

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 22nd October 2015

Present:

- Fr William Wright (Acting Chair)

Appointed

- Joanne Brennan
- Chris Clissitt
- Martin Mayhew

Elected

- Mick Britton (Liturgy)
- Charlotte Burrell (Formation)
- Amanda Kelly (Support)
- Sheila Lund (Interaction)
- Jeff McGillan (Activities)

Secretary: Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Paul Jackson (School), Stephen Walker (Finance)

1. Opening Reading was led by Fr. William

2. Introduction of New Councillors

Fr. William welcomed *in absentia* Paul Jackson to the PPC as new School representative.

3. The minutes of the meeting on 9th July 2015

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

4. Matters Arising not itemised in the Agenda

3) 11) Blue Plaque

Stephen Walker has asked PPC for guidance on whether to proceed with the installation of a 'Civic Society' Blue Plaque commemorating St Mary's construction shortly after the *Roman Catholic Relief Act* (1829).

A short debate balancing the cost (estimated at c. £300) against the benefits e.g. education, promotion and interest for local people and visitors. A majority vote of PPC members decided that SW should proceed with the initiative.

ACTION: Stephen Walker to be asked to investigate costs and process of installing a Blue Plaque and to represent to PPC

4) Report From School

Fr William reported that since the last PPC meeting, St Mary's Primary school had now joined the Bishop Wheeler Trust as an Academy School.

From discussions it was unclear to PPC members whether the transfer of the School management and assets to the Trust included the transfer of land (which may, or may not, have been originally donated to Ampleforth).

Martin Mayhew voiced the concerns of several PPC members re. the rapid manner of this change with quite limited effective consultation, and especially questioned the impact of this status change on the existing relationship with St John Fisher's School; which has rejected membership of the Bishop Wheeler Trust.

It was felt the new attachment to Leeds' schools undermined the historically strong and clear 'feeder' links with Harrogate. It was agreed that St Mary's School should be asked to provide formal reassurance and an explanation of the situation with St John Fishers.

ACTION: Paul Jackson would be asked to represent PPC concerns with St Mary's Governors, and to seek reassurance of continuation of strong links with St John Fishers School.

5) a) Report from Sub Committees: Formation Group

Charlotte Burrell reported that a new catechist to assist in Children's liturgy had been appointed. Consideration was also being given to approach several other parishioners who had recently passed DBS checks as a result of involvement in other Church activities.

CB noted that as a result of recent Group meetings it had been agreed to continue with 2 separate groups (toddlers and older children up to First Communion) and to continue to review the situation. It was also confirmed that the practice of holding no Children's Liturgy during School Holidays would continue, mostly due to difficulties re. attendance and staffing.

Mick Britton queried the limit applied to children attending Children's Liturgy i.e. after receiving First Communion children must attend the whole mass. Fr William explained the removal of the 'Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist' from the School timetable should allow parents to submit their children for First Communion when they were believed to be mature enough, this practice allowing them to attend the Children's Liturgy beyond a certain age if they were not yet ready.

It was also pointed out that prior practice with freedom of choice had resulted in many older children (young teenagers) continuing to attend Children's Liturgy which was not regarded as appropriate.

MB maintained that parents should still be given the final choice re. attendance (even if post First Communion) but accepted opinions were divided.

5) b) Report from Sub Committees: Liturgy Group

Mick Britton confirmed August meetings had been held with various Liturgy Group members to discuss improving the 'liturgical experience' re. comments from the recent Parish Appraisal. MB had circulated written feedback and made some suggestions to PPC members.

9) b) Signage for the Chapel

Amanda Kelly noted 'chapel' annotation on the bulletin calendar had now been introduced to guide attendees to midweek masses towards the Chapel, it was felt this had greatly improved the situation for new visitors.

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

5. Parish Appraisal Easter 2015 Action Plan

In response to previous PPC Meeting discussion on the Parish Appraisal all nominated actions had been achieved or progressed. Items related to the Appraisal and not noted elsewhere (see item 6) included:

- Fr William had asked some families (including children) to assist with the 'welcoming and greeting' activity before Mass.
- Work had started on setting up small music workshops to involve youth in Church activities. This initiative was in a very early stage of development as the small group had not yet met collectively.

Fr William noted planning for the next (2016) Appraisal exercise was underway, including how to best respond to feedback received and how to compare responses to the 2015 Appraisal to show impact of changes.

6. Parish Appraisal: Specific Actions

a) Church Seating Layout

Fr William reported that as a result of Appraisal feedback over access, leg-room and space problems with the current curved rows of seating it has been decided to experiment with a slightly modified layout. Straight lines of seats would be used albeit still orientated in a general arc around the Altar as at present. The seating would be reconfigured after Fr William had alerted the Parish, and feedback would be sought after a few weeks of experimentation.

This activity was supported by the PPC, though it was noted the front row of seats had curved kneelers which may create problems with the proposed layout.

ACTION: Fr William and Ian Burrell to advertise, and implement the experimental change to seating layout in the Church and seek feedback from the Parish.

b) Website Modifications

In response to a small number of unspecific criticisms of the Parish website Fr William sought more detailed feedback from PPC members.

Mick Britton noted the photo of the actual Church was not as prominent as the photo of the viaduct, and that the font and colour used made online reading difficult. It was observed the particular viewing device (phone, PC, or tablet) used to view the website may influence legibility and layout and that this should be investigated.

It was suggested an (annual) listing of baptisms and deaths (and weddings?) – with photographs as appropriate – could be a useful and informative addition to the website.

On reflection many PPC members believed the website to be very well designed (some after comparing St Mary's very favourably with other Church websites), that it contained all information that might be expected, had news items and an attractive 'clean' design.

ACTION: Fr William to pursue website legibility and layout issues re devices with Graham Yare and to consider the addition of a section on baptisms and funerals.

c) Bulletin Redesign

A short discussion was held to suggest improvements to the weekly bulletin.

- It was suggested that in order to provide more space that some of weekly repeated information should be removed (replaced by an insert that could be made available to parishioners).
- Some would also like to see photos and more white space to improve legibility.
- Access to website version of Bulletin was thought to be difficult and could be better signposted.

Certain limitations were noted e.g. coloured side of bulletin is pre-printed and only 1 side of newsletter remains for all parish notices. Amount of new copy received for inclusion also affects content and layout (e.g. when too many items the information is abbreviated with references to atrium posters, but if too little news standard fillers are often used).

ACTION: Fr William to consider above suggestions for improvement of Bulletin.

7. Parish Endorsed Charitable Causes

Jeff McGillan reported that he had recently obtained addresses and written to Fr Francis (Tanzania) and Fr Matthew and Fr Justin (Burkina Faso) seeking feedback on the use of past donations from the Parish.

Subject to feedback that may be received from African parishes (with a deadline by the next meeting) the PPC will consider continuation of support for the above causes, or will seek to identify new recipients.

New envelopes for donations (including Gift Aid instructions, and invitation to set up standing orders) would be introduced in early 2016.

It was noted that Stephen Walker had mentioned a Malawi charity in the written Finance Report which may be considered in future discussions.

ACTION: Jeff McGillan to alert PPC re. any feedback received from Tanzania or Burkina Faso to help inform future PPC discussions on Parish endorsed charitable causes.

JM also noted that all handwritten financial records re J&P had now been transcribed into Excel spreadsheets.

Named signatories to St Mary's charitable bank accounts were also in the process of being updated to include: Jeff McGillan, Harry Boucher and another.

8. Proclaim '15 : Year of Mercy

Fr William wished to explore with the PPC two ideas to help support the Pope and Bishop's new evangelization campaign 'Year of Mercy'.

a) Public Sacrament of Reconciliation

Fr William proposed an event where all interested Catholics could receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a public place (Castle or Market Place); this in a similar manner as the Sacrament is administered in the 'Year 2000' events at Walsingham.

Feedback from PPC included:

- Attendance would not be to everyone's taste, and that courage would be required from both Priest and attendees in such a public setting.
- Concern over how many people would attend (role of PPC members?), and if this activity would be readily understood by the general public.
- Timing and location would need to be carefully considered, partly to minimise potential abuse but also to maximise the impact.
- It was suggested this initiative might be better performed in a more 'Catholic' environment e.g. within School grounds.

b) Sacrament of Anointing Invitation Service

Fr William suggested the hosting of a special Sacrament of Anointing Service at St Mary's inviting the sick (and helpers) who may be identified through the SVP.

Feedback from members included:

- Would need to ensure helpers knew they would not be eligible for the actual anointing; this sacrament is intended only for the sick.
- Location of Church was approved (i.e. not suitable for a 'public' open air event).
- Initiative was unanimously welcomed.

9. Parish Appraisal Questionnaire to those who have dropped away

Fr William had circulated in advance a Parish Appraisal Questionnaire (and other papers) currently in use at Portsmouth Diocese. He requested comment re. the proposed introduction of a similar survey of non-attending Catholics at St Mary's.

Chris Clissitt suggested it may be fruitful to wait until Portsmouth had completed their own survey and published feedback (and/or lessons learned e.g. were the results useful or meaningful) before it was introduced in Knaresborough.

It was also observed by PPC members that the identification and contacting of non-attendees in the Parish could prove challenging.

The contrary view was also represented, namely that this survey should be part of our missionary activity now.

ACTION: Fr William agreed to defer, and revisit the issue following the conclusion (and results) of the Portsmouth Diocese Survey.

10. Report on Finance

A *Finance Report* paper had been submitted in advance by Stephen Walker.

It was noted that Steven Perry had requested assistance with the management of *The Old School*. Fr William responded that he had set up a small committee to assist in SP's duties.

There was no further discussion of finance matters.

11. Report on School

A *Report on School to PPC* paper had been submitted in advance by Paul Jackson.

There was no further discussion of School matters, though note earlier school discussions - See Item 4) 4) above.

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

a) Fundraising

A *Fundraising Report* paper (and Autumn calendar of forthcoming events) had been submitted in advance by Sheila Lund.

There was no further discussion on Fundraising.

13. Thank You to Outgoing PCC Members

On behalf of PPC members and the wider Parish, Fr William thanked all council members who had now reached the end of their elected term of office, namely;

- Charlotte Burrell (Formation)
- Sheila Lund (Interaction)

All were reminded that elections for all vacant PPC positions would be held on Sunday 31st January.

Martin Mayhew had been invited by Fr William to continue for another period on the PPC as an Appointed Member.

14. Any Other Business

No items of AOB were raised.

15. Future Meetings

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 18th February 2016

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 21st April 2016

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 21st July 2016

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 20th October 2016

[PPC Elections: Sunday 31st January 2016 after all three Sunday masses]

[AGM: Sunday 8th May 2016 after 10 am Mass]

16. Final Prayer

Fr. William closed the meeting with a prayer.