

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Thursday 21st April 2016

Present:

- Fr William Wright (Acting Chair)

Appointed

- Joanne Brennan
- Chris Clissitt
- Paul Jackson (School)
- Martin Mayhew

Elected

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

Secretary: Chris Senior (Note Taker)

Apologies: Jeff McGillan (Activities), Stephen Walker (Finance)

1. **Opening Reading** was led by Fr. William
2. **The minutes of the PPC meeting on 25th February 2016**

CORRECTION: Title: Date

Due to difficulties in attendance the 18th February PPC meeting was postponed; unfortunately the rescheduled date of 25th February was not reflected in the PPC minutes which mistakenly retained the original date.

CORRECTION: 6) 2015-16 Parish Appraisal: Remaining Aspirations
e) Standing during the Eucharistic Prayer

Fr William requested the following edit for clarification should be made to the minutes:

‘Fr William suggested that kneeling was a more devotional posture and also more passive, whereas standing was a more liturgical posture making it easier to be more actively engaged’.

The above edit to replace the previous phrase i.e.

‘Fr William further explained that kneeling was a more passive, reflective form of worship while standing indicated an engaged devotional practice that was more in-line with the Eucharistic Prayer’

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

3. **Matters Arising from the PPC February 2016 meeting (not itemised in the Agenda)**

6. a) Church Seating Layout

Fr William reported that Vince McGurk (Parish H&S Officer) had investigated the implications of permanently adopting the new seating layout. As a result some chairs had now been physically 'connected' to limit furniture movement and reduce the potential risk of blocking aisles and exits during an emergency evacuation.

Amanda Kelly also reported that she was arranging with Ian Burrell for the drafting of a floorplan to inform all parishioners of the seating plan and to assist in resetting the Church after events. It was noted that resetting the seating to the newly agreed plan was not solely the responsibility of the cleaning volunteers.

ACTION: Amanda Kelly to organise the issue of a seating plan drawing.

11) Parish Endorsed Charitable Causes

In Stephen Walker and Jeff McGillan's absences there was no update on progress over the relaunch of the African fundraising campaign. Fr William believed it important that the below actions should be completed, *and ideally progress reported by email to all PPC members, before the next scheduled PPC meeting.*

ACTION: Jeff McGillan and Stephen Walker to establish as soon as possible the financial mechanisms to relaunch the Africa Envelope scheme and to assist the Parish of Titao, Burkina Faso.

ACTION: Jeff McGillan as soon as possible to communicate with Fr Terry Madden, to establish contact with Fr Eteinne, and to address St Mary's Parish at Mass as part of a full relaunch of the scheme.

4. **Standing during Eucharistic Prayer: Implementation**

Fr William requested further feedback over the proposal to invite Mass attendees to stand rather than kneel during the Eucharistic prayer. A key issue previously identified by PPC members was the need to provide uniformity of practice across all Masses.

Mick Britton noted that the standing position would result in many parishioners suffering from a more restricted view of the Altar than when kneeling; this especially for children.

Charlotte Burrell observed that in her experience kneeling felt a more devotional and appropriate position for the Eucharistic Prayer.

A general consensus was that standing during the Eucharistic Prayer should be practised as a trial, and thought would be needed in educating and informing the Parish over the changes.

It was agreed parishioners should be invited to join in the practice of standing, and that Fr William provide repeated prior explanations of the reasons for the change.

If the practice was used during a 'trial' liturgical season (e.g. Advent through Christmas) it should also be possible to assess the experience via the following *2017 Parish Appraisal*.

Fr William thanked members for advice, and would consider implementation.

5. **Offering Gesture: Implementation**

Fr William requested a continuation of feedback over the proposal to invite Mass attendees to make an 'offering' open hand gesture during the offertory. Fr William had also circulated for further comment his written draft of a presentation to the Parish on this issue.

Amanda Kelly noted that remaining seated while performing the open hand gesture would be more acceptable to some parishioners, especially teenagers and young adults.

Martin Mayhew commented that seating and standing practice in Mass was not standardised in the wider Catholic Church, e.g. Masses in Europe had different (country-to-country) approaches.

It was agreed that this practice should be introduced as a trial, ideally to coincide with a liturgical season.

The text of Fr William's draft presentation was thought to be helpful and informative.

As with above item 4, it was felt issuing an invitation to join in the practice would be far more effective than a more formal instruction.

Fr William thanked members for their advice and suggestions.

ACTION: Fr William to investigate the impact of the initiative with younger people e.g. Confirmation Group.

6. **Tuning into the Liturgical Seasons**

Fr William wished to explore any opportunities to engage with the liturgical seasons and invited comments which may be informed (or in contrast to) practices in the 'commercial year'.

It was commented (for obvious reasons) that the Liturgy matched the seasons, and therefore regular Church attendees were likely to maintain a very strong sense of the liturgical year. However for those outside the Church awareness of the season was likely to be very limited not least due to the distortions of the commercial year e.g. 'extension' of Christmas and Easter sales periods.

It was suggested that the use of Banners (which might be created by parishioners as a useful community building project), and flowers, colours, the new projection screens and other decorations could help more strongly express the liturgical season within the church itself.

7. Consideration of relocating the Holy Stoop

Fr William requested feedback on the suggested move of the Stoop into the centre-rear of the Church.

The meeting was adjourned to allow members to inspect the stoop which had been moved to its proposed new location.

On reconvening, key comments from PPC members are summarised as follows:

- Members fully understood the aim of drawing parishioners into the heart of the church before taking their seats.
- The orientation of the church and the use of two entrances (where the 'side' garden approach is regarded as the 'main' entrance) meant parishioners were not likely to welcome the more convoluted route required.
- A more traditional church layout would support the proposed location in the centre-rear; but this was not the case for the layout at St Marys.
- It was suspected that the new location could create an access obstruction problem (re. health and safety) in any emergency evacuation.
- Some members were not convinced that the aesthetics of the church appearance were improved by the proposed location of the Stoop.
- It was suggested as an alternative that the Font could be placed in the (proposed) new Stoop location, and the Stoop be located to the current Font position; which was more accessible and convenient to the 'garden' door entrance for parishioners.

8. Activities Ministries : Re-categorisation as Mission activity

To reflect the 'missionary' practice of the church Fr William suggested the name of the 'Activities Ministry' could be more helpfully and accurately retitled the 'Missionary Ministries.'

The PPC fully supported the suggestion, albeit in the absence of Jeff McGillan whose views should be sought (as the representative of the current 'Activities Ministries').

A related suggestion was moving the remit for the Shop from the 'Support Ministry' to 'Activities'. However following discussions it was agreed that the current categorisation for the Shop should be retained, while acknowledging –like many parish activities – that the Shop did have an important 'missionary' aspect.

9. Advertising the 24th December 4:30pm Mass

Fr William sought continued member feedback over the desirability of advertising the 4.30pm children's mass within the parish. This to help manage (reduce) the extremely high attendances, which in past years had seen many parishioners unable to get into the Church and to redistribute attendees to the three Christmas Masses.

NB - Current practice is only to publicise the 4.30pm Mass within the School, but not to advertise the service in either *Churches Together in Knaresborough* (Christmas) publicity, or the Weekly Parish Bulletin.

Fr William confirmed the 4:30pm Mass is held too early to be regarded as a Christmas Holy Day of obligation.

- It was felt that a good number of attendees would only attend the 4.30pm Mass regardless of the other services on offer.
- Any attendance should be regarded as a good thing, and the service is a unique and valuable opportunity to reach out to non-practising Catholics (and non-Catholics) who might otherwise not attend any religious service in the year.
- Some parishioners probably did (mistakenly) regard the 4.30pm Mass as fulfilling the requirements of Christmas Obligation.
- Attendance was likely to remain very high regardless of any reduction in publicity, this as the tradition of the service was strong, and was known to extend to families reuniting at the season as part of a 'family' Christmas ritual.

It was felt that the 4.30pm service should be advertised in a minimal fashion: in School, and within the Weekly Bulletin (as it did represent a Parish activity) although a clear statement of the aim and intent of the service should also be made.

The question was raised over the deferral of the 4.30pm service on years when Christmas Day occurred on a Sunday; and the near timing conflict with the Vigil Mass. As this would next occur in 2016 Fr William would consider further.

10. Time of Easter Vigil

A suggestion to consider changing Easter Vigil time from 8.30 to 7.30 was withdrawn as the earlier time would result in Mass occurring during daylight hours.

11. Bond End Frontage

A discussion (supported by Fr William's advance documentation) related to the replacement of the current 'Great War memorial' Crucifix on the Bond End aspect of St Mary's.

PPC members fully supported the idea of replacing the current Crucifix with a more appropriate and welcoming 'Risen Christ' figure. It was felt a new sculpture (likely to be 1.5 x life size in fitting with the site) would help create a far more attractive aspect to St Mary's Church in what is currently an unattractive face of the building.

Paul Jackson raised possible religious ambiguity of a new figure, compared to the very clear Christian (and Catholic) impact of the present Crucifix. However it was felt a careful selection of an appropriate sculpture, combined with a new external noticeboard and signage should address such concerns.

It was noted that careful thought would be required over sensitively replacing the current memorial during the Centenary commemorations of the 1914-18 war. Fr William noted Ampleforth Abbey would be able to house the old Crucifix, deposited in its own Museum.

Issues re planning would need to be addressed, as would expense (e.g. comparing the commissioning of a sculpture v the installation of a 'standard' arts-piece from suppliers).

Fr William preferred to hand the project over to others to pursue e.g. to identify possible sources of artwork, establish costs and resources needed and welcomed suggestions.

ACTION: Fr William to approach Philip Burnett re. advice over likely Planning Permissions routines required to replace the existing Crucifix on Bond End.

12. Welcome

Item deferred until next meeting

ACTION: 'Welcome' to be raised as a future Agenda item.

13. **Blue Plaque**

Fr William requested a Deliberative Vote from all attending PPC members over the decision to install a Blue Plaque on St Mary's Church; as researched by Stephen Walker.

The vote followed a short discussion over the proposed text and purpose of the plaque.

A secret ballot was held and the proposed installation of a Blue Plaque was passed with 8 votes in favour, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

In addition: The draft layout of the plaque was circulated beforehand. Fr William confirmed the 'Gate of Heaven' sub-header would be omitted. It was agreed the phrasing 'Roman Catholic' should be retained to remove any ambiguity e.g. with Anglican Catholics, and a slight reworking (or potential omission) might be needed to the final paragraph e.g. questioning use of the adjective 'vibrant' and references to the Old School as a community venue.

ACTION: In response to comments over the draft text of the Blue Plaque Fr William would approach Stephen Walker to further revise the inscription.

14. **Committee Reports (PPC 5.1)**

A number of written reports were circulated in advance. The Reports received (and any comments from the PPC meeting noted) were as follows:

a) Finance Report (Stephen Walker).

No comments to the previously circulated paper.

b) Fundraising Report (Sheila Lund).

No comments to the previously circulated paper.

c) School Report (Paul Jackson).

Paul Jackson tabled a School Report which further clarified the situation re. the changed senior leadership at St Mary's since the School joined the Bishop Wheeler Trust, and in particular the practical necessity for the new roles of the newly appointed 'Executive Headteacher' (Alison Ashworth) and 'Head of School' (Helen Tomlinson).

Martin Mayhew suggested members of the parish would welcome a short verbal explanation of the new School leadership structure; ideally as a short address after Sunday Masses.

ACTION: Paul Jackson to give a short address to all Parishioners over the changes at St Mary's Primary School.

15. Future Meetings

19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 21st July 2016
19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 20th October 2016
19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 23rd February 2017
19:00 – 20:30 Thursday 4th May 2017

Parish AGM: Sunday 8th May 2016 after 10 am Mass

ACTION: All PPC members to attend the forthcoming Parish AGM *if at all possible*.

16. Final Prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer.