

St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting Monday 19th Oct 2020

Present:

- Fr William Wright (Chair)

Appointed

- Paul Jackson (School)
- Chris Clissitt
- Barbara Watson

Elected

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

Paul Coman (Secretary to PPC)

- **Apologies:** Vince McGurk, Simon Stockdale

1. Opening Reading and Prayer

Led by Fr. William

2. Apologies

As recorded above

3. Parish Priest introduction

Fr William has made the text of his introduction available and this has been emailed to PPC members as an accompanying document to these minutes.

4. Approval of PPC 20th July 2020 minutes

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

5. Actions / matters arising from the minutes of the PPC 20th July 2020 not itemised in the agenda)

Fr William noted that Vince McGurk was to provide a definition of 'clinically vulnerable' (Item 7, *PPC members' discussion of Diocese of Leeds guidance and the re-opening implications for St Mary's*, 2nd bullet point). Fr William confirmed this action had been completed.

6. School Report

Paul Jackson referred PPC members to his written report and highlighted the following points:

- All classes at St Mary's had been attending school from commencement of Autumn term in Sept 2020. The 94% school attendance rate is only slightly below that recorded prior to Covid-19;
- No Covid-19 cases had been recorded amongst pupils, though one pupil was currently awaiting test results. A number of pupils had self-isolated in accordance with UK track and trace requirements;
- Proposals for a new primary school in Knaresborough were supported by the Academy Council. Its support was based upon several factors. Firstly, the new school was intended to serve the new building developments in Knaresborough. Secondly, entry was to be staggered, commencing with Reception in the school's first year of operation. Thirdly, projections regarding pupil numbers forecast that, by 2027, the presence of new housing developments in Knaresborough would mean that St Mary's school numbers are not likely to be adversely affected by the new school;
- Each class at St Mary's is treated as a 'bubble';
- The curriculum has been adjusted to ensure gaps in knowledge resulting from 'lockdown' would be identified and addressed;
- The staff are to be commended for their commitment, which has been an important factor in a very successful start to the 20/21 school year;
- PPC members thanked Paul for his detailed and helpful report.
- Discussion took place regarding the rationale behind the report's reference to the increase of the Academy Council (formerly governing body) from eight to ten members, through recruitment an additional 'foundation' governor and an additional 'parent' governor. Paul explained that, in order to ensure smooth and timely succession, a person willing to serve as a foundation governor in future was now sought. This person would be 'co-opted' to the Academy Council, in the first instance. In terms of Academy Council balance, it would be helpful if the co-opted foundation governor had children in the early or lower years of schooling.

7. Mass and other sacraments – celebration of – assessment of recent and current adaptations

Fr William invited the thoughts of PPC members. The following points were made:

- We appear to be entering a more challenging time regarding the spread of Covid-19. Bearing in mind the age profile of parishioners, it may be wise to avoid physically attended Masses currently;
- The absence of physically attended Masses has a negative impact upon both valuable social interaction and is likely to have a negative impact on Parish finances;
- Given the technology recently purchased to support livestreaming, it is possible to now offer Masses with opportunity for physical attendance that are also livestreamed so that parishioners have a choice and do not feel, as some have indicated, that physical attendance is discouraged;
- PPC members' information regarding congregation sizes at physically attended Masses in other churches suggested that, overall, attendance patterns at physically attended Masses may be subject to considerable fluctuations. One PPC member had received information of high attendance numbers, while another PPC member had heard of low attendance numbers;
- While a range of provision, including physical attendance in some churches, is available currently across the Deanery, we should be mindful of the potential negative impact on St Mary's of physically attended Masses being offered only elsewhere. The longer the period that physically attended Masses were offered near to, but not at, St Mary's, the greater that potential negative impact on St Mary's is likely to be;
- Were a co-ordinated approach developed regarding provision of physically attended Masses across the Deanery, it would be important to ensure clear and effective communication to St Mary's parishioners regarding opportunities and arrangements;
- The complex Covid-19 situation suggests that, in the longer term, it may be important for parishioners to make their own informed and individual risk assessments regarding physical attendance;
- Some parishioners are likely to feel that, where they have the confidence to use cafes / restaurants etc, they should also be physically attending Mass;

Fr William thanked PPC members for their contributions and made the following observations:

- St Mary's does now have the technical capacity to livestream a physically attended Mass;

- Safeguarding is an issue that will be addressed prior to a jointly livestreamed and physically attended Mass taking place. In particular, the camera angle and its potential to capture parishioners, including children, and/or 'face on' participants (e.g. readers) means it would be essential to both appropriately inform and to secure consent.
- Combining livestream and physical attendance during current restrictions may compromise the current quality of the livestream experience of Mass. There would be no hymn singing and Fr William's current delivery of a livestreamed homily close to camera could not take place; and no drive through communion
- Impact of livestreamed only or partly livestreamed only attendance at Mass on finances awaits the forthcoming Finance Committee analysis. The substantial increase in standing order donations since 'lockdown' (now running at £2,949 per month) will, to some extent, offset the fact that physical attendance numbers are much lower than pre 'lockdown' and that physical attendees have not been encouraged to donate in cash. The Parish's overall financial position will also be affected by its expenditure pattern. The forthcoming Finance Committee meeting (scheduled 26th Oct 2020) is expected to offer the first solid indication of financial impact to date;
- Though accepting that some parishioners remain very keen to continue to donate in cash and grateful for their contribution, Fr William has encouraged take up of standing orders for two main reasons. Firstly, it eliminates risk of Covid-19 transmission. Secondly, it eliminates the need for volunteer 'counters' to record cash donation totals and take money to the bank.

8. Finance

Fr William explained that the scheduling of Parish Finance Committee meetings has been subject to amendment to synchronise with the Diocesan financial calendar. The Finance Committee meeting which will review data relating to the second quarter of the financial year would now be held on 26th October, 2020. Therefore, the PPC does not have October 2020 Finance Committee minutes to inform its considerations at today's meeting.

Chris Clissitt confirmed that subsequent Parish Finance Committee meetings would be held on dates appropriately in advance of PPC meetings and so Finance Committee minutes should be available to inform PPC meetings.

9. Parish income in a covid and post covid age

Fr William introduced this item by informing the PPC of the recent breakdown, beyond economic repair, of the Parish computer, and of the wider context against which the PPC could consider whether to advise computer replacement. Fr William explained that the computer has pre-covid produced the weekly bulletin and, supported tabulation cash donations and entry of totals on an Excel spreadsheet. A replacement would cost £600. Fr William noted that, during the last six months, though there have been occasional cash donations, the frequency of these has been low and not required use of the computer for tabulation. Additionally, the weekly bulletin has been placed on the Parish website, itself more widely used, with individuals printing off a hard copy of the bulletin to

take to other parishioners who are housebound or without internet access. Fr William thought it may be possible to recruit a volunteer to produce the weekly bulletin at home for the website. Additionally, though accepting that a low number of parishioners would continue to wish to make cash donations and that the Parish was grateful for these, for reasons of both hygiene and reduction of demand for volunteer support to count and transfer cash, there were grounds to encourage continuation of non-cash donations post-covid. Overall, there appeared to be an argument in favour of not spending £600 to replace the broken computer. Fr William invited the views of PPC members. Points made in discussion are summarised below:

- The possibility of managing infrequent and low volume cash donations without replacing the Parish computer was raised. It was suggested that the low amounts of cash donation anticipated henceforth be counted by volunteers at home and totals emailed to Fr William on a spreadsheet, obviating the requirement to replace the Parish computer;
- Concern was expressed regarding second collections. Would the second collections be negatively affected if the Parish maintained or intensified its move to cashless donations? Fr William appreciated that this was a good point, adding that there were potential systems under consideration for straightforward giving to second collections via a 'device' rather than as cash. One PPC member observed that there may be a significant number of parishioners accustomed to bringing cash, but not a card, to Mass.

10. Bulletin

Fr William explained that in the current context where all Masses are being livestreamed, the bulletin is available only via the website. He asked PPC members to consider what the future may hold for the bulletin. Points made in discussion are summarised below:

- The importance of bulletin information, sometimes occasionally or intermittently and for a small number of parishioners, should be borne in mind. Parishioners could find useful reminders / updates regarding anniversaries, parishioners who are sick and the dedication of Masses;
- The possibility of emailing the bulletin to all parishioners via a group email was raised. Fr William wondered whether more explicit direction to the website would require less time to administer;
- One PPC member suggested that 'non-internet access' parishioners could be paired with a volunteer parishioner with internet access, facilitating both delivery of bulletin and social connections / friendships between parishioners;
- One PPC member pointed out that visitors had been offered opportunity to become better informed about St Mary's via the hard copy bulletin and we would want to continue to offer this information to visitors. In response, the suggestion was made that a single hard copy bulletin could be made visible on the wall in the Atrium, with an invitation to photograph this via a mobile phone.

11. Reminder of dates

Chris Clissitt advised that the October 2021 PPC meeting may need to move to November in order to ensure it is informed by October 2021 Finance Committee minutes.

PPC (all Monday 1900)

22 Feb 2021, 10 May 2021

Proposed dates

October 2021 – date pending FC date

February 2021 – date pending FC date

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

12. Final Prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer.