

APCM Elections 2026

There are elections during the APCM this Sunday 31 May for both the Deanery Synod Representatives (four positions) which will be held first and then, after that ballot, for PCC membership (seven positions). This is why some candidates have put themselves forward for both positions but, of course, can be elected only to one of them.

Below are the nominees with their proposers and seconders and their personal statements.

Only those on the electoral roll and attending the meeting in person are eligible to vote and they will be handed ballot papers during the meeting.

**Ballot Paper for 5 places as Member of the PCC (for a period of three years)**

*You will be able to vote for up to five (5) only by placing an x against the name. Any ballot papers with more than seven votes will be declared invalid. The candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected.*

Name	statement		
<p><b>Sarah Clark</b> proposed Tracy McKeever seconded Jo Hines</p>	<p>I will watch, listen, and learn if elected to represent St James's Church, Piccadilly on Deanery Synod! Working together with Tracey McKeever, Deanery Synod Representative, I will try to learn from and support her as we represent the views of SJP PCC to Deanery Synod and then report back to SJP PCC. Since joining SJP as a member of the congregation in 2023 I have been moved and excited by all the myriad ways in which the church community seeks to pour out God's love in action. Being part of Weekday Welcomers and Door Welcomers has been a lovely route to getting to know SJP more deeply. █ I also volunteer for the Sunday Breakfast Club. At a recent session, as the guests talked very warmly about the Club, one guest announced happily "we know the rules, ...". The guest's remark had a strong link with a key PCC responsibility, knowing the rules! From the sidelines, I have observed that the PCC manages its extensive list of responsibilities with great skill and good grace. In the role of an ex-officio member of the PCC, as the church begins on the Wren Project pilgrimage, I would be happy to offer advice (only if needed) on fundraising and communications matters where I have previous experience. I am keen to help support SJP's role on Deanery Synod.</p>		

<p><b>Audrey da Costa</b> proposed Tracy McKeever seconded Jo Hines</p>	<p>I am applying to serve on the Deanery Synod to represent the inclusive values and diverse community at St James's, Piccadilly. Being an ethnic minority woman having worked all my life in a traditional patriarchal institution, I have experience in working collaboratively with mainstream majority views</p> <p>I regularly attend Eucharist prayers and congregational worship services.</p> <p>I am rostered and serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Outreach meals at Feast and Sunday Breakfast Club, where I host a sit down meal and conversation for homeless and low income guests of our community</li> <li>• Sunday Service Refreshments after Sunday Service for congregation and visitors to chat</li> <li>• Weekday Welcomers introducing visitors of St James's to the 17th century building with 21st century inclusive values and aspirations for future generations in the Wren project</li> <li>• Earth and Social Justice to plan and encourage education of the existential threat of our world from the climate change crisis. I'm on the Sustainability Group for reassessing how SJP can have less environmental impact.</li> <li>• I work in the gardens of St James's and St Pancras aiming to have a bio diverse planting where regulars and visitors can relax and enjoy nature in the centre of London.</li> </ul> <p>This work gives a comprehensive 'hands on' engagement with the congregation, staff, clergy, volunteers and guests at SJP. Meeting with our neighbouring parishes in the structure of the Diocese Of London and the Church of England, I could feedback opinions and views to ensure representation of all SJP in wider governance decision making within the Diocese</p>
<p><b>Abigail Le Fevre</b> proposed Tracy McKeever seconded Steven Overman</p>	<p>If you had told me a year ago that I'd end up at a Church of England parish and put myself forward for something as obtuse-sounding as Deanery Synod, I would have laughed. Yet the irony is not lost on me as I write a statement explaining why this might actually be a very good idea. While I am relatively new to St James's, I am not new to life within the Church. I come from a non-denominational evangelical background, where I was deeply involved in leading worship, youth work, and occasionally preaching. This has given me a strong foundation and appreciation for church life, and a desire to contribute to conversations about what it means to be the Church within and beyond its walls - conversations in which Deanery Synod plays a significant part. I am aware that St James's voices can sometimes feel like a minority within Synod, among those holding differing theological perspectives. Coming from a background shaped by more conservative evangelical ideas, my journey into a broader and reflective approach to church has shown me how encountering difference can deepen understanding in necessary ways. I see value in bringing that perspective to Synod, not in opposition, but as a reminder that conviction and openness can coexist. Joining Deanery Synod feels like a natural extension of this and an opportunity to represent the openness, honesty, and courage that St James's carries so well - one I consider both a privilege and a challenge worth accepting.</p>

<p><b>Tracy McKeever</b> proposed Claire Wright seconded Dee Hetherington</p>	<p>I joined SJP as a verger in 2015 and have embraced the community and core values of the church and try to embody them in everything I do. I feel as though I have found my spiritual home within the community here and continue to actively contribute to the life of the church in whatever way I can.</p> <p>With my knowledge of SJP from being both staff and a member of the congregation I already have a good understanding of how the church operates and runs day to day and also see it as a family. I have served on the Deanery Synod for 3 years and feel that I have learned a lot and have more to offer. I am also on the Standing Committee for the Synod and am making sure that SJP has more of a voice. I feel that standing again would build on the work I have done and help SJP be more vocal in the community as well as contributing experience to help the new Synod representatives in their new roles.</p>
<p><b>Patrick Wood</b> proposed Justin Blakebrough seconded Sonia Lee</p>	<p>I have been on a long and circuitous journey of faith and doubt since I was 18 and immersed in an evangelical, charismatic non-denominational house church. Over the following 45 years, that journey then took me to a leading evangelical CofE church, to the Russian Orthodox Cathedral, to trying to be an atheist (and eventually failing!), to a liberal CofE church, and to years of not going to church at all. After all this, discovering SJP three years ago was such a relief, and so exciting because I'd found a church putting into practice the values that really matter to me – genuine, non-judgemental openness, welcome and inclusiveness. These are the values I would be privileged to represent at the Deanery Synod. But my long experience before arriving here has given me some understanding of the different ways other Christians can think, so I'd bring this too.</p> <p>The work SJP does with the dispossessed and the marginalised was exactly what I wanted to help with if I could, so I have volunteered regularly as a Table Host at Feast for the last three years, and I've become a Hospitality Lead. I am also on the Steering Group of the International Group and am the Lead for our current, successful application for SJP to be recognised as a Church of Sanctuary.</p>

**Ballot Paper for 7 places as Member of the PCC (for a period of three years)**

*You will be able to vote for up to seven (7) only by placing an x against the name. Any ballot papers with more than seven votes will be declared invalid. The candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected.*

<b>Name</b>	<b>statement</b>
<p><b>Finna Ayres</b> proposed Jo Hines seconded Fiona Notman</p>	<p>Sjp has been part of my life for 40 years. It was the lunch time concerts in the 70s, various semi political meetings in the 80s. There were gaps when I was overseas but I was bought back on my return by Donald Reeves on the radio. Then then there was Hugh, Mary, Charles and now Lucy: all of them so different but along with the congregation they all brought something of God to us.</p>

	<p>I worked here for almost 15 years as your site manager, learning about the people here, the building, the neighbours. As an architect the work was an oblique but happy professional fulfilment. I was midwife to our new roof with our architect as father. I was Charles's backing group when we pursued a failed Restoration Scheme, and hence I have a special love for our successful scheme.</p> <p>My retirement was unexpectedly interrupted by being elected as a Labour councillor in Wandsworth. I knew nothing of local government processes so the learning curve was a cliff face but the 4 years were mostly exciting especially a year as Deputy Mayor. But I don't speak the same language as politicians and the time it involved took me away from SJP to an extent so I'm happy to stand down.</p> <p>Having lived long enough to see the dreams and plans of decades coming true it's time to show my gratitude to really get involved in helping run of this wonderful place.</p>
<p><b>Audrey da Costa</b> proposed Claire Wright seconded Dee Hetherington</p>	<p>I am applying to serve on the SJP PCC to support the governance and Church life of SJP.</p> <p>I regularly attend Eucharist prayers and congregational worship services at St James's, Piccadilly, and St Pancras, Euston.</p> <p>I am rostered and serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Outreach meals at Feast and Sunday Breakfast Club, where I host a sit down meal and conversation for homeless and low income guests of our community</li> <li>• Sunday Service Refreshments after Sunday Service, for congregation and visitors to chat</li> <li>• Weekday Welcomers introducing visitors of St James's to the 17th century building with 21st century inclusive values and aspirations for future generations in the Wren project</li> <li>• Earth and Social Justice, to plan and encourage education of the existential threat of our world from the climate change crisis. I'm on the Sustainability Group for reassessing how SJP can have less environmental impact.</li> <li>• I work in the gardens of St James's and St Pancras aiming to have a biodiverse planting where regulars and visitors can relax and enjoy nature in the centre of London.</li> </ul> <p>The Wren project implementation will be a time of change for the future benefits in the ministry at SJP with 'business as usual' at St Pancras. I was a qualified senior manager, at TfL, working on projects for 15 years. Having experience of finance, safety, communication meetings and accountable actions, to monitor and measure progress for improvement and safeguard against risk. The communication of PCC decisions to coordinate the two churches is central for an inclusive, welcoming church.</p>
<p><b>Tom Gidman</b></p>	<p>As we come up to the APCM, I would like to put myself forward for a second stint serving on the PCC. It's been a real joy to be part of the PCC these last three years: interesting, challenging at times and also a big learning experience. It</p>

<p>proposed Elijah Kinne seconded Felix Smith</p>	<p>means a lot to me to be able to be part of the governance process of SJP – a church I love so much and am thrilled to be getting married in too. This APCM falls at the start (more or less) of the Wren Project getting its go ahead, and it has been a massive and fundamental part of all the discussions and decisions that we’ve made in recent years. But now it’s time for it to actually happen, and I feel very strongly that I would like to continue on the PCC as the project enters this next phase. It will be really useful to have consistency and continuity as we get into the delivery phase of Wren and from a purely selfish perspective I’d love to be able to see it through as a PCC member. It’s really quite exciting!!</p>
<p><b>Graeme Jones</b> proposed Claire Wright seconded David Loyn</p>	<p>It has been a real privilege to serve on the PCC of St James’s Piccadilly over the past three years, and I would very much value the opportunity to continue in this role. During this time, I have come to appreciate even more deeply the unique witness and ministry of St James’s.</p> <p>Many of you will know me through my role as a server, where I have sought to contribute to the prayerful and welcoming life of our worship. Serving at the altar has strengthened my commitment to the community here and to the values that define St James’s.</p> <p>If re-elected, I would continue to support the PCC in its work to nurture and grow our congregation, ensuring that St James’s remains a place of radical welcome. I am passionate about helping our church be a home for absolutely everybody, where all feel valued, included, and able to encounter God.</p> <p>I would be honoured to continue serving this community and to play my part in shaping the next chapter of St James’s life.</p>
<p><b>Tracy McKeever</b> proposed seconded</p>	
<p><b>Jen Veall</b> proposed Claire Wright seconded Deborah O’Brien</p>	<p>I have been a member of St James’s congregation for 14 years and in that time, I have found both a home to grow my faith, and a community offering the gifts of fellowship and ways to try and live out shared values, from planting hedgerows to cooking breakfasts. I would like to stand for the PCC as a way to serve this community as it approaches a time of great change. I hope to bring my experience and knowledge of the SJP community, its values and missions, to help care for everyone as we move forward together, supporting both with practical matters of how we continue to be a gathered congregation, and helping as we shape our vision for the future of SJP.</p>
<p><b>Paul Vickers</b> proposed Claire Wright</p>	<p>St James’s is on the brink of more exciting times than usual even for this extraordinary Community. Raising the funds on the Wren Project has been a stunning success. Now we press the GO button.</p>

<p>seconded Gwenda Walters</p>	<p>The next stages will bring wonderful opportunities but there will undoubtedly be some challenges. I believe that I have a set of skills and experiences that could be of use as we move on to the next phase. I started my professional life as a barrister but then spent the next 40 years working at Board level in major newspaper and television companies. In my current CV I describe myself as a 'battle hardened crisis manager'. I hope that we will avoid both battles and crises, but we will inevitably face challenging financial, planning, governance and even legal challenges. I think that I could help. BUT - St James's is far more than the Wren Project. At its heart are worship, radical welcome and the spreading of the Gospel. Alongside this sit our vital Outreach, Social Justice, and Eco programmes, plus our commitment to being among the most inclusive, LGBTQ+-affirming churches in the UK. None of this must be lost. I have worshipped at St James's since 2018 and feel that I fully joined the community in late 2022. Since then, I have served on the Door Welcomers, Readers, and Intercessions rotas. I am a Kitchen Lead for FEAST. I was a Churchwarden at a previous church and would now like to be of service to St James's.</p>
<p><b>Patrick Wood</b> proposed Fiona Notman seconded Ruth Blakebrough-Miller</p>	<p>I've come to feel part of the community of St James's through the many things we do together. For me, it's most especially been through Feast, where I'm a regular Table Host and sometimes Hospitality Lead, responsible for the overall smooth running of the evening. But our Camino Group still continues to meet simply because we gain such a lot by hearing from each other. I'm also Lead for our application to become recognised as a Church of Sanctuary, which will entail a programme of things yet to be announced that we hope many of us might want to get involved with. As a self-employed musician, band leader, media composer, teacher and producer for over 40 years, I don't have corporate management experience. But what I'd seek to do if elected to the PCC is to represent us and our experiences as best I can as we leave our lovely building and move to St Pancras. I'd try to help as we find new ways to do the things, such as Feast, that make being part of this church so special and so rewarding. As a current member of the Steering group for our International Group, I'd also be another voice seeking to represent the people and the work the church does with our International Community to the PCC.</p>

Keith Best  
PCC Secretary

2805/2026