

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 19th February 2015

Present:

Fr William Wright

Appointed

Simon Knowles (Chairperson)

Chris Clissitt

Martin Mayhew *

Joanne Stockdale (School) *

Elected

Mick Britton (Liturgy)

Charlotte Burrell (Formation)

Amanda Kelly (Support)*

Sheila Lund (Interaction)

Jeff McGillan (Activities)*

Secretary: Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Stephen Walker (Finance) *

* *Newly appointed or new/re-elected PPC members*

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

2. **Welcome and Introductions**

New appointments and new/re-elected members of the Council (Amanda Kelly, Jeff McGillan, Martin Mayhew, Joanne Stockdale, and Stephen Walker *in absentia*) were welcomed to the PPC by Fr William.

3. **The minutes of the meeting on 23rd October 2014**

Correction Apologies of Mick Britton had been forwarded, but were omitted in error.

Clarified Item 4. Report From Finance Committee that the Sunday lunch held on 23rd November was primarily a social (not fundraising) event.

Correction to surnames to be read as Evelyn Coman (Item 6) and Jo Brennan (Item 10).

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda

4) Report of Finance Committee (Annual General Meeting)

Dates had been discussed in Finance Committee for an AGM with the Parish based on following addresses:

Sun 8 March (after each Mass): Short Q&A session on Parish Finances & Funding

Sun 22 March (after each Mass): Short Q&A session on Giving & Donations

It was agreed that a longer AGM with PPC members in attendance would be held after 10:00 am Mass on Sunday 22nd March.

8) Future of Parish Shop

The PPC collectively confirmed that the primary purpose of the shop was as a valued service, primary to its role as a profit making venture. It was strongly reaffirmed that the shop definitely had a future in the Parish.

Amanda Kelly suggested promotion and display of items in the atrium on Sunday morning services could help raise the shop's profile, and that a small line of more 'commercial' items e.g. birthday cards could also assist in sales.

10) a) Car Parking

Simon Knowles gave an update to the neighbouring resident parking situation reporting that display-permit discs had been freely distributed to neighbours, and that voluntary contributions would only be sought with the issue of new discs in 2016.

Fr William explained that the approach had been driven by a mixture of factors including maintaining good local relations and concerns re. liability and the reserving of spaces. Cars discovered parking on church property without a permit were currently left with an explanatory letter inviting contact with Fr William; although admittedly relatively few responses had been received to these letters.

In light of the refurbishment plans for the Church Hall (especially the introduction of a new entrance at the rear to service the Playgroup) the parking situation would continue to be monitored and if necessary reviewed.

All other Actionable matters were either completed, or included as Agenda items.

5. Report from Finance Committee

Sheila Lund tabled a paper copy of a PPT presentation on the works of the Finance Committee and talked through the main points.

Some points of note from the presentation:

- Parish finances were stable, and projected annual income on course for £86K; balance at £24K (after all expenses including Ampleforth loan payment)
- Fundraising activities made an essential contribution to the Parish and the vitality of the community.
- The final payment of £45K had now been made against the original Ampleforth loan (£365K); the Parish is temporarily free of debt.
- A new loan from Ampleforth will be sought to refurbish the Church Hall (to be called *The Old School*); estimates were still being calculated but loan was likely to be between £85-100K
- 25% of Offertory income is paid to the Leeds Diocese. It was noted that payments made exclusively to the Building Fund were outside this diocesan levy.
- The Parish leased and managed lands including various paddocks on Abbey Road.
- The repair and maintenance works of the Church had been affected and in some cases paused for the priority for significant planning & preparation works required on the Hall. Some maintenance works (e.g. damp in Church and the subsequent redecoration) required investigation to establish causes and best corrective action.
- Promotion would be required of *The Old School* for lease and event hire.
- Finance Committee members would present news to the Parish (via the finance briefings - See 4.4)

The PPC welcomed the briefing and suggested feedback of some key issues to the wider Parish would be helpful i.e.

ACTION: ALL PPC members to consider or identify potential groups who might wish to hire-use the Hall or Meeting Room to assist in income generation etc.

6. School Report

Joanne Stockdale reported on various activities on Catholic life in the School:

- Fr William had held a number of Masses in the School and had conducted psalm singing practices with Year 5 children.
- A new 'Catholic Life Council'; had been established which included some School Governor representation, the council had helped judge a children's art competition and developed the 5 underpinning themes for general School life; *Unity, Respect, Joy, Love and Courage*.
- The First Holy Communion programme was underway, held in school but provided outside curriculum time by Parish catechists.
- The School was responding to central government initiatives to instil 'British' values in children by developing this alongside 'Gospel' values.
- Teaching Assistants Sue Almond and JS had set up a Friday Prayer Group, initially aimed at KS2 children to drop in for quiet reflection. It was noted that girls were the greater attendees.

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

a) Fundraising

Shelia Lund tabled a short report on fundraising activities.

The Team had raised in excess of £10K in 1 year (since its formation in 2013) and had organised a wide range of fundraising activities which apart from income generation also helped strengthen the community life of the Church.

It was noted that the Sunday lunches had proved popular and were to be repeated (as a small fundraising event) and it was also hoped would be expanded to include an occasional 'meals on wheels' service to sick and housebound parishioners.

£120 of funds had also been forwarded to the newly formed SVP group in the Parish.

b) CTIK Report

Mick Britton had circulated a report of the January meeting of *Churches Together in Knaresborough* (CTIK) though this was not discussed in the PPC meeting due to lack of time.

c) Other Groups

Fr William confirmed that PPC members were free to organise sub-committees or otherwise canvass opinions from parishioners working in their spheres of responsibility.

The use of formal sub-groups was only suggested (not mandatory) but providing representation of other's views was seen as an important role of PPC members.

8. **Liturgy Groups**

Fr William reported for information that he had now established 3 x representative 'Liturgy groups' for each of the Sunday Mass services; it was hoped this initiative would help improve the parishioners experience in each Mass.

It was noted each weekend Mass had a differing character in both attendees and tone, and the differing format of representation of the Liturgy groups reflected this.

Some developments including the continuation and extension of (last years) Year 5 singers who on a monthly basis assisted with sung responses in 6pm Mass. Kitty Watson is also assisting with this initiative.

9. Parish Appraisal

Fr William circulated a draft questionnaire that he planned to circulate to the Parish and invited feedback from members. He suggested this could be run as a regular (Annual) survey and was intended to help improve the Parish experience and guide activities and priorities.

The major comments and suggestions were:

- It was felt the questionnaire was too long, a maximum of 12 questions would be ideal. To maximise returns all should be encourage to fill the questionnaire immediately (i.e. not take away) and brevity would assist in this aim.
- Given the range of subjects in the draft it may even be better to have separate surveys with one addressing the Mass experience, and another on the Parish.
- A single 'any other comments' section (rather than repeating after each question) was recommended.
- Questions should be numbered for easier referencing and assessment.
- Boxes should be given for parishioners to voluntarily note their age range and sex; this could provide useful demographic data for further analysis.
- A parallel online version of the questionnaire would be helpful (various online web services could provide this form of functionality).
- Some queries were raised over the terminology and clarity of the questions e.g. what was meant by 'symbolic actions of the Mass' and changing some responses to better suit the question or using a 0-10 scale.
- The survey lacked a clear header explanation of why it was been taken.
- Parishioners would anticipate a report of the results of the Survey (and over a number of years presumably trends in responses and/or appropriate graphing).
- A feedback Report should also include a note of the actions [to be] taken as a result of the survey.
- Some thought was required over how actions would be identified from the survey.

The Parish Appraisal initiative was unanimously welcomed by the PPC.

10. Assessing Parish Charitable Activities

Jeff McGillan provided an update to previous PPC meetings discussions.

It had been subsequently agreed that it was not appropriate to contact Evelyn Coman re. state of any correspondence with African parishes. Instead direct communication would be sought by JM via other means (e.g. direct contact, banks, approach Fr Terry Madden).

ACTION: Jeff McGillan to write directly to the African parishes to seek confirmation and any other feedback over the funds St Mary's had donated by bank transfer.

It was reported that before standing down as J&P Treasurer Harry Boucher had passed on additional funds (totalling £800) to the African parishes; this was made after the PPC decision to suspend such payments pending further clarification of the use of monies.

Harry Boucher had passed on all prior handwritten accounts of J&P finances and these were being electronically transcribed (spreadsheets) by JM for the use and information of the Finance Committee. The funding management issues re charitable activities would now fall under the remit of the Finance Committee under Stephen Walker, and quarterly reports would be generated.

It was still felt useful to identify other 'Parish endorsed' charitable causes in Africa and this should form an Agenda item at the following PPC meeting.

ACTION: ALL to consider and suggest charitable causes in Africa for discussion at the next PPC meeting.

11. Atrium Management

Fr William queried the status and management of competition of poster space in the church atrium (and leaflet, free paper displays) and the impact on a tidy and attractive entrance space. It was noted that Alice McIntyre helped manage this area but some assistance and guidance over the management of posters etc. could be useful.

ACTION: ALL to consider management of the Atrium area for discussion at the next PPC meeting.

12. Projector Instalment

A previously circulated handout presentation over the proposed installation of the projector in the Church was briefly discussed; discussion time was limited.

Fr William confirmed that the proposed double projection of images (on either side of the crucifixion) was made directly onto the wall and that no screens or other distracting equipment was actually fastened to the wall. It was confirmed an alternative screen/display would be provided near the main entrance of the church to allow visibility of images for parishioners at the sides of the church.

No objection was raised by PPC members to the proposed repositioning of the Stations of the Cross.

Fr William was hoping to seek the a majority approval of the parish (though a form of vote) for these planned works, which were estimated to cost c. £5-6K

13. Mail Shots - Database Management

Chris Clissitt sought feedback over the recent use of the parish database for e-mail news and information postings.

PPC members confirmed that these postings were not intrusive, or too frequent and in fact strongly welcomed them as they were seen as providing a useful service. It was felt that no restrictions or regulation were required as the mailshots were already being managed in a responsible manner.

14. Any Other Business

a) Bulletin: Advance Notice of Special Mass Times

A parishioner has suggested more advanced notice should be given in the Bulletin for times of special masses (e.g. Feasts of Easter, Christmas, and Holy Days of Obligation) rather than providing a week's notice as at present.

Although Fr William noted all Mass times had now been standardised it was agreed this suggestion would be considered.

b) Website: Daily Prayer

It had been suggested that the parish website (<http://www.stmarysknaresborough.org/>) could usefully provide a regularly updated daily 'reflective' area.

Independent of the suggestion it was noted this has option actually already been recently introduced, with links to external sites of daily scripture readings and to daily 'snippets' from the Catholic Catechism.

c) Easter Egg Hunt

Jeff McGillan noted that the annual Easter Egg hunt would again be held in the Church garden, and that the involvement (attendance) of more children from the School would be especially welcomed and encouraged.

d) Resignation of PPC Chair (Simon Knowles)

Simon Knowles announced that due to his changed personal working circumstances (higher workloads and increasingly irregular periods away from the UK) it was necessary to resign from his role as PPC Chair with immediate effect. It is notable that the role of Chair has been held by Simon for well over a decade through successive re-elections.

Fr William noted that Simon's enthusiasm and energy had helped make many improvements in the Parish over his considerable time in office; and Simon was warmly thanked for all his hard work by all PPC members.

Fr William would stand in as PPC Chair until further notice.

15. Future Meetings

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 16th April 2015

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 9th July 2015

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 22nd October 2015

16. Final prayer

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer.