

Parish Pastoral Council, 10 December 2024,

Start: 7.30pm

List of attendees:

PPC Members: Stephen Warde (Chair), Michanne Haynes-Prempeh, Sarah Sykes, Fr Simon, Fr Robin, Geoff Cook, Edward Acton, Guillaume Hennequin, Jim O'Sullivan, Leonie Issacson, Margaret Martin, May Agustin, Nora Darby, Roberta Canning, Ronald Haynes

Parish Administrator: Emanuela Di Pietro (minute-taker)

Other parishioners: Mary-Jane O'Sullivan

Apologies: Helena Judd

Agenda

1. Apologies, Minutes, Matters Arising
2. Plans for Fr Robin's arrival
3. Arrangements for Christmas
4. PPC Officer positions
5. Financial planning
6. Diocesan consultation
7. Liturgy, Education & Faith Sharing
8. Buildings & Grounds / Tech Group
9. Communications
10. Office & Staffing
11. Parish Groups – SVP, CAFOD
12. Safeguarding
13. AoB

1. Minutes and matters arising

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Fr Robin who will be the new Parish Priest at St Laurence's.

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

2. Plans for Fr Robin's arrival

Fr Robin introduced himself: religious career and his family of origins. He stated that the Adorno Fathers wanted to open a mission in England and that he also needed a change in his life. Therefore, his appointment as the new Parish priest at St Laurence's. It is expected that two more

priests will be coming to live and work at St Laurence's. The exact date of arrival of Fr Robin and his two colleagues is not known yet. It will be in mid-January.

Fr Simon is ensuring that all processes will be in place for Fr Robin's arrival. In these 2 days of Fr Robin's visit here at St Laurence's Fr Simon will drive him around the borders of the Parish and they will also meet with the Dominicans at Blackfriars.

As soon as we know the date, we can mark it with a coffee after an 11am Sunday Mass. After a month from the arrival, we can organize a meeting with all the parish groups to present their activities. We will invite all parishioners to this "Open Day" – so it will be an opportunity both to introduce the Parish to Fr Robin and for groups to promote themselves to parishioners.

Fr Simon will let us know when he will be leaving as soon as he knows.

ACTION:

- Organise a welcome for Fr Robin at his first 11am Mass – Steve
- Organise a Parish Open Day. Tentative date agreed: 22nd February, 3pm-5pm – Steve / Michanne

3. Arrangements for Christmas:

Nora Darby informs that the arrangements are the same as last year. At Fr Simon's initiative, there will be, however, something new: New Year's Eve Mass at 6pm with drinks and nibbles afterwards. The Epiphany on January 5th will be as normal, with a social gathering after the Ablaze Mass (bring and share) organised by the Confirmation Group. The Mass plan for Christmas is online, posters are out and a KIT will be out on Wednesday 11th December too.

Michanne lets everyone know that the FHC social event was very well attended last weekend because it took place during the day at the weekend. She reckons that it would be important in the future to organise these types of events involving young families during the day.

ACTION:

- Some help will be needed with the New Year's Eve social – Fr Simon to send out a request
- Some future social events for young families to be organized during the day - Everyone
- Send out KIT email with Mass plan for Christmas – Emanuela Di Pietro

4. PPC Officer positions

Steve is planning to step down and Michanne to step up as a Chair in the PPC. There are two positions to cover: Vice Chair (current: Michanne Haynes-Prempeh) and Secretary (current: Sarah Sykes). The proposal was for the new Vice Chair to support Michanne and take over in 2 years' time. Steve nominated Michanne Haynes-Prempeh as the new Chair of the PPC. The other members of the PPC voted unanimously in favour of Michanne as the new Chair of the PPC.

Edward Acton is willing to become Vice Chair, fulfilling the role of, e.g., chairing meetings in the absence of the Chair, but not with the expectation of becoming Chair afterwards. On that basis,

he was nominated by Margaret Martin. The members of the PPC voted unanimously in favour of Edward Acton becoming Vice Chair but without a view of becoming Chair in 2 years.

Sarah plans to step down as Secretary after the next meeting – PPC members are invited to volunteer for this role.

ACTION:

- Volunteer needed for Secretary role – Everyone.
- Michanne Haynes-Premphah (Chair) and Edward Acton (Vice Chair) are declared elected
- Update the website and publicise this via the newsletter – Steve.

5. Financial planning

*See written report at the end of these minutes.

Budget for next year was discussed and agreed on based on the Finance Report - Budget 2025 at the end of these minutes.

Jim O’Sullivan says they still don’t know exactly how they will be sharing the work of the Treasurer between the new two volunteers Una Mannu and Davide Fiorentino.

Thanks were given to James Dore for what he has done as a stand-in treasurer meanwhile.

Jim O’Sullivan is planning to step down as Chair of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee met last week working on the budget for 2025. The income is relatively healthy. There is a possibility of hiring a Pastoral Assistant later in the year, if required, as there is a budget available for it. Sarah Sykes asks if the two other Adorno Fathers will be working here just for the Parish. The answer given by Fr Robin is positive.

The Committee identified ‘headroom’ of £10,000 for the PPC to allocate to new activities, if required. Note, this is after allowance has been made for likely extra expense for additional priests.

The PPC considered all of the potential new projects identified in the attached report. The total cost is around £12,000 but Jim affirms that it shouldn’t be a problem for the Parish to meet these costs.

Michanne spoke about the Jubilee pilgrimage – there are more people interested than we thought. It will be a Diocesan-led trip. There is an initial down payment for the people interested of £150 and the Diocese is planning for 24 pilgrims – but it may be possible to increase this. The funding model is the following: 1/3 (£450) per pilgrim for the Parish to pay, 1/3 for the Pilgrim to cover and 1/3 covered by the Diocese. Fundraising activities will help in finding more funds. 8 people signed up so far. The cost of the pilgrimage is £1250 for 8 days. The pilgrims will be responsible for their visa costs. The travel arrangements will be organised by the Diocese. The ‘Pilgrim pack’ will be presented this Sunday after 11am Mass.

Printing Easter/Christmas cards is for next year 2025. Michanne is working on that.

Everyone is happy with the proposed budget.

Capital Projects List: Fr Simon says to consider the input of Fr Robin in terms of prioritisation for a collaborative decision, there is no need to rush.

The first 4 items in the Capital Projects list will likely to be carried out during 2025.

Fr Simon reiterates the importance for him to have the house prepared for the arrival of Fr Robin and he is now satisfied with the results of the work carried out. Everything is ready in the house for Fr Robin. In the new year Fr Robin will decide the prioritisation of the necessary activities to be carried out in agreement with the Finance Committee.

A future activity discussed was the purchase and installation of screens in the church.

We expect a quinquennial survey 2025 which may revise the list.

Everyone is happy with the list.

ACTION:

- The projects list is approved – the Finance Committee should now finalise the budget.
- We need plans to carry out the activities of the Capital Project list in 2025 – Buildings & Grounds group in collaboration with the Parish Priest.

6. Diocesan consultation:

Various possibilities on how to approach the discussion with the parishioners on the Diocesan consultation were discussed. An initial discussion session was held last week with PPC members, facilitated by Kay Dodsworth (thanks were given to Kay). The results could be posted in a document on St Laurence's website so that parishioners can review the thoughts gathered so far and then submit their own comments. Michanne points out that we need to be careful that any working document on our conversation on the Bishop's consultations is not misinterpreted as our final response. It was suggested that the document be clearly marked as a discussion document and presented in bullet point form for ease of review and so that it looks less finished.

Steve will draft and circulate the document before this goes online.

Further discussions on how to encourage lay involvement in the parish were carried out. Roberta Canning suggested that there should also be a paper version available for people to pick up and a mechanism to respond other than email.

ACTION:

- Finalize consultation document and post on website and in porch, inviting responses by mid January. Coordinate collating answers into a response to the Diocese by 31 Jan - Steve

7. Liturgy, Education & Faith Sharing

*See written report at the end of these minutes.

Thanks to Ella Warde we now have 22 trained altar servers in the Parish. Next challenge is to organise an efficient schedule for their rotation. The Parish should thank Ella for her hard work. Everyone agrees.

ACTION: Michanne and Fr Simon will organize thanks for Ella.

8. Buildings and grounds:

*See written report at the end of these minutes.

Steve updated everyone on the roof and presbytery works, garden and heating related issues.

As for the parking management he informs everyone that we are locked in a 5 year contract with the parking company. We are still working on improving the conditions. We have 5 years to see what we want to do in the future but at the moment we are trying to mitigate the problems we are encountering – for example, by changing the hours of operation.

Tech group: Ron informs the participants that the Video doorbell will be installed shortly. It will be accessed via a tablet that has already been purchased. Heating controls will also be on the tablet as suggested by Fr Simon. Ron affirms that he will get it running next week. Two other priorities from Fr Simon are to complete the tidying up of both the cabling in the church and the access point for the Internet/phone currently in the presbytery study. Ron will follow up on these with the Tech Group.

ACTION:

- Continue working with Creative Parking to manage and reduce parking system problems – Emanuela and Steve
- Confirm schedule for completing the video doorbell, cable tidying in church, and new internet access point – Tech Group

9. Communications & Outreach:

Website development: Ron presents the features that a new website may have. They include parish registration, events ticketing, calendars among the others. He affirms that it will take a while to complete the new website as it is quite a big job but it will perform many activities and solve many problems for the Parish. Meanwhile, Fr Simon and Emanuela have been working on reorganizing the existing Google diary and it should be possible to publish a view of this on the current website.

We have had some contact regarding possible ecumenical activities in both Castle and Northstowe.

ACTION:

- Add new diaries to Parish website – Emanuela, Tech Group

10. Office and Staffing:

*See written report at the end of these minutes.

11. Parish Groups – SVP, CAFOD

SVP: *See written report at the end of these minutes.

CAFOD: Roberta affirms that £1,609 was donated from our Family Fast Day. We have been generous but now people donate in different ways and it's difficult to monitor the final overall figure of donations.

12. Safeguarding

Jim confirms that 70 people have been DBS checked so far.

13. AOB:

Sarah needs to take headshots of the members of the PPC.

Dates for next meetings: Michanne suggests that the future Annual General Meetings should be held in the afternoon and not in the evening, and that should happen on a Saturday to include more people around the table.

Roberta suggests that some activities for children are organised during that meeting.

Dates for future meetings:

Welcome event for Fr Robin – Sat, 22 Feb, 3pm

PPC Meeting – Tues 4th March 7.30pm

Annual General Meeting – TBC. Likeliest date – Saturday, 26th April, 3pm

PPC Meeting – Thursday 12th June, 7.30pm

PPC Meeting – Tuesday 9th September, 7.30pm

PPC Meeting – Thursday 11th December, 7.30pm – there is a clash with a Hall booking on this date, so we will need to either move it or hold the meeting in the Library.

Written reports submitted to PPC Meeting, 4 December, 2024

Finance Report - Budget 2025

'Headroom' in 2025 running costs budget (from Finance Committee): **£10,000**

Note: the budget includes funding for two priests (salary and housekeeping) and potential to recruit a Pastoral Assistant.

Suggested items to prioritise.

Recurring items:

- Support The Blessed Carlos Acutis Group - £3,000
- Support Confirmation group, Ignite & Flame events (coach travel etc.) - £1,350
- Printing Easter / Christmas cards for new housing (e.g., Northstowe) - £500
- Youth choir, professional support - £2,550

One-off items:

- Parish Jubilee week (e.g., 'retreat' week and weekend social event) - £2,500
- Bursaries to send young people (16-35) to Jubilee celebrations in Rome - £2,650

Total requested: £12,550. (£7,400 recurring, £5,150 one off).

Capital Projects List (funded from reserves)

Priority	Item	Description	Size
1	Redecorate sacristy and repair ceiling damage	Redecorate Sacristy, make good ceiling in the office and around the new windows	S
2	Presbytery roof & loft	Insulate loft, repair tiles, renew soffits and clear gutters, bird wire around solar panels	M
3	Further presbytery redecoration	Replace hard flooring in hallway, review soft furnishings (curtains, bedding)	S
4	Church windows	Replace remaining windows	M/L
5	Redecorate church	Repaint – opportunity for reordering or reorganisation of church/sanctuary	L+
6	Screens in church	Consider along with redecoration?	M
7	Parish Hall & Narthex	Redecorate / refloor	M
8	Front wall / fencing	Repair (Quinquennial survey item)	M
9	Solar panels	Consider further panels on church roof	L

Notes:

- Items 3, 6 & 7 are new items – we should agree whether or not to add these to the list.
- A likely practical target for 2025 is to get to least point 4 and at least specify detail of 5/6.
- We expect a quinquennial survey during 2025, which may revise this list.

Liturgy, Education and Faith Sharing report – Roberta Canning

Some members of the group are involved in First Communion and Confirmation preparation and Children's liturgy.

Liturgy

Our tentative plan for a Music in the Liturgy workshop was put on hold till our new parish priest has settled in.

Children and young people had some involvement at Mass on Youth Sunday. It would be good to build on this.

Christmas Youth Choir rehearsals have begun.

Faith Support

The first meeting of the Blessed Carlos Acutis Group for children between First Communion and Confirmation started well; the children experienced Eucharistic Adoration with guided reflection, activities and pizza. They meet again in January.

Some parishioners plan a regular prayer and Lectio Divina Group.

Sister Gemma Simmonds CJ is booked to lead a Retreat Day at St Laurence's on Saturday 15 March.

We plan to offer an opportunity to explore the Gospel of St Luke.

We would like to encourage take up of the Diocesan Certificate App

Building & Grounds Report – Steve Warde

The **roof and windows** replacement over the Parish rooms and Sacristy is now complete. Thanks to Christine Knight and Jim O'Sullivan for organising. We hope this will end the problems with water ingress in the Sacristy and Parish office. We are getting quotes for repairing / redecorating the ceilings in the Sacristy and office, and 'making good' around the new window frames and hope this work will be done soon.

A lot of work has been completed in the **presbytery**. The bedrooms, living room, study, and dining room have all been redecorated. All of the carpets, which had suffered from an infestation of carpet moth, have been replaced. The building has been fumigated to avoid future moth problems, which should also be limited by the use of non-wool carpets. The chimney has been cleaned and capped to get rid of the dead pigeon problem. The kind donation of a sofa and armchairs by Debbie Banaszkiwicz has enabled us to get rid of the decrepit sofa in the living room. The house is now in a much fitter state for our new priest to move in. Key remaining items are to insulate the loft properly and replace the hard flooring in the hall.

Thanks to Nikki Searle for continuing to organise the **garden**, including two action days which have kept things under control.

The **heating** in the church has had its first test as winter arrives. We had some teething problems with the sensor that controls when the systems switches on/off, but seem to be

ironing this out by repositioning the sensor and will keep an eye on it. The heating is set on a weekly schedule to come on/off in line with the regular Masses. Anyone organising an event in the church that needs heating at other times should contact the office to ensure the schedule is changed for that week - or make sure they know how to switch the heating on manually from the control panel in the Narthex.

Parking management continues to be a major headache, occupying far too much of Emanuela's time in working to get PCN notices cancelled for people who were legitimate visitors to the church - there were, for example, over 30 of these problems in September. On investigation it unfortunately turns out that we are locked in to a 5 year contract with Creative Parking, which auto-renewed in July without our reviewing it. Creative Parking staff have so far been quite helpful in cancelling unwanted PCNs or reducing the fine to £20, but this still creates an admin overhead, and it is proving hard to speak to the right people to review the contract. We would at least like to change it so that the camera hours of operation are reduced to 9am-6pm on weekdays. We will continue to try. My observation would be that, at present, the cost to the Parish of this system in time and potential ill-will exceeds any benefit, and if we are unable to change the arrangements, we should research alternatives and cancel it at the first opportunity (currently, unless we can bring it forward, 2029).

We're advertising in the newsletter for a volunteer **handyman**, as it would be useful to have someone available on a regular basis to change lightbulbs, fix things, etc.

Office & HR Support – Edward Acton

- We have liaised with Fr Simon D who has been vigorous in making administrative improvements and establishing sound patterns for Fr Robin to inherit.
- Emanuela di Pietro has taken up the reins in the office very efficiently. Steve Warde has worked closely with her and Christine Knight has acted as her mentor when needed.
- Fr Simon has established regular meetings with Emanuela and worked with her to put systems in place across a range of issues from a multi-faceted working diary, upgraded security and written protocols to a new credit card and a major tidy up of the office.
- Fr Simon and Leonie Isaacson will conduct Emanuela's interim probation review next week, encouraging her to set out her priorities and embedding regular appraisal.
- Debbie Banaszkiwicz has continued to provide invaluable support, and we have invited her as well as Emanuela for a seasonal lunch with Fr Simon next week.
- Given how much will be unfamiliar to Fr Robin, we are benefitting enormously from Fr Simon's focus on preparing for the transition: PPC members may have additional suggestions

SVP Report – Ciaran Ward

Giving Tree up and running, remember to send gifts back before the 15th of December and leave them under the tree – We are always very grateful for help on the 15th of December to pack the hampers and sort the children's presents, we will be working from 1pm to 3pm if you want to come along.

You would probably have noticed the boxes of homeless gifts in the library – we are working on getting rid of them as soon as possible – unfortunately the head office has provided us with far too much!

We are grateful for all the parishioners support over the last few months for the SVP raffle and Christmas Card plus general donations. Thank you!

We have been busy with a number of new requests recently connecting parishioner offers and family requests. This has been a great success and thank you for your responses.

We will be working on getting new SVP material for the noticeboard at the front of the church. It is down on our meeting agenda tonight to arrange.