

St Mary's Pastoral Parish Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 18th April 2013

Present:

Father William (Parish Priest)
Simon Knowles (Chairman)
Cathy Binns (Support)
Mick Britton (Liturgy B)
Charlotte Burrell (Formation)
Sheila Lund (Interaction)

Jeff McGillan (Activities)
Chris Matthewman (Finance)
Martin Mayhew
Amanda Kelly (School)
Simon Stockdale (Liturgy A)
Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: none

1. **Welcome and opening prayer** led by Fr William
2. **The minutes of the meeting on 19th March 2013** were approved.

5) **Representation and web details**

ACTION: reminder for all PPC members who have not yet forwarded details to send a brief 'pen picture' (a couple of lines) and a photo (if available) to Fr William for inclusion on the website.

Other outstanding actions and matters were discussed as agenda items.

3. **Role of the PPC presidency and chair** and
4. **Composition of the PPC and clarification of terms:**

Simon Knowles clarified the role of the PPC and distributed for further information copies of *Composition of the PPC and Terms of Office*. Outline in brief:

- The PPC is primarily an advisory body to assist the Parish Priest in a wide range of parish matters. Any comments, findings or results of votes cast by the Council should be regarded as recommendations.
- Any PPC official with a particular area of representation, was encouraged to form a sub-committee (parish ministries) of key parishioners to widen feedback from their ministry group. To assist officers in forming these subcommittees Simon Knowles distributed the original list of nominations and active members from the PPC elections; it was suggested that PPC members could obtain contact details for individuals through Chris Clissit.
- The PPC would normally meet 4 times per year, with the option of further extraordinary meetings if required.
- Elections for the PPC would be held annually on the 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, with results published the following week.
- Currently some PPC posts had a shorter than usual term of office (Elected members: 1 year Liturgy A and B, 2 years Activities and Support; Appointed members: 2 years Amanda Kelly and Martin Mayhew). This was to provide a staggered change of membership, ensuring continuity of experienced representatives on the PPC.
- Consideration would be given to merging the Liturgy A & B posts at a later time.

In response to a question Fr William clarified that the 'Formation' officer was an umbrella role to bring together key people involved in a wide range of activities, all of which provided the opportunity for encouraging and supporting ongoing spiritual growth.

5. Children's Liturgy

Fr William sought feedback following the Lent introduction of restricting attendance at Children's Liturgy only to those children who had not yet received their First Holy Communion.

Fr William explained that prior to this change he had consulted with the Catechists Team, and with the Ampleforth community; but had subsequently been approached by parents concerned that the new restriction may not be the most appropriate way to encourage the spiritual growth of all children. Fr William had distributed some literature (Redemptorist publications) to the parents which he suggested could be used in preparing their children for Mass, and had also introduced further changes in the Sunday morning Mass to include children in the Gospel and homily. However Fr William also welcomed wider feedback from PPC members on this matter.

Comments expressed in the discussion that followed included:

- Charlotte Burrell noted that previously older (Yr 6-7) children had been attending the Children's Liturgy and the Liturgy Team had concerns that this older age group should really be attending Mass. However she felt that it was preferable that children attend the Children's Liturgy than not attend or engage with church at all.
- Simon Stockdale commented that he had experience of children (Yr 7-8) requesting their own special 'liturgy of the word' sessions where they felt they learned and appreciated more than attendance at the full Mass. It was however acknowledged that if such an initiative was introduced this would require a third Liturgy group (and all the attendant problems of requiring volunteers etc).
- Martin Mayhew noted that First Holy Communion was used as the point at which children could become Altar Servers, and it was arguably a theologically sound to use this as a cut-off point for children ceasing attendance at the Children's Liturgy.
- Amanda Kelly noted she had also received representation from parents at St Mary's School over this matter, and the feeling was that full attendance at Mass may not be helpful and might not 'engage' all children aged 7-8.
- Sheila Lund noted that parents with several children of different ages, especially when combined with attending the young Children's Liturgy group, may have difficulty with the supervision of children with the introduction of the new cut-off.
- Jeff McGillan noted that attendance at Mass should be a family experience and that ideally all ages would attend together throughout the whole service; and that some understanding should be extended to parents who are on their own with children of different ages where a strict demarcation line means splitting them up.
- Fr William's new initiatives in including the older children in the morning Mass (procession and proclamation of the Gospel and the calling forward of children for the homily which was tailored for children) were regarded as a welcome development.
- It was wondered if a more phased transition for attendance at the Children's Liturgy could be introduced e.g. we make 1st Holy Communion the graduation point for 2013, but allow the existing years 4,5,6 to continue through with Children's liturgy?
- It was suggested that a children oriented Mass held once per month (perhaps expanding on the format of the once-per-term Mass held with the St Mary's School) could be helpful.

- Amanda Kelly noted it would be helpful if the new practices were explicitly explained to parents (and children) within the First Holy Communion training programme held at the School.

Fr William thanked all members for the various helpful comments and suggestions.

ACTION: Amanda Kelly to provide immediate feedback of the PPC discussions to parents at the School, and to seek further feedback from colleagues and parents.

ACTION: Fr William asked that there should be another discussion of the Children's Liturgy at the next PPC meeting, all to gain feedback and consider further suggestions.

6. The Shrine of Our Lady of the Crag

Simon Knowles updated all on the activities following the discussion of the Shrine from the previous PPC meeting. Outstanding issues related to; the potential high costs for the maintenance of the site, the liability and insurance cover of the Parish in relation to Health & Safety concerns, the work of the Shrine Group and identifying and exploiting suitable sources of income.

The situation over the safety of the trees on the site was still unknown, and it was felt that professional opinion(s) were required from tree surgeons to accurately cost any works (currently roughly estimated at £25K) or to confirm if the trees were actually dangerous and should be felled; and what the procedures re. obtaining permission for this clearance work would be.

ACTION: A notice should be placed in the Bulletin seeking a Tree Surgeon -or similar- to volunteer services or further advise on the treatment of the trees on the Shrine site.

Simon had requested but not yet received any details – i.e. explicit written assurance- from the Insurers over the cover and liability of the site; the Shrine is covered under the general terms of Ampleforth's Insurance but this appears to be subject to certain specific concerns about the site as raised by the underwriters - including the condition of the trees. Fr William confirmed that he had not received any news from Ampleforth over this matter.

It was acknowledged by all that the Shrine Group had made significant improvements to safety on the site, including works on the steps, improved signage, and not opening the Shrine in wet conditions. However the open-access nature of the site meant safety and liability was a concern e.g. the new Shrine Group initiative to erect physical (hedge) boundaries.

Chris Matthewman summarised for all that the feedback from the insurers was of the highest priority and critical to inform prioritisation of future actions (and to then investigate and understand true costs).

ACTION: Simon Knowles would chase the underwriters to urgently obtain a written assurance of adequate insurance cover, or a statement of any corrective works needed to inform further discussions.

Funding to support ongoing maintenance of the Shrine site continues to be difficult, aside from past grants for specific works (e.g. Millennium Fund) it was confirmed that almost all income (£600 pa) is through donations. It was clarified that Ampleforth could not provide financial support and should the Parish finance works on site (currently roughly estimated at up to £50K) this would need careful balancing and prioritisation against the other financial commitments and activities of the Parish.

The PPC wondered if more could be done to help the Shrine Group exploit the site and raise income from visitors e.g. sale of items and souvenirs, with longer and more frequent opening. The promotion of its status as the 'oldest shrine in England' could also enhance the general visitor attractions in the Knaresborough & Harrogate area. Mick Britton noted that as the Shrine fell within the Leeds Diocese and queried if financial (and other) support e.g. organisation of Deanery Pilgrimages might also be investigated.

7. Acolytes & Altar Servers

Fr William announced for information his recent introduction of the new role of 'Acolyte' to help develop and encourage older children in their ongoing involvement in the Mass. By definition Acolytes are older children who act as candle bearers and handle the sacred vessels during the celebration, the post allowing a natural progression from the activities of younger children acting as Altar Servers (holding Missal, washing of hands etc).

The PPC welcomed this initiative, and it was recommended that an explanation of the positions to the wider Parish, and a recruitment call for volunteers would be helpful.

This matter prompted a query over the reason for the Priest's robing of the chasuble at the Altar in Mass (to help emphasise that the celebrant is acting in Christ's name during the Liturgy of the Eucharist) and it was again felt that this would be helpfully communicated to the Parish.

ACTION: Fr William to draft a notice for the Bulletin explaining the new role of Acolyte compared to Altar Servers (and to seek volunteers), and to provide notes of other recent changes introduced in the celebration of Mass at St Mary's .

8. Church Maintenance Update

Simon Knowles and Cathy Binns reported that the Fabrics Committee were actively pursuing repair works, and were also investigating the condition of the Church and its buildings to draw up a list of works (and costs) to advise and inform the Finance Committee. The PPC felt that it would also be very useful for its own activities to receive a copy of this report.

ACTION: The Fabrics Committee imminent Report on the state and future works to be made available to the PPC.

Cathy Binns also wished to formally acknowledge the work of Raymond Doherty on the Fabrics Committee; this following his recent stepping down from the group after many years of service.

9. **Confirmation Candidates 2013: Preparation Programme**

Fr William noted that he was keen to expose the current Confirmation Group (10 attendees, aged 11-12) to charitable Christian care activities, and sought any suggestions from the Council for suitable experiences. As the Confirmation date would be 19th May the earliest possible suggestions would be especially helpful.

A brief discussion was held, and some suggestions which might be explored (subject to full discussion and agreement with parents re. appropriateness) were:

- Homeless Hostel, Harrogate
- Claver Hall, Bradford
- Age Concern, Knaresborough
- Carers Resource, Harrogate
- Accompanying Eucharistic Ministers visiting the sick and housebound
- Continued support of the First Holy Communion class via the 'Shared Supper'

ACTION: All to consider initiatives (ideally local) and contact Fr William directly with suggestions and full details.

10. **Any Other Business**

a) St John's Coffee Morning after Sunday Services

Jeff McGillan raised a suggestion arising from news of the temporary closure of St John's Church Hall closure for refurbishment (where the facilities at St Mary's were being made available to St John's parishioners). Following brief discussions with a St John's Church Warden Jeff suggested the hosting of a shared coffee morning after Sunday service in St Mary's Hall; this coinciding with the end of 10am Mass and a monthly children's service (10.30 am - 11am).

The St John's children's service was held on the first Sunday of each month and therefore it was suggested that the Parish could run a trial coffee event for the first Sunday in May [5th] offering refreshments including hot snacks.

ACTION: Jeff McGillan was subsequently asked to explore the organisation of a shared Sunday coffee event with St John's.

b) Bed Race Cafe volunteers

Sheila Lund announced that volunteers would be needed to help run the Cafe on Bed Race Day (Saturday 8th June) this request would be publicised elsewhere e.g. the Bulletin.

11. **Future Meetings**

1900 – 2030 Thursday 18th July 2013

1900 – 2030 Thursday 24th October 2013

12. **Final prayer**

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer at 20:30