

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 9th July 2015

Present:

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| • Fr William Wright (Acting Chair) | <i>Elected</i> |
| | • Mick Britton (Liturgy) |
| <i>Appointed</i> | • Charlotte Burrell (Formation) |
| • Joanne Brennan | • Amanda Kelly (Support) |
| • Martin Mayhew | |

Secretary: Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Chris Clissitt, Sheila Lund, Jeff McGillan, Stephen Walker

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

2. **The minutes of the meeting on 16th April 2015**

Aside from minor typographic errors (and it was Sheila Lund, not Stephen Walker presented the Report from Finance Committee - Item 10) the Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.

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

10) **Parish Endorsed Charitable Causes for Africa**

In the absence of several key PPC members Fr William asked for this item be deferred until the next meeting.

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) **Any Other Business b) Blue Plaque**

In the absence of Stephen Walker assumed this item is deferred until the next meeting.

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

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

4. Report from School

Fr William reported that Joanne Stockdale had stepped down as the School representative member of the PPC. Fr William and fellow committee members thanked her for her contribution in previous meetings.

It was noted that St Mary's school had now completed its transition to Academy Status within the Bishop Wheeler Trust. An explanatory letter had been emailed from the Chair of Governors to the PPC members earlier today (9th July). Various comments were raised by members questioning the seeming rapidity of the move to Academy status, the impact on local schools and links, and the fact that St Robert's school had instead chosen to withdraw from the partnership initiative.

Fr William also reported that St Mary's Headteacher Lee Talbot, was leaving the School. Helen Tomlinson was standing in as Acting Head until a replacement could be appointed.

5. Report from any sub-committees (PPC 5.1)

a) Formation Group

Charlotte Burrell reported that the Children's Liturgy group would meet on Wednesday 15th July to discuss key issues re. need to recruit new catechists (some existing teachers now wished to attend non 10:00 Mass with their own families) and the very low numbers of children attending the children's liturgy.

A short discussion included the following comments:

- The CRB checking of potential catechists was an expense, but should not act as a barrier to inviting appointments.
- Merger of the current different age groups for children's liturgy may help counter problems re attendance and catechist numbers
- It might be worth reviewing lifting the bar on (post) First Communion children not attending Children's liturgy, e.g. lifting the age range to end of School Year 6.

CB noted these items and others would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting.

b) Liturgy Group

Mick Britton noted the relevant outcomes from Fr William's Parish Appraisal (See item 6) would be taken back for detailed discussion in a meeting within the Liturgy Group to be held later in the Summer.

6. Parish Appraisal Easter 2015 – Action Plan

Fr William had circulated in advance a number of detailed reports and 'comments' from the survey taken all three Sunday masses. He invited discussion of items, especially those matters he had flagged as "rapid response" and "for PPC discussion" in order to give timely feedback to parish on outcomes and actions.

It was noted that the total response rate for the surveys had been excellent, and that the overwhelming majority of comments (and boxes ticked) indicated the experience of Mass and of St Mary's generally was a very positive one for most respondents.

It was also thought that the extreme range of some responses (e.g. desire for formal v informal services) would make it difficult to equally cater for everyone's requirements.

Following reflects issues discussed by PPC and an outline of actions or responses (e.g. where further work or longer term consideration was needed).

a) TICK BOX RESULTS:

46% come to Mass at St Mary's because they find it uplifting.

ACTION: Fr William to consider further ways to increase uplifting experience of Mass.

15% found the homily too difficult.

46% listen to the readings, 51% follow on the sheet. (Sunday 10am 56% listen)

13% feel welcomed only sometimes or not at all. (same at all three Sunday masses).

ACTION: Fr William encouraged to occasionally ask all to greet their neighbour at the beginning of mass.

6% (six) find the website not sufficiently informative.

ACTION: Enhancing the Events page with a more complete list of events.

ACTION: Include on the events page reports on each event as they occur, with photos.

ACTION: Put out a question on the bulletin as to what further information people might like to find.

b) INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS:

1. "Hard of hearing, or some readers too quiet, or amplification inadequate".

ACTION: Hearing Loop to be tested.

ACTION: Fr William to arrange Readers meeting to include tuition on improved delivery.

2. "People without computers feel excluded from the parish by reference to website".

ACTION: Hold a session to Parish on the website when the projector is up and running.

ACTION: Ensure paper copies available for all parish reports.

ACTION: Encourage parishioners to collaborate with family or friends who may have access to the internet.

3. "Consider more social occasions catering for all age groups".

RESPONSE: Assumed activities like BBQ, quizzes would appeal to all age groups.

4. "Can we have secular concerts in the church?"

RESPONSE: There were arguments and strong feelings on both sides, both for and against.

5. "Concern that the installation of the projector would lead to the church being used for secular purposes and the 'holiness be taken away from the church' "

RESPONSE: Outside mass the projector will be used for catechesis and for specifically Christian or religious films for example, as we have done to date with my portable projector. During mass it will be 'off' during the Liturgy of the Eucharist and at times when it is not needed for hymn texts or homily illustration.

6. "Fundraising sometimes too much and aimed at the same people"

RESPONSE: PPC members includes representation from the fundraising committee. We don't know if other parishioners share this view. It's something for us to keep in mind. Parish is in an untypical high-fundraising period with support required for the refurbishment of the Old School.

7. "Does socialising in the church compromise the reverence needed in a holy place, or sacred space?"

RESPONSE: We need to be acutely aware of people's views on this, and particularly sensitive to the view expressed in this question. It's an important area and one that we might well come back to for further discussion and discernment.

8. "The rule that children can only attend children's liturgy up to 1st HC is too inflexible"

ACTION: This is now back on the agenda for discussion and Fr William is consulting with various groups on this.

9. "Website not sufficiently informative, especially on events."

ACTION: Fr William will attempt to be more thorough in ensuring that events are posted on the events page and looking to include news feed on past events.

10. "Sometimes the homilies seem like a theology lecture. Sunday 10am Mass homily should be more child friendly."

RESPONSE: There was a view that a bit of theology from time to time was a good thing. Images/pictures are a powerful way of making homilies more accessible, both for children and for adults, and this is one of the motivating factors for the projector installation. But Fr William also grateful for these two comments and will keep this in mind for homilies.

11. "Suggest Socialising/refreshments after all three Sunday masses occasionally"

ACTION: Agreed we should have refreshments and socialising after all three Sunday masses on occasion.

12. "To have more people involved in the Liturgy, especially younger people."

ACTION: Fr William now in discussion with the Liturgy groups to look at ways this might be achieved.

13. "To encourage more families to attend."

ACTION: Fr William looking at this in collaboration with Liturgy groups.

c) OTHER MATTERS DISCUSSED *not already included above*:

1. Visitors feeling unwelcomed:

- Wondered if two doors' entrance to church was part of the problem.
- Currently had multiple post Mass socialising areas (Atrium, Church and Hall) should we encourage a single social location?
- Repeat the gallery of photos of parishioners in corridor as used by Fr Stephen.

2. Mass experience

- Seek involvement of more children e.g. in choir and sung responses, psalms.
- Balance of sermon was good, if message of homily was clear to children should also be clear to adults.
- Invitation for parishioners to suggest music for Mass

3. Outreach

- Outreach events e.g. *Apostleship of the Sea* could help youth participation
- Was webpage site print typeface too small?
- Clear (75% +) majority in support of the installation of a data projector in Church, 15% were against, 10% abstained.

7. **Tuning into the Liturgical Seasons**

Due to time limitations the item was not discussed.

ACTION: Item to be deferred until the next PPC meeting.

8. **Fundraising Report**

Sheila Lund had circulated in advance a short report on fundraising.

Fr William noted the year's fundraising total had now risen to £9,959.28, this including £946.66 raised from the Parish BBQ and Bed Race cafe.

9. **Any Other Business**

a) **Money Counters**

Mick Britton reported there was a shortage of parishioners who were available to count the weekly income e.g. plate etc.

ACTION: Fr William consider approaching additional personnel to augment the counting team.

b) Signs for the Chapel

Amanda Kelly suggested a small direction/welcome sign indicating that low-attendance Masses or Eucharistic Services would be celebrated in the Chapel would help direct occasional or new visitors who may otherwise expect Mass to be held in the main Church.

ACTION: Fr William acknowledged the likely value for some signage and would further consider, may also include Bulletin reminder.

10. Future Meetings

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

11. Final prayer

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer.