

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 16th April 2015

Present:

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Fr William Wright (Acting Chair) | <i>Elected</i> |
| | • Mick Britton (Liturgy) |
| <i>Appointed</i> | • Charlotte Burrell (Formation) |
| • Martin Mayhew | • Amanda Kelly (Support) |
| • Joanne Stockdale (School) | • Sheila Lund (Interaction) |
| • Stephen Walker (Finance) | • Jeff McGillan (Activities) |

Secretary: Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Chris Clissitt

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

2. **The minutes of the meeting on 19th February 2015**

Item 10) Assessing Parish Charitable Activities it was clarified that the outgoing J&P Treasurer, Harry Boucher had made the additional payments to Africa before learning of the PPC's October 2014 decision to suspend payments to parishes pending further investigation of the use of the donated money.

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

3. **Matters Arising not itemised in the Agenda**

5) Report of Finance Committee

It was noted that Facebook and other media, including use of online images and video, would be used to publicise the facilities in *The Old School* for hire purposes at (tbc) dates closer to the end of refurbishment.

ACTION: Fr William would approach individual parishioners for assistance in creating and hosting media and images to assist in publicity of the refurbished Hall.

9) Parish Appraisal

Fr William reported he was working on a revised draft of the questionnaire which he planned to circulate to PPC members for comments before final distribution to the Parish.

ACTION: Fr William to circulate new draft of Appraisal questionnaire to PPC by email.

10) Assessing Parish Charitable Activities

Jeff McGillan clarified in answer to Stephen Walker that the formal reporting required of the *Finance Committee* re. J&P accounts was very low profile, and that the changes to the 'Envelopes for Africa' administration were simply to rationalise bank account details with the wider Parish but to keep both funds separate and fully accountable.

ACTION: Jeff McGillan would become a signatory to J&P Accounts.

ACTION: Stephen Walker and Jeff McGillan to liaise with Ian Burrell (Finance) re. the financial administration required for *Justice & Peace* activity.

It was asked if *Gift Aid* could be easily enabled for J&P donations, SW noted this was always encouraged and would be investigated to see if uptake could be improved and clarified.

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

4. Report from Finance Committee

Stephen Walker Lund tabled a paper (dated April 2015) on the works of the *Finance Committee* and talked through the main items.

Key points of note from the presentation:

- Parish income and finances were reported stable even though Mass attendances were falling.
- Fundraising activities were a vital element in paying of (the anticipated) loan for Hall refurbishment and many other Parish activities.
- Tender documentation for *The Old School* refurbishment was to be issued to potential contractors on 20th April, and deadline for returns was 11th May.
- Schedule of the Hall works was on target though this was subject to obtaining planning permission from HBC (decision was expected w/c 8th June).
- Meetings were due with Ampleforth Trustees over future financial loan to the Parish, this looking to a May-June decision which would be influenced (in the £ amount) by the possibility of any external grants which was also being investigated by members of the committee.
- Appreciation by all involved of the critical role played by Philip Burnett in the Hall Refurbishment project.
- A logo competition for *The Old School* would be launched imminently.
- Finance committee was querying with Ampleforth re. the necessity of the now-due *Quinquennial [Building] Survey* for Church and Hall.
- The general maintenance and redecoration of the Church itself had not been forgotten, but due to priorities required of the Hall works this latter work would be developed post Hall Refurbishment as part of a wider assessment of Church spaces e.g. Shop, General Office etc.

In response to PPC suggestions, Sheila Lund confirmed assistance was being sought from a number of local businesses for the Hall works (e.g. *Abacus* for bathroom fixtures and equipment for toilets).

SW also answered there had been no major feedback received back from parishioners as a result of the 2 x Q&A Sessions given by the Finance Committee members in March.

5. **School Report**

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

- Year 4 had performed 'Resurrection Rock' to the rest of the School.
- Friday Prayer Group continues.
- The major topic in this period was the launch of the public consultation over the proposal for the school to leave Local Authority control by adopting Academy Status within the *Bishop Wheeler Catholic Multi Academy Trust*. This public consultation was due to end on Thursday 30th April.

A short discussion was held on the issue of Academy Status, and it was suggested all members who were interested could find out more by attending the advertised open meeting for staff, parents and parishioners at St Mary's School on 20th April (6.30pm).

6. **The Old School Update**

Shelia Lund had circulated in advance a short, detailed report on the work to date over the Hall Refurbishment. This work was being driven by a smaller sub-committee of the original *Church Hall Refurbishment Group* (Philip Burnett, Steven Perry, Stephen Walker, Angela Wicken & Sheila Lund) who met *at least* weekly to review progress and direct the appointed external Project Manager.

The original Planning Application(s) had been resubmitted (8th April) following some minor technical discrepancies raised by HBC.

Timings remain tight for the completion of the project within Summer 2015 (works planned start 1st Jul, end 1st Sep). Planning was the major known risk to this timetable.

Hall works would include; new furniture, projector screen for the amenity-meeting room, dedicated storage facilities, transfer of the Library room to the Playgroup, facelift to the Hall (including exposure of stonework and heightening of ceiling), improved insulation and 'planning-permitting' double-glazing and complete window replacement.

Announcements would be made shortly re. a series of presentations to the wider Parish.

NB: Other Hall Refurbishment news already noted in Item 4 above.

The PPC thanked the sub-committee for their time and work on this project.

7. Fundraising Report

Shelia Lund had circulated in advance a short report on Parish Fundraising.

The annual fundraising aim of £10,000 income was on-target thanks to an impressive range of recent successful social and fund raising initiatives, including; TTS (£477+£58), Sunday Lunch, (£250) Quiz Night (£1161), St Mary's Brownies (£105) etc.

Future events included 'Anything Goes' concert, and the launch of a Recipe Book (NB contributions for recipes and content still welcomed).

A Pocket Panto has been booked for a social event in the Church Hall on 8th January 2016.

8. Atrium Management

Fr William sought PPC suggestions re. improvements to the atrium area and the display of posters, notices, leaflets etc.

The major feedback and comments included:

- The recent reintroduction of separate sections of the noticeboards (e.g. Parish, Diocese) helped casual browsing.
- It was suggested specific local i.e. St Mary's activities could use maximum size of A3 posters, but that A4 should be the maximum display for all other posters.
- The fundraising whiteboard (and any activities in the Atrium after Mass) tended to obscure the noticeboards behind it.
- Annotations on each poster of a date for withdrawal/removal could be used.
- It was suggested that management of the space could be supported by the Mass Welcome Team/Greeters.
- A better display was required than the table for 'take away' items (leaflets, newspapers etc.)
- Design of posters for St Mary's events could benefit from quality control e.g. improved graphic design and use of colour.
- Maintenance and display of Noticeboards were a known problem in all Parishes.
- The possible reorganisation of Shop and link corridor spaces could provide opportunities to rethink the layout.
- The Bulletin should (continue to) be used to refer to new atrium posters.

9. Church Garden: 'Knaresborough in Bloom'

Sheila Lund reported that St Mary's had been invited by 'Knaresborough in Bloom' to include the Church garden in the town entry and judging of (August) 'Britain in Bloom' competition; a contest in which Knaresborough has enjoyed some success in recent years.

4th May had been identified for a Garden clearing up drive, and volunteers were being sought to assist in all gardening works leading up to August, including provision of plants.

10. Parish Endorsed Charitable causes in Africa

Jeff McGillan reported that he was still awaiting feedback from the 2 African parishes re. the specific use of the funds provided by St Mary's.

A brief discussion followed where some suggestions for alternative charitable recipients were made; ideally as individual parishes rather than large organisations. Fr William suggested he might be able to personally investigate potential African parishes.

It was agreed that a further discussion could be usefully held at the next PPC meeting, which would also allow time for response from the parishes recently approached by JM.

ACTION: Parish Endorsed Charitable Causes to be raised as a PPC Agenda item.

ACTION: ALL to consider possible specific charitable causes for the next PPC meeting.

11. Sunday Mass Times

Fr William requested feedback over the desirability of changing Mass times at St Mary's; this to explore the current mood within the parish rather than initiate a change.

No consensus or especially strong desire for change emerged from members, although it was acknowledged that (with other Harrogate Churches), local Catholics had a wide range of Sunday times available from which they could choose to attend weekly Mass.

12. Any Other Business

a) General Office clearance

Stephen Walker noted that in order to prepare for the change of the General Office (into a meeting/interview room for Father William) in the near future volunteers would create a retain, discard and query list for furniture and all other office contents and equipment.

b) Blue Plaque

It has been suggested a 'Knaresborough Civic Society' Blue Plaque could be installed on the church to celebrate its apparent construction as only the second 'newly built' Catholic church in England following the *Roman Catholic Emancipation Act* (1829)

ACTION: Stephen Walker to investigate the Blue Plaque situation (and presumably the veracity of the 'second church' claim for St Mary's).

c) Simon Knowles: Formal Appreciation

IT was unanimously agreed that a formal letter of thanks should be addressed to Simon reflecting his many years of valuable service to St Mary's Parish on the PPC.

ACTION: Fr William to draft and circulate the letter of appreciation for Simon Knowles.

13. Future Meetings

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 9th July 2015

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

14. Final prayer

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer.