

Parish Pastoral Council, 26 September, 7.30pm

Present: Steve Warde (Chair), Jim O'Sullivan, Ciarán Ward, Roberta Canning, May Agustin, Nora Darby, Deacon Geoff Cook, Michanne Haynes-Prempeh, Edward Acton, Ronald Haynes, Margaret Martin, Fr Simon Davies, Guillaume Henniquin, Sarah Sykes (Minutes)

Apologies: Leonie Isaacson

1. Minutes and matters arising

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Fr Simon Davies who is currently looking after the Parish until a permanent parish priest can be appointed.

The Minutes of the July meeting were accepted as an accurate record. There were no Matters Arising.

2. The latest on a change of Parish Priest and our Self Appraisal document

The Bishop has invited the Adorno Fathers (CRM) a religious Order of priests and brothers founded by Saint Francis Caracciolo, Venerable Augustine Adorno and Father Fabrizio Caracciolo in 1588 to take on our Parish. This Order is the same one that Fr Andrews (who stayed at our parish briefly earlier this year) is a member of. This requires our new priest(s) to go through the visa application process, which usually takes about 2 months. The PPC was strongly supportive of the idea that there can be a handover period between Fr Simon and the any priest(s) before he leaves the Parish. He said that English will be either their second or third language and highlighted that there will be a period of adjustment and learning as they come to grips with running a large parish in what, to them, is a foreign country.

Fr Simon was grateful to have a copy of our Self Appraisal document which he found very useful for giving an overview of the parish. He noted that it would also be useful for it to include information about the church/presbytery keys, door codes, the opening and closing times of the church, information on how the things work in the church and an idea of what the Parish Priests typical day might look like.

Steve said that the Appraisal document is on the parish website and that there will be an invite for feedback in the newsletter shortly. We particularly need additional input from the parish groups.

A number of comments and suggestions were made on the document during the meeting.

Fr Simon suggested that a slight redraft or accompanying note to simplify or explain some of the English might be needed for the new priest(s). The document can be checked for best English, but the priests will need to check in with the PPC on anything which is not clear.

Thanks were given to Steve and Edward for putting the Appraisal document together.

ACTION

- Assess the SA document for clear English and circulate on the Parish website for parishioner comments. Integrate additional information/corrections/suggestions – Steve Warde

3. Practical arrangements (Mass cover, home visits, locking/unlocking the church)

Fr Simon will take a regular day off each week and requested that a rota for the opening and closing the church be put together. Guillaume volunteered to organise this. As Setsuko tends to open up in the mornings when there is Mass it will mainly be evenings that need covering.

Fr Simon will continue to say Mass per the current Mass schedule but suggested that the Tuesday 8am Mass should be rescheduled. He will canvass opinion on what might be the best time and asked for input from PPC members over the following week. He confirmed that the Dominicans will continue to cover some of the Masses, as they have been doing for several years.

Fr Simon is reviewing the list of sick people in the parish and working closely with the SVP group regarding those who need home visits. Fr Simon said that he would like the opportunity to visit everyone on the list who may not regularly see a priest. He will aim to visit everyone once every 4-6 weeks, with weekly visits being made by others in between. He plans to hand out the pyxes during Mass to Eucharistic Ministers who take Communion out to those who cannot come to Mass.

There will be an announcement at Mass and a notice in the newsletter asking that anyone who is making home visits to contact him with details. Jim O'Sullivan asked for access to the final list so that he can check that all have had a DBS check done. Steve volunteered to check that all are on the parish database.

ACTION

- Organise a rota for opening and closing the church at the beginning and end of the each day
– Guillaume Henniquin
- Create a Master List of those who need/are having home visits by a priest/parishioner
– Fr Simon with SVP and others as necessary
- Check final list and confirm all have DBS certificate – Jim O'Sullivan
- Check this information is recorded on the parish database – Steve Warde

4. Office and staffing including update on new Administrator

Edward reported that the position for our new Parish Administrator had been advertised in various local churches as well as in the general community. The interviews had been conducted by Leonie Isaacson, Christine Knight, Steve Warde, and Edward. Emanuela started work on 12th Sept. Thanks were given to Debbie Banaszkiwicz who has been covering the office as a volunteer over the summer. She has agreed to stay on for a period to help Emanuela settle into the job. Office open hours have changed to Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am-3pm. It was thought that Emanuela would like newsletter notices in by Wednesday, but this needs to be confirmed and noted in the newsletter.

ACTION

- Check on preferred timing for submission newsletter items and put this in the newsletter
– Steve Warde

5. Financial Planning

Jim O'Sullivan reported on behalf of the Parish Finance Committee that with the formation of the PPC there is an opportunity to rebalance how the parish's financial planning is done. A summary of his report is attached at the end of these minutes. Ideally, suggestions for projects and expenditure should now be fed to the PPC and then once agreed, passed onto the Finance committee, who would assess whether the cost can be afforded and then continue to monitor the expenditure. The PPC and Core Teams are invited to feed into the current list of expenditure as described in the attached report.

He requested that project and spending suggestions be sent to the Chair of the PPC so that the suggestions can be discussed and put forward to the Finance committee before its next meeting. Ron pointed out that there are several projects underway and in the pipeline for the Tech group and it was agreed that these should be listed for completeness' sake.

The Diocesan Jubilee year is next year and we need to canvass ideas for celebrations and include an approximate cost for these activities.

Fr Simon Blakesley's name should be added to the Parish Priest list plaque.

The Finance Committee has already authorised expenditure for the holes left in the external walls of the church by the changeover of the heating system, and the work will be scheduled shortly.

Jim reminded the Meeting that any project costing over £5000 requires at least 3 quotes and Diocesan approval. Project expenditure under £5,000 can be approved by the Finance Committee.

ACTION

- Submit project suggestions to the chair of the PPC by the end of October for consideration by the PPC and parish Finance group – All members of the PPC
- Canvass ideas, and estimate costs, for the Diocesan Jubilee celebrations in the parish - All members of the PPC

6. Buildings and Grounds

Christine Knight is lead on the reroofing project which includes new Velux windows in the Office, Library Room and parish hall. Scaffolding is due to be erected on 18th October. Two skips will be placed in the disabled bays opposite the church entrance. The work will probably last a couple of weeks. It was suggested that temporarily reallocating the Disabled bays could be done.

Fr Simon reported that the Presbytery needs a substantial amount of work for it to be a more comfortable place to live, this includes new carpets/flooring and general redecoration. It was noted that these items are already on our list of planned capital expenditure and there is no reason not to proceed with them now. Debbie has sent carpet quotations to James and Riq of the Finance committee. Parish cleaner, Natasha, has been offered some extra hours to do a deep clean starting with the kitchen. When it comes to new flooring going down a working party to move the furniture may be needed.

Parking System – Debbie and Steve feel that the current system is problematic to run and maintain. Legitimate users are getting fined and although we are able to cancel up to three fines a month, more fines have been issued to legitimate users which leads to a continual negotiation with the parking company. It is questionable whether the administrative overhead matches justifies the benefit of the system. It was suggested that we investigate what the terms are for changing or cancelling the contract or operating arrangements with the current company operating the parking system and suggested that we shut the system down while we look into how we can resolve the regular issuing of tickets to those with legitimate business at the church.

We should put additional notices, including in the newsletter, reminding people that cars parking in our car park need to be registered on the system, but it was decided not to shut down the current system until alternative methods for controlling illegitimate use of the car park.

ACTION

- Investigate alternative parking management systems for the parish car park
– Office/Admin Core team

7. Diocesan Consultation

The Bishop has sent a briefing document and two questions for the PPC to consider. This is a three-stage consultation process taking place across the Diocese. Stage one was a Clergy consultation. Stage two is consulting the Parish organisational bodies such as the PPC. Stage three will be to consult parishioners and other religious organisations in the Diocese.

ACTION

- Circulate the bishop's questions to the PPC. - Steve Warde
- Ideas for how we might best discuss these questions as a group before December welcome.

8. Liturgy, Education and Faith sharing (Roberta Canning)

There have been two evening meetings this month: 1. Parenting teenagers and 2. Cross of the Moment. Both had a low turnout, but it is hoped to offer a chance to discuss the Cross of the Moment at another time as Fr Simon is interested in doing further sessions to hopefully a bigger audience. It would be a good opportunity to open this up to other parishes.

The planned 'Inbetweeners' group, being developed to plug the gap between First Holy Communion preparation and Confirmation, will hold its inaugural meeting on 9 November. Before plans are made, this meeting will be an opportunity to see who attends and what people would like to commit to helping with for this parent-led project. In general, the plan will be to devise an evening with a mixture of activities, adoration and catechesis.

Currently on hold are a music workshop and Youth Mass on Youth Sunday due to the change of priest.

It's hoped that there will be at least one study session on Luke during Advent.

Day time options rather than evenings are being considered, particularly as the evenings start to draw in, with the idea that people may have more flexible work schedules these days.

A new altar server training period starts this month. There are 10 new candidates. A request that servers should be rota'd across all Masses was made, particularly with the aim of ensuring more servers at the 9.30am and other Masses. Steve responded that a rota may not be the best way to achieve this, but the hope is that the new training will result in more servers at both 9.30am and 11am.

9. Communications (Ronald Haynes)

The group aims to meet monthly. They are considering revisiting the newsletter and expanding it. Work is ongoing on the next generation website. Work on interacting with other Christian denominations is also ongoing.

10. Social Activities

Fr Simon B's leaving party and Mass were a great success and very enjoyable occasion. Thanks to Nora Darby for organising Fr Simon B's leaving party. And thanks also to Margaret Martin for finishing off the organising when Nora fell ill.

Nora reported that the Social Core Team was more or less disbanded by default as she got almost no response from the team when organising the leaving party. Going forward she suggested that

individual social events should be run by relevant parish groups. The next social event should be considered once we know the arrival details for our new priest(s).

11. Safeguarding

Jim O'Sullivan reported that the recording of attendance at Children's Liturgy is now happening at the 9.30am Mass and, although not confirmed, is also likely to be happening at the 11am Mass too.

12. AOB

Ciarán announced that there will be a Mass of Anointing on 12th October at 3pm

13. Date for next meeting - Tuesday 10th December at 7.30pm

Financial planning report

Reminder of the current situation:

- Our parish reserves are very healthy (£275K at start of the year).
- Our reserves policy is to hold funds to cover 6 months operating costs plus 3 months of staff salary costs. In addition, funds to cover the costs identified in the quinquennial survey of buildings and other big projects identified by the Parish, over and above that reasonably expected to be funded from regular income.
- Even with these accounted for, there is headroom of at least £100K.
- Income remains strong and regularly covers day-to-day costs - and was budgeted to pay for a Pastoral Assistant this year.

Current top priority list of quinquennial / 'big' projects:

- Heating (done!).
- Re-roofing the back of the Parish Rooms + Velux windows (underway).
- Reflooring, redecoration, insulation of the presbytery (now getting underway).
- Redecoration of the sacristy (and office?) (repair water damage once roof & windows are fixed).
- Remaining windows in the church.
- Redecoration of the church.
- Fencing / front wall and external redecoration.
- Solar panels.

Proposed process for the PPC over next 3 months:

- Please all go away and consider these two questions:
 - Are there any big projects we should consider adding to (or removing from) this list?
 - Are there any smaller but significant expenses (e.g., between £500 and £1,000) that we should consider adding to the regular budget for 2025 (i.e., things that might not be covered by our normal outgoings)?
- Please make any proposals for this by the end of October. Submit to Steve to collate.
- If needed, we might have a discussion before (or at?) the next Fin Com, open to any PPC members who are interested.
- Fin Com to draft budget in November.
- PPC to review this budget at our meeting in December.
- Parish Priest to approve final budget for submission to diocese in January.