

## St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

### Minutes of meeting Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020

#### Present:

- Fr William Wright (Chair)

#### *Appointed*

- Paul Jackson (School)
- Chris Clissitt
- Simon Stockdale
- Barbara Watson
- Vince McGurk

#### *Elected*

- Teresa Britton (Liturgy)
- Amanda Kelly (Support)
- Sheila Lund (Interaction)
- Jules Finn (Mission)
- Frances Watson (Formation)

Paul Coman (Secretary to PPC )

- **Apologies:** None

#### 1. Opening Reading and Prayer

Led by Fr. William

#### 2. Apologies

As recorded above

#### 3. Parish Priest introduction

Fr William highlighted key issues being addressed by the Parish during current Covid-19 related 'lockdown'.

- Use of Information Technology (IT) This was enabling Parish committees to function. The Finance committee had met via Microsoft Teams recently.
- Support for vulnerable parishioners The SVP had identified and was supporting those parishioners who may have greater vulnerability.
- Livestreaming of Masses This was taking place with the use of borrowed equipment. Fr William was in dialogue with both the Finance committee and Robinson's Integrated Solutions (IT equipment suppliers) regarding purchase of appropriate equipment to continue this service.

#### **4. The minutes of PPC meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

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

#### **5. Actions and matters arising from the PPC 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 meeting (not in the Agenda)**

##### Action point 6 (Ampleforth Apology Card)

**ACTION:** Fr William to include reference to victims of abuse within the bidding prayers.

Fr William explained that the sudden and significant adjustments required by 'lockdown' had led to this action remaining outstanding.

**ACTION:** Fr William is to seek to arrange 'scripture champion' support for Advent.

In view of changes imposed by 'lockdown', Fr William has requested scripture champion presentation in Advent 2020.

All other outstanding Actions were completed, or otherwise raised as Agenda items.

#### **6. Review of the shortened trial period for setting aside the printed texts for the Liturgy of the Word**

Fr William explained that, during Lent, there had been low take up of the hard copies of both gospel reflection and readings which had been made available in the Atrium. For the gospel reflection, take up ranged between 0 copies and a peak of 5 copies (peak on 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent). For the readings, take up ranged from 0 copies and a peak of 3 copies (peak on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent). Additionally, 10 hard copies of both the gospel reflection and the readings had been provided for housebound parishioners. Fr William suggested that low take up could be interpreted as signalling that a large majority of parishioners were happy to dispense with the hard copy texts and to refer to the Parish website or to listen only rather than read. He stated that he was keen to hear the thoughts of PPC members.

Debate within the PPC elicited the following key points:

- Parishioners may have been willing to move away from hard copy texts as a commitment to the concept of the 'trial period', rather than because an absence of hard copy texts was their settled preference.
- Some parishioners may have not yet become clear regarding location of hard copies within the Atrium.

- Due to Covid-19 concerns which preceded 'lockdown', the period of Lent this year had, perhaps, been subject to unusual fluctuations in Mass attendance and there also may have been reluctance by some parishioners to pick up hard copy.
- There was value in fulfilling the spirit of 'trial period', when circumstances for attending Mass were more typical.
- A suggestion was made that low take up of hard copies perhaps justified the Parish in ordering fewer hard copies for the remainder of the trial period. Fr William explained that, unfortunately, copies were printed so far in advance that this not feasible.
- The most satisfactory conclusion to the 'trial period' would involve a formal opportunity for evaluation.
- Handing out next Sunday's hard copy documents at the Atrium door to parishioners as they depart Mass would be a good way of ensuring access to the hard copies as preparatory reading for Mass the following Sunday and provide hard copy for those whose strong preference was to read at Mass.

Fr William summarised key points arising as being:

Concern that the 'trial period' would need an extension or a 're-run';

Considerable support among PPC members for handing out the following Sunday's readings as preparation for Mass.

## **7. 'Lockdown' and livestreaming of Mass**

Fr William explained that he would appreciate PPC members' advice regarding pastoral issues raised by livestreaming of Mass. He reported that he had received positive feedback regarding the livestreaming of Mass. This had been made possible through use of borrowed equipment that would soon need to be returned to its owner.

- Possible purchase by Parish of IT equipment to support livestreaming Fr William updated the PPC on the money pledged to date for the purchase of equipment to support continued livestreaming of Mass during and beyond 'lockdown'. This was now at £4,600 (approx.) and so had reached the level of anticipated cost. Pledges continued to be received.
- Supporting housebound parishioners through livestreaming Fr William reported that he had discussed the support of housebound parishioners with Angela Smith, who had agreed to contact carers with a view to facilitating, where possible, the viewing of livestreamed Mass by housebound parishioners. It had become apparent that some housebound parishioners living in their own homes lacked the IT infrastructure (e.g. Smart TV) to access livestreamed Mass. Within discussion, the suggestion was made of using any surplus funds raised via pledges for church based IT equipment to support housebound parishioners living in their own home, but without the essential domestic IT equipment. Fr William

stated that email contact of individual donors could be a means of seeking their consent to use pledged money to support of housebound parishioners.

PPC members raised several issues. Firstly, determining whether the absence of equipment related to lack of money may be both necessary and challenging. Secondly, financial support may be necessary beyond initial purchase e.g. to service subscription/s, costs of repair/maintenance. Thirdly, the re-routing of some funds that had donated for church equipment would require explicit consent from donors. Obtaining explicit consent could prove challenging. Several PPC members felt it may be wise to stick to the 'tight' purpose expressed originally when the appeal for donations was launched. Linked to this, there was currently some uncertainty about final pricing of IT equipment for use in church.

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), child protection and safeguarding Fr William explained that he had ascertained that neither GDPR nor child protection / safeguarding guidance deemed livestreaming of Mass inappropriate now or post 'lockdown'. An important and built-in safeguard was that streaming was only available 'live' and not as a recording.
- Considerations regarding participants in the Mass with high visibility Fr William stated that consent to be on camera from some highly visible participants within a livestreamed Mass post 'lockdown' e.g. readers, servers and acolytes, should be sought via an 'opt in' procedure. He thought also that the livestreaming of Holy Communion would need consideration as it would be wise to ensure that the faces of those in the congregation were not filmed. One option was to 'blank out' Holy Communion. Several PPC members felt a 'blank out' inappropriate for such a key aspect of the Mass. An alternative suggestion was that a camera angle be used to ensure only the backs of communicants were filmed. One PPC member suggested that an arrangement whereby one of the Masses on each Sunday was not livestreamed may be welcomed by those keen to not be on camera.
- Potential impact of post 'lockdown' livestreaming on church attendance Several PPC members wondered whether livestreaming of Mass post 'lockdown' would discourage some from attending church and, perhaps, result in those parishioners failing to fulfil the obligation to 'attend' Mass each Sunday. Fr William explained that it was not yet clear whether watching a livestream Mass at home would constitute fulfilment of the obligation to 'attend' Mass. He thought it likely that able bodied parishioners would be expected to attend in person, rather than online.
- Measures being taken within churches in European countries moving out of 'lockdown' Fr William updated PPC members on measures being introduced in Catholic churches in France and Germany as each country eased 'lockdown' measures. These included use of masks and gloves, absence of an offertory procession, social distancing, use of hand sanitiser by the priest and, during Holy Communion, both priest and communicants refraining from speech.

## **8. Submission from parishioners and how to cover these in Council meetings**

Fr William reported two questions raised by the Secretary to the PPC, following compilation of minutes of PPC meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Firstly, should anonymity should be afforded to

parishioners making a submission? Secondly, do PPC members find provision of an email text, where email has been the form of submission, preferable to the issue paraphrased by Fr William as Chair?

PPC members thought anonymity appropriate, as discussion should focus on the 'issue', rather than 'person'. PPC members felt that receipt of anonymised email text (where available) in advance of the meeting would be helpful.

**ACTION:** Where a parishioner's submission has been made via email, Fr William to forward PPC members the anonymised email text in advance of the forthcoming PPC meeting,

## **9. 2020 Parish Appraisal trial period without printed texts for the Liturgy of the Word**

The draft Appraisal document was considered.

Several PPC members considered that the draft closed question focused on the trial period without printed texts for the Liturgy of the Word may fail to elicit important nuance regarding parishioners' views regarding the absence of printed texts. It was suggested that a qualitative approach that allowed an open comment would be more useful.

Fr William wondered, on reflection, whether the draft question on parishioners' views regarding the handover of the Parish to the Diocese of Leeds was redundant, as nothing could now be done to change that event or process.

**ACTION:** Fr William to consider replacing closed question with an open comment space for the question pertaining to views on the trial period without printed texts for the Liturgy of the Word

**ACTION:** Fr William to delete the draft question regarding views on handover of Parish to Diocese of Leeds.

**ACTION:** Implementation of Parish Appraisal to be delayed until after the end of 'lockdown'.

## **10. Finance Report**

Fr William thanked Stephen Walker (Chair, Finance Committee) for the report he had submitted and asked for questions or comments.

Chris Clissitt made the following 3 points:

- A surplus had been recorded for financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. However, fundraising income had declined for several reasons, including impact of 'lockdown'. The new budget forecast for financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, anticipated a deficit of £5,600. This forecast was based on 'lockdown' having ended by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- The amount of Offertory income via standing orders had increased from £29,000 to £35,000.
- The repair of the floor in the church represented a 3-5 years' financial commitment, with consultancy fees needing to be met early in that period.

A question was asked regarding the impact of the online 'text giving' option that had been in operation at livestreamed Masses. Fr William said these were few so far (in the region of a dozen).

### **11. School Report**

Paul Jackson made the following 3 points regarding impact of 'lockdown':

- Since 'lockdown' commenced, no more than 5 pupils had attended school in person on any school term time day, with no more than 2 pupils attending school in person on any one day during the Easter holidays.
- Staff had been present in school on a rota basis. The rota ensured a qualified first aider was always on site.
- Distance learning provision was being provided for pupils not physically present at school.

### **12. Reminder of dates**

PPC (all Monday 1900)  
20 Jul 2020, 19 Oct 2020, 22 Feb 2021

#### Proposed dates

10 May 2021 – (to avoid clash with May bank holiday)

03 May 2020 AGM after 10am Mass – reschedule to be decided

**ACTION:** Fr William to reschedule proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 AGM

### **13. Final Prayer**

The meeting closed with a prayer.