

St Aidan's Parish Pastoral Council
Minutes of Meeting held 27th March 2017 in the Presbytery.

1. Present: John Hannacher (JH, Chair), Fr Ken (KP), Dcn John (JC), Shirley Abarca (SA), Sue Finch (SF), Brian Gallagher (BG), Deirdre Lay (DL), Louise Moss (LM), Anne Parsons (AP), Clare Reed (CR), Vince Smith (VS), Virginia Wedgwood (VW).

Apologies: Berni Hassim (BH).

2. Prayer and welcome: JH welcomed all and the meeting commenced with a prayer from Fr. Ken.

3. Minutes: Minutes of the last meeting 16th January 2017 were approved.

4. Ministry reports and discussion as necessary:

4.1 Finance. Report from SF:

There was a meeting of the Finance Committee on Monday 20th March 2017

1 Garrick Ransome has resigned from the committee as he and his family are moving to Singapore. The committee would like to replace Garrick, and Fr Ken is considering who he could approach.

2 Review of the parish finances

i Chairs for the choir. £1,860 has been paid the money coming from donations received.

ii The path from the drive to the Parish Hall has been re-laid and widened by Countrywide Driveways at a cost of £3,650.

iii The additional monthly SOs made by a few parishioners to reduce any parish debt have all now been received.

3 Sisters of the Holy Cross offer to fund grant applications

Hugh Davies, the Director of Finance and development had circulated to all parishes a copy of a letter from the Sisters of the Holy Cross Charitable Trust offering grants of £25K towards parish projects/salaries meeting the criteria detailed in the letter.

There was nothing currently in St Aidan's plans that would be eligible for a grant application. However it was suggested that our Pastoral Area might be in a position to make an application to finance a Youth Worker to be shared by the parishes of St Aidan's, St Columba's and Our Lady's. Dcn John will pass this letter on to the Compass Advisory Group. Steve Gill suggested that if an application was made, it should be professionally drawn up.

4 Church Acoustics

We are in the process of finding out if painting the ceiling tiles will improve the acoustics of the church. If we find this is successful then we will be able to get an estimate of the cost.

5 See appendix 2.

4.2 Liturgy. Report from JC.

JC shared the minutes from the most recent Liturgy group meeting:

1. REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS

1.1 New Sunday Mass Times: Settling in without any obvious problems at St Aidan's. Some new faces at the Saturday Vigil Mass. At St Columba's and Our Lady's, it is taking longer to accept the new arrangements.

1.2 Advent: Reconciliation Day Saturday 17th December with two priests didn't have great numbers. Reconciliation Services held at St Joseph's and St Columba's with fair numbers attending. The variety of options was appreciated.

1.3 Christmas: An over-full-house for the Family Vigil Mass and a full-house for the 'Midnight' Mass at 8.30pm and on Christmas Day. All immensely joyful. The carol singing at the morning Mass wasn't as exuberant as might be expected from a full church. This possibly reflected the present acoustic's discouragement to sing. (See item 8 below).

1.4 New Year: Vigil 11-Midnight concluding with Benediction had about 20 attenders who quietly prayed-in 2017.

2. LENT

2.1 Ashes: invite in Newsletter for Sundays 19 & 26 Feb the return of palms for burning. ACTION: JC

2.2 Music: Plainchant, no Gloria, no Alleluia. GA to provide a 'standard' top & tail for the gospel acclamation throughout the season that should be on the screen. Choir familiar with all the music so rehearsals probably not necessary except for the Exsultet. GA will arrange that, probably ahead of a Sunday Mass at 10.15 am.

ACTIONS: GA

2.3 Consider 'burying' the Alleluia on the Sunday before Ash Wed (26 Feb)

ACTION: JC

2.4 Stations of the Cross: 10am on Fridays led by Fr Ken (except 4 Mar Women's World Day of Prayer at St George's 10.30am); 6pm on Sundays led by Dcn John.

ACTION: KJP/JC

2.5 Reconciliation Services & Day: To be discussed with the pastoral area clergy. Possibly a Reconciliation Day at St Aidan's on Sat 8th April. ACTION: KJP/JC

3. HOLY WEEK

3.1 PALM SUNDAY Sat Vigil Mass will be a Youth Mass with the opening Gospel read from the Narthex followed by the hymn during the procession to the altar 'All glory, laud and honour' verses 1, 3 & 5 as in the Parish Mass Book p.180. ACTION: SG

3.2 Palm Sunday morning Mass: Opening Prayer, Gospel and Procession from St Aidan's statue (weather permitting) or the Narthex. Hymn as above with all verses.

ACTION: GA

3.3 Palms will be provided as well as encouraging 'bring-your-own' foliage. ACTION: KJP

3.4 MAUNDY THURSDAY Chrism Mass 11am at the Cathedral, Northampton. Open Invitation should appear in the Newsletter during Lent. ACTION: KJP/JC

3.5 Maundy Thursday Mass of the last Supper at 7.30pm. Washing of hands by Fr Ken. Altar of Repose. Procession. Stripping of the Altar. ACTION: KJP/JC

3.6 GOOD FRIDAY Walk of Witness by Churches Together starting 10am at Methodist Church, through the village to St George's and arriving at St Aidan's for an 11am Service. Reflections at various points on the walk (by Dcn John) based on the Stations of the Cross. Consideration being given to using the first 6(say) Stations on the walk and the remainder on screen as part or the whole of the Service in the Church. Other material also to be considered. GA willing to play the hymns selected. SG as first reserve. ACTIONS: JC/KJP/Clare Reed (the Service) GA & SG (Hymns when selected).

3.7 Passion of the Lord & Veneration 3pm. No Holy Communion as in 2016.

4. EASTER

4.1 VIGIL 8.30pm. Polish participation? – Fr Ken to ask Fr Roman. Exsultet = GA/JC with rehearsal as mentioned in 2.3 above. Readings and Psalms as last year with Polish as before if they are taking part. Fr Ken suggested pictures on screen during the readings in English. The long Alleluia in the dismissal. ACTIONS: KJP/JC/GA

4.1 MORNING Mass as usual with dismissal as above.

5. CHILDREN'S LITURGY: No report

6. YOUTH MASS: SG reported amicably sharing the church space with the Confirmation Group during rehearsals. Grateful for Liz Jackson's presence for 'safeguarding' especially in the temporary absence of Ryta Kuzel. More support was needed from players, singers and parents. She expressed a desire to have some new Mass settings. Fr Ken suggested looking at Gordon Rock's Mass for the revised liturgy. Dcn John suggested looking at Teresa Brown's Mass of St Luke that is used at the Cathedral and by some parishes in the diocese. He undertook to ask Gerrards Cross, Great Missenden & Chesham parishes which settings they used. GA is willing to look at whatever is discovered. ACTIONS: SG/JC/GA

7. ALTAR SERVERS: The new servers being trained by Ella Salczynska are coming on well.

8. ACOUSTICS IN CHURCH: GA reported increasing evidence that the congregation is moving more into 'listening mode' and away from the 'full and active participation' that the Church's liturgy documents say we should be striving with all our might to achieve. Choir members were also avoiding the microphones because the present deadness in the acoustics exposed individual voices. It was noted that the sub-committee of the Parish Pastoral Council, set up to consider this whole issue, is due to meet on Mon 30th Jan. They have considered all the evidence offered to them, including the audio files for Fr Ken's 50th Ordination celebration (before the refurb) and the Parish 50th Birthday (after the refurb) and they have taken professional advice. They are in no doubt as to the serious nature of the problem and how it has greatly diminished our congregational singing. Their investigations and the professional advice they have taken suggest that the answer lies in replacing some of the existing acoustic tiles with a more resonant tile or board over the area occupied by the congregation. This group hoped that they would find a solution that was affordable. GA and JC are members of the sub-committee and will pass on those views. ACTION: GA/JC

9. HOLY DAY MASS TIMES: Fr Ken reported that following on the revision of weekend Mass times in the three local churches, the clergy were looking at Holy Days to see if a better spread of times would encourage attendance. ACTION KJP/JC

It was noted at the meeting that other churches mark the Pentecost Novena, which this year runs from 26th May to 4th June. There are resources on the Diocesan website.

4.3 Formation. Reports from BG & JC

1. Baptism - The next baptism preparation course will begin with a 'welcome' for 4 families on Sunday 30 April at the 11am Mass. The 3-part course will follow that Mass and also on 7 & 14 May.

2. First Holy Communion program

a. The course is well on the way towards completion with the date for first Holy Communion being 20 May 2017. That is a Saturday. Once again as in recent years there has been a strong emphasis on parental involvement and this seems to be paying dividends.

3. Confirmation program.

a. This is also now entering its final phases prior to the administration of the sacrament on 21 May 2017. The sacrament will be administered by Bishop Peter at St Joseph's Church in Gerrards Cross at 5 PM. This is a Sunday.

b. The reason for the administration of the sacrament at St Joseph is because we are preparing the candidates as part of the Pastoral Area. There are some 40 candidates from the three secular parishes and some 30 candidates from St Josephs. Preparations are being made for the logistical aspects of the day.

c. So far as the course is concerned we have just completed what turned out to be very successful retreat at Restore Hope. This is one of the Blaze retreat days. There were "plenary sessions"; there were workshop sessions. There was opportunity to go to confession (which was taken up by an appreciable number of our candidates). The day was brought to a close with Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter who had earlier held a question and answer session which in my view went well. I will be asking the candidates for feedback.

d. Our next session is on Saturday when we will be focusing upon the Mass in relation to the consecration.

4. The children's liturgy program seems to have got back onto a reasonable track.

5. Post-Confirmation

It is our intention to hold monthly sessions on a Saturday for those wishing to attend after confirmation. It will be necessary to encourage people to come along but there will be sessions and they will be advertised.

Also, some thought perhaps needs to be given to running sessions for those who have completed their first Holy Communion with a view to identifying future readers,

musicians, singers, altar servers and other volunteers. We may want to consider even if only in an embryonic state the setting up of junior sections of what we do at an adult level. This will require time and effort and volunteers. As ever this is the challenge for all of us.

6. Marriage Preparation - 12 engaged couples have this year asked for marriage prep in the 3 parishes of St A's, St C's & OL's. Two have been referred to 'Marriage Care' because of the short timescale they presented. Our mentor couples are doing their best to include the other 10 in the SmartLoving/Engaged course. Two of our mentor couples have done an introductory session for would-be mentors at St Joseph's. We need more mentor couples.

5 of the couples are from St Aidan's, and it was suggested that after all the marriages have taken place, the couples are invited for a meal.

4.4 Social and Cultural. Report from DL

1. Next monthly lunch is 23rd April. The monthly lunch on 25th June will be combined with a celebration of Deacon John's retirement. It will be open to all parishioners.

2. May Fayre is going to take place on Monday 1st May. We have already received donations to cover the Grand Draw, Plants, Cafe and BBQ. We had a good response to the request for help and tasks have been allocated. We will be putting sign-up lists in the Narthex for help on the day for the various stalls and activities. We have information in the weekly newsletter regarding donations of goods and money. We will, with Father Ken's permission, be making an appeal from the altar this coming week-end and again following Easter.

After discussion, it was agreed that the money raised by the May Fayre would be given, as in previous years, to the Chiltern Child Contact Centre, The Hospice of St Francis, and our parish.

3. AV operators. We have lost one of our regular adult operators. Over the weekend of 22nd and 23rd April, I would like to have a quick overview training session after Mass for PPC members and anyone who might be interested in going on the rota. I would like to send an e-mail out to all parishioners and put something in the newsletter this week asking that anyone who might be interested, to come to one of these sessions. Hopefully, once people see that it is not as difficult or onerous as perceived, we will get a few more for the rota.

4.5 Maintenance. Report from VW.

1. Landscape contract – all going well. Grass cutting starts next week.

2. External works - entrance to the Parish Hall has been enlarged with a new tarmac finish by Countrywide Driveways. Cost was £3,650 which has already been paid. It was noted that the driveway will need doing in the next couple of years.

3. Fire alarm and emergency lighting – annual check was carried out today 27th March.
4. Heaters in church – to be serviced on 28th March.
5. Bollards in car park – Maz to finish off work and carry out other minor electrical items
6. 'How to do' guide book is almost complete. Weekly and non-scheduled maintenance log has been prepared

4.7 Ecumenical. Report from CR

1. Lenten Course – Based on the film The King's Speech. This has been a thought provoking evening lead by the different churches. Attendance has been a bit on the low side. It was noted that the course materials are not easy to use.
2. Good Friday – as already mentioned by JC, St. Aidan's will be hosting the service after the Walk of Witness. Refreshments to be served after the service – DL agreed to organise these.
3. Epilepsy Centre – The Churches Together Easter service is on Wednesday 5th April at 2pm at the Epilepsy Centre in Chalfont St. Peter.
4. Pavilion in the Park – this will run on Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th April from 11am- 4pm at the Pavilion in the park at Chenies Avenue.
5. Food Bank – it has been fairly quiet the last month with only 2 clients in that time.

4.8 Youth. Report from BH

A letter was sent to parents regarding COMPASS (see Appendix 1). Five people gave their contact details regarding helping with Compass from St Aidan's. I have contacted them but have not had any response yet.

Brain Shelley is keen for Compass to restart and he has organised a meeting of the advisory group at Our Lady's on the 4th April to discuss this, which I shall try to attend. Gerard Felix has informed Brian he will not be participating in the future. I feel it needs a new leader and new parents on a volunteer basis.

4.9 Pastoral Area Council. Report from JC.

The PAC met a few weeks ago, where they discussed the Bishop's proposal to merge our Pastoral Area with mid Bucks and Aylesbury.

The PAC wrote to the Bishop with their concerns, stating that they felt the new area would be too big, and proposing instead that we merge with Great Missenden.

A final decision will be announced by the Bishop by September.

5. AOB

1. New website. It was agreed that the proposed new website is much better than what we have currently, and LM reported that it was much easier to use. All ministries are to send in content by Easter to be uploaded by LM, with the hope of going 'live' by the beginning of May.

More photographs are required, of the church, Parish Council and any events (St Patrick's social, May Fayre, Baptisms etc.). If the parents give their permission, we will take photographs at the upcoming First Holy Communion and Confirmation Masses.

The Polish and Filipino communities should have their own area on the website.

2. Acoustics. As a test, a selection of ceiling tiles in the gallery will be painted to increase their reflective properties and hopefully improve the acoustics. VW to arrange.

3. CAFOD. The recent CAFOD fast day collection was very well supported, and it was thought that the videos before and after Mass helped the appeal.

4. Projector in Hall. It would be very useful to have a projector or large screen in the Hall. VS to investigate costs.

5. AGM. The AGM will be on Sunday 2nd July after Mass. Ministry reports (no longer than half a page) should be ready by 18th June.

6. Future Meetings

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 5th June at 7.30pm

7. Close

Fr Ken closed the meeting with a prayer.

Louise Moss
18th April 2017