

Minutes of the Gower Ministry Area Council Meeting

Wednesday March 19th 2025 at St. Hilary's Hall, Killay

1. PL welcomed everyone to the meeting, followed by prayers led by TA. We remembered one of the MA treasurers Lorraine Aubrey, who had recently passed away. Paul Shenston (PS) was welcomed to his first meeting of the MAC representing St. Madoc and St. Cadoc.
2. Attendance – Rev. Peter Lewis MAL (PL), Archdeacon Peter Brooks (PB), Rev. Tim Ardouin (TA), Rev. Layfetta Masih (LM), Rev. Nigel King (NK), Rev. Sue Waite (SW), Celia Hall (CH), Catherine Thomas (CT), Paul Shenston (PS), Ross Davies (RD), Peter Townsend (PT), Gill Morgan (GM), Andrew Harris-John (AH-J), David Harry (DH), Merlin Kingham (MK), Alan Glass (AG), Enid Jones (EJ), Barry Fox (BF), Pam Dennis (PD) Marian Williams (MW).

Apologies – Caroline Wassell (CW), Penny Henderson (PH), Rev. Roger Donaldson (RD), Rev. Nigel Doyle (ND), John Tucker (JT).

3. Minutes of previous meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on January 20th, 2025 were approved, proposed by PT, seconded by CT and agreed unanimously.
4. Matters arising
 - a. Lent, Easter and Holy Week updates – PL gave an update. A variety of events planned for the beginning of the week, a poster will be produced by AH-J, Good Friday – Walk of Witness in Reynoldston, events on Oxwich beach in afternoon, Holy Saturday am – Messy Church style family event with puppets at Reynoldston Village Hall, volunteers needed, hoped that Police and Fire and Rescue Service will attend. Port Eynon beach – pm. Easter Monday Reflective walk on Cefn Bryn 11:00am – 1:00pm
 - b. SPREE – July 11th – 13th TA, LM and PL will discuss what will happen. Money was obtained from the Mission Fund last year, possible donation from the GMA Magazine fund this year.
 - c. Confirmation – Sunday 30th March All Souls, Tycoch at 4.00pm. 9 young people and 1 adult being confirmed, please support. Bishop John is undertaking a prayerful walk around the Diocese and is in the Gower MA from March 24th – 30th.
 - d. Membership app – AH-J gave an update, all data for 2024 has been entered, drawing out the data from the app has been problematic. Hoped that we can draw ideas from this.
 - e. MA retreats – Friday August 29th – Sunday August 31st Update from PL, envisaged that these will be dispersed retreats at the end of the summer holiday, possibly with visiting speakers, crafts, a celebration for visitors put together in a dynamic way. The 5th Sunday will be utilised for this.
Midweek retreat at Caldey Island – update from LM, dates Monday October 6th – Thursday October 9th. 18 beds available, cost £75 per night inc food. There will be an official launch when details are available, no names will be taken in advance.

5. Wellbeing Project – PL and TA gave an update. The bid made to the Church in Wales Growth Fund was successful. There were 13 applicants for one post and 4 applicants for the other. The Project Lead and Wellbeing Chaplain were appointed on March 14th, names will be announced next week. Chloe Thomas the Creative Practitioner will return from Maternity Leave in August. The steering group – Mary Stott, Mags Attwell, Rev. Peter, Fr. Tim and David Ashelby meets quarterly and would like a representative from the MAC to join the group.
6. Charity updates – PL gave an update. Names are being updated and removing names of trustees who have stepped down. Geraldine Rees has agreed to become the MA Gift Aid secretary. She will be the named official and will collect all submissions. Hoped that this can be set up with HMRC soon.
7. 2024 Annual Report and Finances – PT and AH-J gave an update. To date, 15 churches have submitted their reports and attendance figures, hope to complete next week.
8. Finance – PT gave an update
 - a. Ministry Share – a number of cheques to clear but should be able to pay the share in full by March 31st. Only 1 church with no payment – Oxwich. Hope to take accounts to independent examiner next week.
 - b. Insurance – all previous policies have now been cancelled. All churches and halls have set up direct debits except Bishopston.
 - c. NatWest has given free banking to date, but the threshold has now been exceeded, we shall incur a 35p charge for each transaction approx 650 transactions per year, so £250 - £300 per year.
 - d. My Fund – this is not working, only PT and 3 treasurers are inputting any data. LM reported that at the last meeting of the Standing Cttee, PB had reported that it had come to a dead end. PL stated that we are now becoming noncompliant with CiW requirements. There is still nobody available to come out to provide training and treasurers must have a desktop or laptop to run the programme. AH-J is prepared to go out to support treasurers when he has received more information. A lot of money was spent on the software and its use is compulsory. The MA is paying for the software, AG suggested that perhaps the diocese should pay the cost. PL suggested that we might need a job description for a treasurer to ensure that we have compliance but recognised that it is difficult to find volunteers to become treasurers already.
 - e. PT has set up all our accounts and processes for the previous 2 years but will be stepping down in July. He suggested that there might be someone in the community with a background in finance who would be willing to undertake this role. PL and all present expressed their thanks to PT.

9. Update on communication to the Diocese

- a. PL and LM have already reported to the Standing Committee that Gower might not be able to pay its MA share. They were informed that this is non-negotiable.
- b. MAL network meeting - the diocese must do something now or it will lead to bankruptcy.
- c. NK thought that the diocese could face bankruptcy in 2 years.
- d. PT reported that there is a new set up for insurance, all churches pay, so we are charged for the transactions.

10. Treasurer at Llanyrnewydd request for retrieval of funds – PL and TA

At the meeting of the Gower Ministry Area Council on March 19th, 2025, a proposal was approved to allow the treasurer at St. Gwynour's Church, Llanyrnewydd to retrieve from the Representative Body funds released by the sale of St. Gwynour's Church Hall.

11. Stewardship campaign – NK and PL

Successful campaigns depend upon people agreeing that there is a need. Need agreement before key people are involved. Need to analyse current giving – amount, who gives, where the money comes from. In the past people have given to their local church, not the MA. We need a group of people to discuss this – increase giving, encourage move to Gift Direct, encourage direct debit, consider gifts in wills. How is contact made – letters, phone calls, village meetings.

PS explained what is happening in the three villages served by St. Madoc and St. Cadoc. Villagers have been made aware that they might lose their churches, one is Grade 1 listed, the other Grade 2. There has been a positive response to a village meeting designed to generate new ideas. Also shown a strong emotional attachment to the graveyards.

PL agreed that campaign needs to be linked to the local area and that deputations from individual congregations is important.

Possibly need a Stewardship team which individual churches can tap into, suggested Rev. Nigel King, Peter Townsend to help with analysis, Paul Shenston - people and Layfetta Masih – prayer.

12. Congregational Reports – PL

Reports received from St. David's, Wernffrwd, St. Illtyd's, Ilston, St. Cenydd's, Llangennith, St. Nicholas, Nicholaston, St. John the Baptist, Penmaen were noted.

13. Requests for Faculties

PS reported that the second request to install flood gates at Cheriton had been rejected by the DAC. PB clarified that the faculty request has not been rejected, he is a member of the DAC and they have requested more information before any decision can be made.

14. Church Reviews – PB and PL

All clergy are conducting their own reviews in their churches. PB put out a daily prayer diary at the beginning of Lent, based on the proforma, asking people what they can contribute now and in the future. He has set a Lenten challenge praying for all the churches in the South East Cluster asking, 'Where are we and what do we need to do?'

Clergy update – PL

Rev. Nigel Doyle and Archdeacon Peter Brooks are retiring. Canon Roger Donaldson and Rev. Hilary Evans are moving.

There will be three people working as part of the Wonder of Wellbeing Project.

PL stressed that we need to be in charge of the change.

GM asked for details regarding the format of the church reviews.

15. Updates from the following

- a. The Lamplighter – nothing
- b. The Gower Pilgrimage Way – new appointee to Wonder of Wellbeing Project to oversee this.
- c. Gower MA magazine – nothing
- d. Ecochurch – All Souls, Tycoch and St. Cenydd's Church, Llangennith both gained Bronze awards.
- e. Property Committee – BF, Robert Fisher (RF) and Roy Chapman (RC) went to Brecon to the Property Day event. Ecclesiastical is a not for profit organisation which funds initiatives.
- f. Health and Safety – nothing reported, PL stressed that any incident should be reported. This should be done by someone who saw what happened or was the injured party. Food Hygiene training – no date given but suggested that it should be updated every 3 years. Training courses are available free at Gower College – names to be given to AH-J.
- g. Safeguarding – We do not have a safeguarding officer in the MA.

16. AOB

Churchyard survey – no updates yet.

AH-J has been asked to prepare a list of events to be held in Gower.

Swansea Council Biodiversity Project – Some of the projects have been carried forward to 2026.

Intinct or Chalice – PL South West Gower now does both. Those wishing to instinct receive first, then they are told that the chalice is open and those wishing to receive are invited to come forward.

Blessing given by AH-J

Date of next meeting – Monday May 19th, 7:00pm at The Glebe Hall, Bishopston

The meeting closed at 9:10pm