

## **St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council**

### **Minutes of meeting Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

Present:

*Appointed*

Simon Knowles (Chairperson)

Chris Clissitt

Martin Mayhew

Simon Stockdale

Amanda Kelly (School)

*Elected*

Cathy Binns (Support)

Mick Britton (Liturgy)

Charlotte Burrell (Formation)

*Secretary:* Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Jeff McGillan (Activities)

Sheila Lund (Interaction)

1. **Welcome and Opening Reading** was led by Fr. William

2. **The minutes of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.

3. **Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda**

6) Assessing Parish Charitable Activities

In Jeff McGillan's absence a report on the action was deferred until the next meeting, although an advanced email circulation by JM to all PPC would be welcomed.

**ACTION:** Jeff McGillan to contact 'African' Parish Priests for more detailed information over the use of St Mary's donations to help in ongoing fundraising activities.

**ACTION:** Jeff McGillan to circulate a briefing by email to all PPC of current situation in advance of the next meeting.

All other Actionable matters were included as Agenda items.

4. **Report Back from Sub-Committees (PPC 5.1)**

a) Churches Together in Knaresborough (CTIK):

Mick Britton gave a verbal report of his attendance at the CTIK meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Some concern was expressed by existing members that the future of CTIK was doubtful, primarily as public events were poorly supported (indeed only 6 attendees were at the meeting), and that existing committee members were nearing the end of their terms of office.

A general discussion explored the issues, main ideas expressed included:

- Similar Church groups (elsewhere) usually functioned best when churches were struggling, so non-engagement may actually indicate a healthy situation for individual Christian communities in Knaresborough
- St Mary's was not involved in certain activities due to making its own internal arrangements (e.g. Bed Race teams, recent sponsored bike ride etc.)
- The public Christian processions as previously organised by CTIK had removed the processional element; which was felt to have debased the event.

MB noted the next CTIK meeting (October 2014) was likely to discuss and review the 'future' issue in more detail. It was also noted the next CTIK 'event' would be involvement in the *FEVA Festival* (8-17<sup>th</sup> August).

## 5. **Welcoming newcomers or visitors**

Fr William requested feedback and discussion on the best way to engage with new parishioners or visitors to St Mary's; he suggested three initial options to engage with people after Mass:

- i) Add to the 'brief' of helpers distributing Hymn books and Bulletins the task of talking to new people afterwards.
- ii) A new ministry of 'welcomers' explicitly to talk to newcomers.
- iii) Nurture a culture in the Parish that ALL attendees seek out and welcome new people.

A key problem was on actually recognising 'new' attendees, Fr William believed he could make an identification, but was then often heavily involved with Parishioners after services so could not easily break off and talk to new people.

It was suggested that:

- Fr William could repeat his direction to parishioners to turn round and greet the people behind as part of Mass; especially when he recognised there were strangers in the congregation.
- Accompanying new people into the Church Hall for Tea & Coffee (rather than just directing) might overcome the awkwardness of crossing the threshold into the Hall.
- *Parish Welcome Pack* should be distributed to all newcomers
- Fr William might directly raise the matter with the Parish e.g. educate parishioners to look for and welcome new faces immediately around them (arguably made easier as people tended to regularly seat themselves in the same place).
- Possibility of helpers distributing hymn books to 'pass on' or identify strangers to others (given work of hymn book distribution was already quite involved).

It was recognised that individuals might find it difficult to talk to strangers, newcomers may be actually put off by overt friendliness and that the change would require a cultural shift.

Fr William thanked the committee for their comments and suggestions.

## 6. **SVP Consultation**

Fr William reported that he had contacted Siobhan Goodfield on setting up a *Saint Vincent de Paul Society* (SVP) group in the Parish; and had also circulated the letter by Vincent Naylor prior to the PPC meeting.

It was clarified that the Ripon & Wetherby SVP activities occurring in Knaresborough had been made in continuing previous SVP support for ex Ripon/Wetherby residents after they had moved into St Mary's Parish.

The outcome suggested in the letter, was that Vincent Naylor would:

- Give a brief address at the weekend Masses, 11-12<sup>th</sup> October (outlining what the SVP does and inviting parishioners to attend an information evening).
- Host the information evening on 14<sup>th</sup> October, at 7.30pm after Mass.

This initiative was warmly welcomed by the PPC

## 7. **Projector**

Fr William noted he had approached the Finance Committee and the favourable vote 7:2 would permit the installation of a projector as discussed in the previous PPC minutes.

It was felt that the projector would also remove the costly need for replacement Hymn Books, as it could be used to display the hymns. Fr William sought further comments, and ideas on how to best engage with the Parish on the matter.

Feedback raised by members (additional to those previously noted) included:

- Sightlines were noted as critical it was important that all of the congregation could see; which may be a problem at the 'wings' of the current seating.
- Similarly a larger 'screen' display than offered at present was also required.
- Preserving the dignity of the Sanctuary (wall) was recognised of importance, so the images would be projected made to the side of the Altar wall.
- Continuing to use the existing small projector may help 'prepare' for the installation of a larger system.
- It was generally felt the facility would help improve the Church, and engage all (not just young people) in the Mass and in other more general presentations.

## 8. **Welcome Mass Revisited**

It was believed the 'Welcome Mass' had been a good idea, though making an assessment over its success was complicated by the service falling on Mother's Day *and* by the weekend's clock changes to BST. Fr William asked for comments on why attendances were statistically dropping.

Feedback points raised were:

- Unfamiliar hymns may be off-putting to some.
- Lengthy Masses may also be a problem; although the PPC unanimously believed the 60 mins for Family Mass (45 mins for Evening Mass) as practiced at St Mary's was ideal.

- A 'better' experience may be offered by neighbouring Catholic Churches, and that our attendance at services elsewhere may be instructive.
- The character of a Parish Priest can be divisive for individual parishioners.
- Family attendances were notably in decline. The enforcement of attendance at the whole Mass (not just Liturgy of the Eucharist) for post First Communion children was regarded as problematical for some parents; in relation to maturity, engagement with the Mass and 'embarrassment' of dealing with misbehaviour.
- Improving and catering for new Children's activities would require more volunteers; but it was felt unlikely that newly attending parents would readily (or quickly) fill these roles.
- The Obligation to attend a weekly Mass was simply not observed, or regarded as all that critical by many Catholics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Encouragement of attendance at School Masses, and outreach to parents of pupils at St Mary's Primary School was a potential way to increase attendance.

**ACTION:** Agenda item would be raised in the next PPC meeting to consider what other Churches did differently (which might inform St Mary's actions).

## 9. Care of Car Parks and Bins

Fr William noted that a planning solution to the misuse (by passers-by and nearby residents) of the Church bins was being pursued by the Church Hall Refurbishment working group. However the related issue of car park litter was of some concern.

After a short discussion it was agreed that individual parishioners should be encouraged to pick up any loose litter in the Church grounds, and that a more permanent solution to the bins problem was imminent through the re-siting of bins.

## 10. Items Brought to PPC by the Parish

### a) Parish Shop

Criticism had been received that the small range of items available in the Parish shop was a lost opportunity for income and that stock didn't serve parish needs. It was noted that income had indeed declined, but this was partly as pre-stocking was expensive and it was difficult to predict needs; especially as many people now chose to shop via the internet.

It was suggested that the Shop might be converted into smaller lockable cabinet in the Church vestibule (with a greater visible presence than the link corridor) or that an e-shop might be considered.

However it was also noted that the existing shop was a useful focus point and greeting area for new attendees (as discussed in item 5 above).

**ACTION:** The Parish Shop would be raised as an Agenda item next time.

**11. Any Other Business**

No AOB was raised.

**12. Future Meetings**

1900 – 2030 Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014

1900 – 2030 Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**13. Final prayer**

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer.