

Parochial Church Council Meeting

Monday 24 August 2026

Congregational Report

An additional meeting of the PCC was called for a specific purpose which was most important as it required the consent of the PCC as the Church's governing body to agree to complete RIBA stage 3 and move on to RIBA stage 4 design, to meet the programme timetable for the contractor procurement for works to start next year.

Revised costs have been received and further assessment for Health and Safety requirements have been done. Given the requirements of working conditions for SJP staff and living requirements of clergy, a proposal was also considered for cooling systems for both Piccadilly and Jermyn Street buildings which would be cost effective to do as part of the project rather than attempting to retro-fit later on. In the context of persistently hotter weather from now on, the PCC considered air conditioning throughout. The challenge is that air conditioning or a cooling system is currently not funded, and current priorities for the project have to be met. After discussion, the Design Team was tasked with putting forward various options such as zoning, some places having full air-conditioning installed and others with mobile units and all to include the ongoing repair and maintenance costs. These options will then be put to the PCC for final decision. Other currently unfunded items include necessary repairs to the Jermyn Street wall and Southwood Fountain. Delegation levels were agreed for the Wren Project Board on behalf of the PCC. The PCC also agreed for SJP to register for VAT (even though our commercial activity is currently below the compulsory level for registration) in order to be able to recover some £2m on the construction costs which, without registering, we should have to find in extra fundraising.

The PCC also considered a full proposal from StreetVox, a company that has been recommended to the PCC by the Project Team, following a competitive procurement process, for the sale of advertising on the hoarding that will be around the whole site during construction. The income from hoarding advertising will be what helps St James's to survive while 'on the road' as currently, something like 80% of our annual income comes from the use of our site; church, garden, courtyard and rectory, which will not be available during the construction phase of the project. The PCC met with the CEO of StreetVox directly and was very impressed by their approach and proposal. They have done this for many churches and cathedrals in Europe and throughout the UK. When terms are agreed, this will be vital income for St James's until the church re opens.

The timeline for what will happen was set out clearly, although all is subject to procurement and agreement with main contractor. Work on site is due to start July/August 2027 with completion November 2029.

Although, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the Development team led by Brian Willetts we have achieved a phenomenal success in raising funds for our original plans, as with everything we have not been able to include all that was included in the original design. The garden pavilion remains unfunded currently but sufficient groundwork will be completed in the present project so that, if a donor comes forward, we could add the pavilion at a later stage but, in the meantime, it cannot be included in the present works.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish for any clarification on the above.

Keith Best
PCC Secretary
27/08/2026