offer better returns. In 2025 a further £10000 was transferred to the deposit account, £3300 for Croft and £6700 for general funds.
- VI. The deposit account now holds restricted funds of £14000 and designated funds of £26300 specifically for Croft and a further £25457 for general expenses.
- VII. *The works carried out at Croft in 2022 still have a retention invoice that will be due when the architect signs off the work as complete and all snagging issues are sorted. Funds for this are in the restricted funds in the Deposit account.*

7. Plans for 26-27

- Development of spiritual posters for display

8. Risk Management

Our 3 main challenges are:

I. Finding new recruits for the PCC

II. Continued support and management of Croft Church; maintenance challenges of falling plaster and uneven floor

III. Finding new ways of Outreach

9. Structure Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. We are exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission. The appointment of members is conducted in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Other points of note are:

I. We have 5 PCC meetings per year.

II. Revd Matthew Burns continues as our Chair whilst also being responsible across multiple Parishes. Our Lay Co-Chair is Jane Higgins.

III. We have 2 Church Wardens; Jane Higgins & Anna Morley. Jane has served as our representative to the Deanery Synod

IV. Our accounts are inspected.

V. The physical management of the Building is now the responsibility of St. Leonard's Management.

11. Administrative Information

Croft with Yarpole and Lucton PCC, St Leonard's Church, Green Lane Yarpole HR6 0BB

PCC Members for whole year:

Jane Higgins - Church Warden

Anna Morley - Church Warden

Sue Smith - Treasurer

Caroline Seaman - Secretary

David Nightingale - Burial Ground

Jane Higgins & Anna Morley - Electoral Roll

Richard Fletcher - Joint Council Rep & Deanery Synod Rep (from July '26)

Miriam Graham - Member

Val Ainsworth - Safeguarding

Gordon Ewing - SLM rep

There are 33 members on the electoral roll at 31st March 2026.

Appendix B

Treasurer's Report - Year ending December 2025 - APCM - May 2026

A copy of the 2025 accounts is available at the back of the church.

I have re-read the report I did for this time last year and I could just re-issue it changing the date and a few figures but that's not cricket, is it? In the Annual report, I have broken down figures, percentages, advised on increased and decreased income and expenditure, but the treasurer's report is more than that, it is an overview on how we are doing, not just figures. So how to say it differently?

Yarpole is an ageing population, and I include myself in the ageing and the Yarpole, and as a consequence we find our **regular income** changes as people move away or move on to pastures new. But the church is a constant, always here, always available, always open. And even though the maintenance and running costs are handled by the SLM, for the 'church' to be able to offer services, pastoral care, drop-in sessions and additional events, we need funds, we need **regular givers**. An additional and continuing expense in 2025 was the mowing of the verges at St Leonard's, a decision that was taken and judging by the comments received a decision well made. Thank you to the SLM for their financial support of this decision. There are a lot of unsung heroes when it comes to the churchyard, from the villagers who look after the 'nectar bar', and the volunteers who mow the paths, and the volunteers who do regular mowing sessions and the annual tidy up of the whole churchyard. And in the burial ground, we cannot forget the Adopt a Grave team, who have selflessly taken on the care of older graves whose occupants have no local or in some cases no living relatives. Hats off to the volunteers. If you can, find time to walk around the burial ground, it is well worth it. As a PCC we have to make a decision of how best to spend our money, without the volunteers, our expenses would be much higher and that would need to be offset against a reducing number of **regular givers**.

We are grateful to the SLM, they handle so much, from the day to day running costs, making sure that the fabric of the building is in good order, that the paths are safe in bad weather. The list goes on. But we are two sides of the same coin, we are not independent of each other. You can't have one without the other. And without the SLM and the PCC, you wouldn't have the shop. The shop is quite a separate entity. Located within the church, but independent of it, using the premises but without the responsibility of repairs. That said, the shop does pay for its own utilities. So, a unique set-up really.

St Michael's, Croft is a different set up again, with all the maintenance, utilities and ministry falling to the PCC. Again, we are grateful to the National Trust, who maintain the outside area, and, on occasions, lock and unlock the building for us.

So how are our funds held? One bank account serves all. The contents from Croft Wall box, the donations from the St Leonard's contactless machine, the cash in the wall boxes, the collections and the **regular givers** all go into the one bank account. We do separate certain incomes and expenses by having restricted funds. The YGPC gives us a grant towards our mowing costs, it is separated out and kept specifically for burial ground expenses, not the churchyard. Funds that come into Croft go into the same bank account, but are logged as income for Croft. We, as a PCC, decide to treat some of the Croft money that comes in as designated, setting the funds aside in case we have a major expense at Croft, but they are still in the same bank account. And so on.

A round of applause for everyone who supports us in any way, either by dropping your spare coins in our wall boxes, donating funds following a sale of items or by coming along to our fundraising events. The plant stall raised £810, and a late amount of £72.48 came in in 2026, so thank you to anyone who donates plants, and buys plants. And a thank you to the Yarpole Group Parish Council for their donation towards the Burial Ground expenses.

Assigned fees, for life events, funerals, weddings and baptisms accounted for just over £2500. I'm not very good at sales pitches, but for us to be here for you when you need us, we need you to be here for us now. If you think you could become a **regular giver**, please see me at the end and I will talk through the

options.

Service collections were down in 2025 and with a dwindling congregation we really could use some more **regular givers**.

Gift Aid and Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS) brought in just over £4000, always useful, but also down on last year.

Our contactless machines do pay for themselves, albeit the Yarpole one is free and the Croft one has a larger footfall with its location in the National Trust grounds

We are still of the opinion that **regular donations** is the best way forward, a **regular donation** to the church could be likened to the standing charge on your utilities bill. We all have to pay a standing charge to ensure future security.

The future of the church is not just about finances, important though that is, it is just as important to be offering something for all. The Be Still service continues to be popular, as does the Celtic service held in an afternoon. Our Café Church, so named because we meet in the café, started as a Lent program four years ago and just never stopped. Harvest and Christmas Carols around the Tree are well attended and the Christingle service alongside the Crib Festival was also well received.

Finding a way of delivering what you want alongside what we can do requires us to work together on finding solutions. Please talk to any of the PCC members if there are things you would like to see, things that we can try to offer alongside the services already in place.

The eagle eyed among you will have noticed that I have used the word 'regular' at least **eight** times, **nine** if you count this last one.

Late update.

Despite the recent repair works at Croft, some of the render on the west side of the church has fallen away and we are currently in discussions with the architect, the builder and the diocesan solicitor on the best way forward for repair and at the least costs to ourselves. We may have to dip into those restricted funds sooner than we would like. If you would like further information on this, please talk to any PCC Member.