

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH AGM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2017

Those present included:

Fr Deo, Fr Innocent, Richard Bush, Gerard Cowie, Tony McGing, Gordon Clark, Richard Harries, Melvin Carty, Lucy Nwagwu, Tony Price, Eddie Sanders, Tim O'Donoghue, Sr Ann Ugoh, Teresa Furtado (Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Members)

Kathleen Netherwood, Mary-Ellen Fox, Rob Foster, Jean Sanders, Bernadette Courtney, Jeanette Da Silva, Gerry Grehan, Rosemary Clark, Andrew McMillan, Jo Taylor, John Taylor, John Ambler, Linda Leggett, Mark Leggett, Victoria Onwuekwe, Jane Windsor, Sabina Bush, Ken Hopkins, Brenda Hopkins, Edgee Li Tai Leong, Thérèse Clark-Martins, Maureen O'Donoghue, Cynthia Jouan, Mary Madden, Maria Lopeman, Joseph Uwagba.

(Those who gave their names, representing various parish groups and parishioners)

1/ The meeting commenced at 19:45 with an opening prayer from Fr Deo.

The Agenda was included in the previous weekend's newsletter, and this was distributed to all.

2/ Apologies were received from:

Mary Cook, Nana Bonsu, Charmaine Shali, Jeanette Coyle, Nicole Rodriguez, Rev Ged Perkins, Jim Hughes.

Prior to the meeting, there was a display of Irish dancing by Conor Academy of Irish Dancing.

3/ Minutes of the previous AGM, held in 2016 – these had already been agreed by the PPC at their next meeting following that AGM, said Richard Bush, Chairman.

4/ Matters arising from the minutes of the previous AGM – The same applied.

5/ Fr Deo's report as President of the PPC. This covered the following areas:

Corpus Christi Processions; Reverence and respect in church; Christmas 2016 and Easter 2017 Liturgies; Stations of the Cross; The successful reintroduction of the Legion of Mary; The Clergy Support Fund; World Youth Day & Youth Conference in Leeds; 24 Hours for the Lord and Parish pilgrimage to the Door of Mercy at the Cathedral; Re-establishment of Social Committee; Forthcoming Parish Census; Replacement of church boilers; Hosting "A Day With Mary"; Encouraging Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life; Tanzanian Safari; National Eucharistic Congress 2018.

Future plans including the purchasing a Parish Mini Bus, the re-establishment of the Family/Youth choir and the reintroduction of the Parish Football Team.

Comments relating to this included the following:

Clergy Support Fund - The sum pledged so far by our parish has not yet been calculated;

Corpus Christi Processions - Due to the national situation with regard to terrorist activity, together with parental concerns, we shall wait for a year or so before deciding what to do. It is particularly important as children would be heavily involved.

The Walk of Witness on Good Friday is a smaller scale event, which has continued without incident.

The Deanery Corpus Christi Procession has continued to be hosted by St Bede's Clapham Park without incident, though this does not make use of busy main roads. In previous years it was held at the now no longer existent St Michael's Convent on Streatham Common North Side.

There is no reason why the Family Choir should not be re-established, provided we can find a leader.

The Legion of Mary has a supply of Rosaries and prayer cards for anybody who would like them,

Perhaps we could put the reports from parish groups on the Web Site in advance of the AGM.

The newsletter does not suit or necessarily appeal to every individual in the parish.

6/ Richard Bush's report as Chairman of the PPC. This covered the following areas:

Regular meetings held with Fr Deo, often discussing the fact that we need more people and new blood to ensure the future of our parish.

The PPC exists to promote activity and discuss matters, acting as the eyes and ears of the clergy.

Praise to all those who ensured excellent catechesis and organisation for the First Holy Communion and Confirmations. However, more catechists are greatly needed.

Deacon Ged has asked that catechists be recognised for their hard work.

Father Paul's departure to Charlton, Our Lady of Grace, run by his order, the Spiritans.

Visit by Bishop Pat Lynch.

The Parish Web Site – we are encouraged to use it to good effect and to help add to it.

The new look Parish Newsletter has been widely seen as a great success. Suggestions are welcome.

The Repository is in need of volunteers to share the load at weekends.

There is a lack of order at Mass, particularly in relation to receiving Holy Communion.

The place to chat is outside the church and in the parish hall.

The Mass Count is half way through. Numbers are to be confirmed later on. It is interesting to note how the parish has shrunk from an attendance of 2300 in 1968 to less than 1000 today.

Parish History – three have been done in the past, with the most recent being 2008. This is in the process of being fully updated, and the cost of production will be kept as low as possible.

Parish Census – last carried out in 1996. We need to update our information, in line with Data Protection Legislation, and find out both the needs and the abilities of our parishioners.

Fr John Mulligan had given advice to the PPC as to how meetings should be run, and their frequency. Ideally monthly, this has not always been feasible. It is important that there should be achievement as opposed to just talking about things. Whilst not all groups are represented on the PPC, they are still consulted regarding parish matters.

Richard feels privileged to represent the parish as Chairman.

Comments relating to this included the following:

The Mass Count reflects the natural decline in numbers nationally. It is not the fault of the parish. Today we are a far more multicultural parish.

There seems to be a falling away post Confirmation, this point being taken on board by Deacon Ged in his dissertation.

Perhaps we need to offer more to young people, such as regular discos etc.

There are still uncollected First Holy Communion Certificates for this year and last year.

7/ Tony McGing's report as Chairman of the Parish Finance Committee. This covered the following areas:

Remarking on accounts to the end of December 2016, the somewhat larger expenditure over income was mainly due to £53k for church repairs and catch-up work delayed from past years.

Income has dropped by approximately 7%.

Church heating needs replacing, and an appeal to the parish is under consideration.

Comments relating to this included the following:

The wages bill is for 4 staff, costing £1100.00 per week.

What reserves do we have to call upon?

The Diocesan levy seems to be particularly high, and could this be reduced or negotiated down?

There appears to be a loss on publication sales – this is due to the fact that no charge is made for the diocesan newspaper, "Pilgrim" and the quarterly daily prayer booklets. Other than that, we rely on the honesty and goodwill of people to make payment using the wall box.

We need to stem the flow to stop the downward trend in income. It might make more sense to produce a Balance Sheet as well as Income and Expenditure figures.

8/ Gordon Clark's report as Chairman of the Parish Maintenance Committee. This covered the following areas:

Decoration of the hall, including the need for new carpeting and furniture upstairs;

Sound system, refurbished and replaced as needed, with further improvements to come;

Roof and guttering are now watertight, and the Repository flooding issue resolved;

Many items are ongoing, as maintenance is a proactive process as well as a reactive one:

Statutory requirements for Public Access and Listed Buildings restricts what we can do and which materials we use; they also stipulate what we must do.

- a) Statutory Maintenance – The Hall Lift; Fire alarms; Service of boilers in both the presbytery and the church; Electronic doors; Self-closing doors.
- b) Planned Maintenance is required to keep things going – the organ; the garden; the coin counting machine; window cleaning; church lighting and heating etc.
- c) Unplanned Maintenance is required as a result of misuse, damage, vandalism, deterioration of seals on fire extinguishers, failure of toilet mechanisms etc.

Locks are to be changed for the hall and a fresh list of key holders and their contact details to be issued, with sets of keys as required; all keys to be signed for together with acknowledgment of fire regulations and knowledge of procedures thereof etc, which is an insurance requirement.

Importance of informing the parish office or clergy when entering the hall, and only entering when your particular group is using the hall.

It is also important, as this is your hall, that you report anything to the parish office.

## 9/ FURTHER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Perhaps questions could be sent in written form to the PPC prior to meetings.

Mission – Generally well received. Will we be inviting Canon Frank back for follow-up?

Youth – Fr Deo to re-establish football teams.

Youth Mission – as per Coloma has held.

Deacon Ged's dissertation – the loss of youth post Confirmation – results pending.

Youth Club – Eddie Sanders said that nobody is turned away, though over 14s have reduced in number. The official age range is from 11 upwards, but even those as young as 6 have come along.

The youth are not the same as they were in the past. Perhaps we should ask them for their ideas.

The involvement of the Confirmation candidates at FLAME was very strong. What ideas can be taken from that event? Are we accessing the information which came out of it?

Southwark Catholic Youth Service (SCYC) would be a good body to turn to.

Catechists – there is a crisis in respect of numbers. The worst case scenario would be cancelling the programme or reducing the number of candidates for First Holy Communion.

How about a monthly Mass for Youth at 5pm Masses, followed by a social gathering? Of course, volunteers would be required to help run such a venture.

Perhaps the Social Committee could organise a team for quiz at St Michael's Pollards Hill.

Regrettably some readers were offended by the suggestion of training which has been offered. Fr Deo pointed out that there is always room for improvement, and that seeking to maintain one's abilities and to improve are very positive things. Even the clergy have to take part in Ongoing Formation throughout their ministry. Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion hold an important role in parish life, and they are commissioned to carry out these ministries. There used to be training days for readers, including how to prepare, including Bible study. It is an honour to carry out such a ministry and indeed to take pride in so doing.

Sometimes it can be difficult to understand somebody reading where they have a different accent and knowledge of English pronunciation. It is easy for one to "swallow" one's words. This applies to clergy as well as lay people.

Training in how to use the ambo microphone is important. People expect the microphone to absorb and amplify their voices; they need to know how to use the mic effectively and not shout. A longer ambo mic is on order. The system has been adjusted for optimum use.

There can be problems with feedback. There may be a device available to deal with this.

The loop system does not always seem to be on. Do those with hearing aids put them into loop mode? On the whole, nobody tends to complain about this. Gordon Clark has a device to test the loop system, which he does regularly.

Masses can sometimes go on too long. Perhaps we need to plan better and think carefully around the logistics of big events such as Palm Sunday.

The newsletter now has more space, having double in size, and with a minimum size font of 12 points, which suits all readers. Additionally it is available via the parish web site, and can always be magnified on screen. Repetition can be an issue, though not repeating items often enough also raised complaints. Do we really need a whole page devoted to Mass times? Whilst we are open to ideas regarding the newsletter, it goes without saying that one cannot please all of the people all of the time. We need contributions from all parish groups towards the newsletter.

Uncollected photographs – these are produced by John Taylor and he bears the cost. Some people have never collected their pictures, despite regular items in the newsletter. It would seem that not everybody tends to read it through.

Fr Philip Glandfield has been asked if he can produce a copy of the booklet he produced when at St Bart's. It included a particular section on the protocols for reception of Holy Communion. It may be buried in piles of papers at Archbishop's House following recent renovation.

When any of the choirs is singing at Mass, people should be reminded to allow them to go to Communion first. They have to get back to the gallery for a short time of thanksgiving before singing whilst the congregation go to Communion.

10/ The next AGM will be held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

11/ The meeting ended at 21:30 with a prayer and blessing from Fr Deo, with the opportunity for those present to socialise afterwards.