

Meeting Notes of Christ Church Council

Wednesday, 4th February 2026 at 7.30 pm in Christ Church Mews

Present: Heather Smith (Incumbent, Chair), Isobel Powell, Jane Nicholson, Maggie Willans, Emma Elliott (Clerk), Sarah Kerr, Judith Bishop, Djemila Cope, Sarah Jones, David Rawlings.

Opening Prayer

Heather opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. **Apologies** were received from Nicky Mathiason, Lucy Humbert, Morny Davison.

2. Meeting Notes of the last meeting

The meeting notes from the last meeting were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Maggie, Seconded: Judith

3. Matters Arising

3a. Informal Talks

It was agreed that it's sensible to postpone these until summer, when the turnout is likely to be better. A few more names were put forward to Heather for possible speakers.

3b. Church Garden

No progress has been made on plans for the church garden. Heather has it on her list to convene a meeting with the resident of the adjacent house, who makes use of the garden and does some maintenance. Sarah K reported that the roses have been pruned.

3c. Inclusive Church

The application to join Inclusive Church was submitted on 19th November. Christ Church is still not listed on the Inclusive church website. Emma has contacted Inclusive Church recently, via their site, to ask how long this will take. Awaiting a reply. Heather will confirm with the treasurer, Zoe Bushell, that the payment was sent. **Action: Emma and Heather**

4. Trustees' Minutes

Two sets of meeting notes from the Trustees meeting have been received since the last meeting of council and are noted. Maggie has agreed to be a Trustee, and it has been agreed that she will stand down from council at the next AGM in May.

5. Safeguarding

There was no information from our safeguarding officer or from the diocese for council to receive and note.

6. Worship

6.1 Christmas Services

The Christmas services were discussed and were well-received by all who attended. The recent Candlemas service was also mentioned, and positive feedback was noted.

At this point in the meeting, a conversation took place about candles. Following the conversation, it was agreed that the candles we buy for congregational use at candlelit services would be reviewed, following various reported issues. Heather agreed to investigate this. **Action: Heather**

6.2 Maundy Thursday

Heather asked for views on what the format of the service might take this year. Last year, members of the church joined with St Stephen's for their Agape service. In the past, we have alternated each year between a more formal service and an Agape-style event, or a Passover-style meal. No strong views were held but a couple of points were raised to note:

- We could consider a communion service but with a more informal style to our usual Sunday morning services.
- Concerns were expressed over the risk of cultural appropriation for the Passover-style event.
- If food is to be served, it is important that we ensure we cater for those who require a gluten free diet and try to cover any other dietary requirements, to avoid inadvertent exclusion of congregation members from the event.

Heather will discuss the service with the Ministry Group.

7. OTN

The last OTN service attracted very low numbers. A discussion took place about the way forward for this monthly service. Some points of note:

- at our last meeting, the view expressed and agreed upon was that new ventures can take time to get established.
- The services are important to people who might otherwise not feel confident to come to church, even when a church advertises its-self as inclusive.
- Some people need the reassurance of inclusion as something separate from a church's regular pattern of services.
- Now that the position on involving clergy from other denominations is clearer, it should be possible to start inviting clergy from elsewhere, who might attract a wider congregation.
- A suggestion was made that we could approach the new University Chaplain at the University of Bath.

These comments will be fed to Simon Tatton Brown. It was agreed that we will review OTN services in around 12 months.

8. Charities Listed for 2026

The following list has been put forward by our Charities committee:

- RUHX (Formerly “Forever Friends” Appeal (Jan/Feb)
- Children’s Hospice South West (March/April)
- (Junior Church Choice – TBC) (May/June)
- USPG Malawi Project (July/Aug)
- Blood Bikes (Sep/Oct)
- Genesis / Julian House (Nov/Dec)

All agreed this was a good list with a good mix of different charities

Proposed: Jane, Seconded: Judith

The months in which we might support each charity were discussed and agreed during the meeting.

It was agreed that in future, council should have the list of charities agreed before the end of the year.

The timetable moving forward should be to convene the working group in the September meeting and for the group to report back with a proposed list in the November meeting. Maggie agreed to put together a working document for the charities committee. Maggie was thanked for agreeing to do this.

Action: Maggie

9. Defibrillator

Trustees have taken this on and progress is being made.

10. Future Events

10.1 Museum of Bath at Work

Heather reported several exciting forthcoming events in collaboration with the Museum of Bath at Work. There are plans for a joint event in the summer, probably July, to also include St Mary’s RC church. This might take the form of a mini-fete, hopefully taking place outside, in the grounds of Christ Church and the museum. A suggestion of making more of the space in front of the museum has been put forward, possibly to include a “peace tree” and Christ Church have been invited to be involved.

The Museum of Bath at Work are planning an exhibition on faith in the city. The team from the museum started collecting ideas for the exhibition at the Inter-faith event that was held at Christ Church last November.

10.2 Interfaith Week in November

Last year’s interfaith event was well attended and well-received. The plan is to host another event this year in November, to coincide with Interfaith week. Heather would welcome any involvement from interested people in the congregation.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 Piano

A document was circulated to council members in early December – **please see appendix I**, and comments were invited by Email. Some comments were positive. A few questions were raised such as where it will be kept, how it will be used and how would it be moved. (These questions were all covered in the document that was circulated.)

A discussion took place about the fire exit that is near the piano’s proposed location. (It was not mentioned specifically at the meeting, but this matter is also covered in the circulated document.)

The trustees intend to ask for an advisor to come in and inspect the space specifically regarding safety and access to the fire door. Judith Bishop reported that some booking enquiries we receive don’t go ahead because we don’t have a piano.

At this point, a further discussion took place about the fire door, aside from the piano discussion. It was agreed by all council members that it should be unlocked during all services. This will be followed up with Angela, to ensure that it is unlocked.

Action: Heather

11.2 Flowers

Sarah K raised the topic of flowers, following the recent announcements that the use of “Oasis” flower arrangement foam will be debated at General Synod next month. (Please see article in this month’s Link magazine). It was agreed that no action need be taken by the flower team at this time, we will wait to see how this topic unfolds.

11.3 Social Media Presence

Sarah J reported that a review is planned for the church social media presence, and which platforms we should be using / not using. For example, members of council and the wider community are uncomfortable with the church’s continued presence on X (formerly known as Twitter). Sarah J will report back to council on any decisions.

Action: Sarah J

Date and time of next meeting

The meeting of council will be Thursday 23rd April at 7.30 pm in The Mews.

The meeting closed with The Grace at 9.08 pm.

Glossary

USPG	The United Society Partners in the Gospel – more info here: https://uspg.org.uk/about/
OTN	Open Table Network

Appendix I – Piano

Below: the contents of a document emailed to all council members by Heather on 08-12-2025. Council members were invited to submit comments by Email.

- Whether you think a piano is a good idea per se
- The position - with reference to how it will affect the worship space, safety, and anything else you want to comment on.
- How it would contribute to our worship
- The weight we should give to its availability for concerts
- Anything else

Submission to the Trustees of Christ Church, Bath

Proposal for the purchase of a Grand Piano

Introduction

Christ Church has a distinguished musical tradition, with a flourishing choir, versatile Organ and a varied programme of concerts and recitals. At present the church does not own a grand piano, which puts limits on both liturgical and concert opportunities. This proposal recommends the acquisition of a high-quality grand piano to enhance worship and broaden musical outreach.

Anticipated Use

It is expected that the use of such a piano would include, but not be limited to:

- The accompaniment of liturgical music when stylistically appropriate at the morning Eucharist (for example, choir anthems that are better suited to Piano accompaniment than Organ).
- The accompaniment of certain hymns at the monthly Open Table service.
- The yearly Windrush Sunday service where the music selection typically incorporates a wider range of liturgical styles.
- The yearly autumn concert series (allowing a far broader range of performances).
- The accompaniment of visiting ensembles wishing to hire Christ Church for rehearsals and/or concerts, in particular choirs (of which there are nearly 100 in Bath) or chamber music groups.
- Use by visiting recitalists.

Suggested Model/Cost

It is proposed that Christ Church acquires a reconditioned or nearly new medium-sized grand piano, for example a Yamaha C3 or equivalent. Such an instrument would be suitable for regular accompanying and would also have the dynamic and tonal range to be used for professional recitals. The estimated cost is £15,000-£18,000 and from most suppliers would include delivery, installation and the first tuning.

The following are optional (but highly desirable) additions:

- A frame for the piano to rest on to facilitate easy movement (see below) – estimated cost £600-£1000.
- A cover for the piano to provide protection from accidental damage and dust – estimated cost £500-£800.

Location

The proposed medium-sized grand piano (approximately 1.7-1.8m long and 1.5m wide at the keyboard end) will comfortably fit parallel to the front row of south-side pews (see figure 1). There would be sufficient space to allow easy access to the St Michael chapel (an arc of more than 1.8m radius) as well as clearance from the Southside fire exit. From this storage position the piano could be pulled forward for liturgical or performance-use (there is sufficient clearance to manoeuvre as far as the pulpit). It is anticipated that this arrangement would be satisfactory for the majority of the piano's use. On occasion, however, it may be desirable for the piano to be lifted up the chancel steps to a more central position. Professional consultation would be required as to a safe and practical way of achieving this.

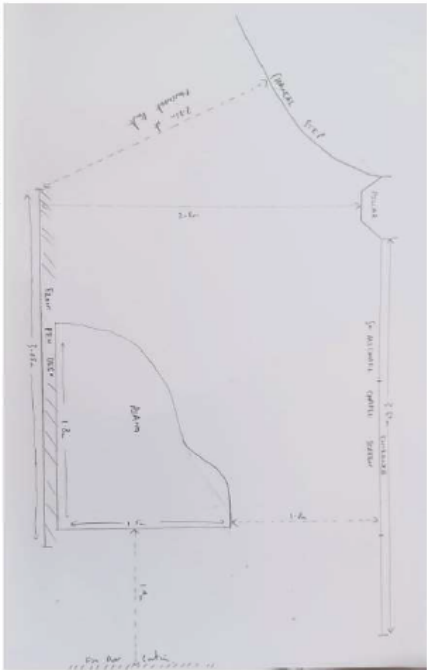


Figure 1 Proposed storage location for the piano

Ongoing Costs

The following ongoing costs are anticipated:

- Two to three tunings per year, estimated at around £100 for each visit
- Addition of the piano to the Church's existing contents insurance policy
- A more comprehensive servicing every three to five years at approximately £250-£500

It is likely that these costs would be offset from revenue generated (e.g. from a greater number and broader range of ensembles hiring the Church for events).

Fundraising

This would start with the proceeds of this year's autumn concert series and continue by encouraging further individual donations from members of the congregation. Further events could be held in the new year.

Summary of Benefits

The expected benefits to Christ Church and the local community would include:

- Enhancing worship and the liturgy
- Attracting high calibre visiting musicians and ensembles
- Expanding outreach into the local community
- Providing a valuable teaching and rehearsal resource for young musicians

Recommendation

That the Trustees approve:

- A total budget of up to £20,000 for the purchase, delivery, and initial tuning of a reconditioned or new grand piano and associated accessories as outlined above.
- Appointment of the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music to manage the selection process and report back to the trustees before final purchase.