

# ST AIDAN'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2nd JULY 2017

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our AGM which gives you the opportunity to hear to what is going on in the parish and ask any questions

I have a few opening comments before members of the Parish Council report to you.

We continue to enjoy worship in our refurbished church and fresh in our thoughts is the wonderful occasion last Sunday when we celebrated Deacon John's ministry and retirement. He will be missed.

I believe we are a welcoming and generous parish and organise events such as this very well. There have been a number of other Social and Cultural activities in the past year and I must mention our May Fayre when we raised over £7000 for our 3 charities.

We are in a healthy financial state as a result of the generosity of parishioners although there is always ongoing maintenance and potential projects which may need future investment. We have not made as much progress with the acoustic problem as we had hoped although I believe we are close to trialling a possible solution.

We are actively engaged in Ecumenical activities and financially support the Chiltern Child Contact Centre where one of our parishioners is a trustee.

Formation in the parish comprises preparation for Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

At the Bishop's request, this year's Confirmation classes were organised on a Pastoral Area basis for the first time requiring parishes to work together to prepare young people. I know this presents a number of challenges but it is very much the direction of travel in the future.

We have also changed the time of our Sunday Mass to provide more consistent coverage within the Pastoral Area – without presenting too many problems for our parishioners.

Unfortunately the Compass programme launched last year for young people has had to close and discussions are going on to see if it can be relaunched, as it was very popular. St Aidan's parishioners have been very involved but it will need parental involvement for future success.

We have recently introduced a new website which I would urge you to visit and provide feedback. It is our intention to increasingly use it as the "go to" place for information about the parish events and activities. Photographs of parish events will always be welcomed.

We have a sophisticated A/V system in church which is used to support our services. We are hoping to increase the use of its capabilities - for example by installing broadband to enable us to Live Stream Sunday masses.

Three of our council members, Clare Reed, Bernie Hassim and Shirley Abarca are seeking to stand down and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment during their time on the parish council.

A common theme of all of the presentations today is the need for more volunteers to support the parish and its various activities. It is no exaggeration to say that without that help we may not be able to continue to carry on doing all that we do.

I know people are often reluctant to say they will help, worried at the ongoing commitment longer term. All I can say is that we urgently need your help and will do everything to support and encourage you if you decide to volunteer. Please speak to Fr. Ken or any of us on the council for more information on anything you hear about today.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to Fr. Ken, my colleagues on the Parish Council and to the many people who support the parish in countless ways every day, week and month.

**John Hannacher**

# MINISTRY REPORTS

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Parishioners have continued to be generous over the last year, and we are most grateful to them.

Some have increased their Offertory giving, and more have taken out SOs - this is a way of guaranteeing regular monthly income. Others have made donations, and a number took out an extra monthly SO for 12 months. Those who have been able to Gift Aid their Offertory increase their giving by 25p for every pound given and this also has also made a substantial contribution to the parish income.

Over the year we have continued to make improvements to the grounds and buildings using donations gratefully received specifically for this purpose.

All this has helped to make St Aidan's once more financially secure.

### 1. PARISH FINANCES AT THE START OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

The financial year started with £27,120 in hand.

### 2. PARISH INCOME FOR THE YEAR

- i **General Income** – Offertory, Donations and Mass Stipends increased in the region of £11,500 from the previous year. Standing orders, Offertory cash, Gift Aid receipts, Mass stipends and donations all increased which offset the reduction in Together in Faith money received.
- ii **Income from church activities** was higher than the previous year thanks to the income received from the rental of car parking spaces to The Entertainer Toy Shop.
- iii **Donations** continued to be made specifically for refurbishment projects.

### 3. PARISH EXPENSES FOR 2016-2017

- i **Liturgical costs** decreased by £2,000 this financial year
- ii **Property and associated costs.**

Property costs though just under a third of the previous year are still significant. The major expenditure was:

  - 1 Utility costs (heating, lighting etc) These are slightly down on last year.
  - 2 Improvements to the lighting system, both internally and externally
  - 3 The replacement of the presbytery door.
  - 4 Health and Safety issues have been addressed:
    - a After a Legionella survey, improvements were made to the water system
    - b A fire door has been installed as a result of a Fire survey and the cupboard in the narthex which houses the main fuse boxes has been made fireproof.
    - c The access path to the parish was hazardous because of the uneven paving slabs. The path has now been made wider and the uneven paving slabs replaced with tarmac.
  - 5 An acoustic survey was carried out to try to understand why the acoustics were poor after the refurbishment and to see what could be done to improve them.
- iii **Restricted Fund Raising and restricted donations.**

Cupboards were built in the narthex, chairs were purchased for the choir and the path to the parish hall has been widened and resurfaced.

#### 4 **DIOCESAN CHARGES**

**The Diocesan Fund** supports the running of the Diocese – ie Bishop's House, the Admin, Finance Departments, employed staff at Bishop's House, NORES, NYMO etc. These charges are a percentage of our general income.

There is also property and liability Insurance, and the priests' pension fund.

#### 5 **THE FUTURE**

**The financial year ended with £54,165 in our account.**

We still have to see if we can resolve the issue of the poor acoustics of the church as a consequence of the refurbishment.

Hopefully we will continue to build up our parish reserves so that we are able to respond to any major spending, both unforeseen and planned, that may be required

- 6 **FINALLY** I would like to thank all the members of the Finance team for their hard work and support: **John Hannacher** for his guidance, **Garrick Ransome** who has now stepped down as he is leaving the parish in July - our good wishes go with Garrick and his family, **Steve Gill** for all his work with the Gift Aid, **Philip Patten** for his help with the production of the Financial Statement, the counting teams, and of course to **Dcn John** for all his efforts these past years and especially during the time of the refurbishment. We shall miss him and we wish him well in his retirement.

**Sue Finch, Chair of Finance**

## **FORMATION REPORT**

2016-2017 has been a very busy year. 21 First Holy Communicants were prepared by an active programme led by our catechists and closely involving their parents which fulfils the expectation that parents will be the principal teachers of children in matters of faith. A big thank you is owed to the parents of the first holy communicants and also to our catechists who were led by Mary Hughes and Caroline Quinn.

Marriage and Baptism preparation courses have been provided throughout the year and there has been a good and enthusiastic take up.

As regards confirmation this was the largest preparation course undertaken in the year. Bishop Peter had asked that the preparation of candidates for confirmation be carried out on a Pastoral Area basis. Our pastoral area comprises St Aidan's, St Columba's, St Joseph's and Our Lady's parishes. All the parishes responded positively to the Bishop's request. A total of 81 candidates were confirmed, of which 36 were from St Aidan's, St Columba's and Our Lady's. All four parishes ran the one course. The course commenced in October 2016 and culminated in the conferring of the sacrament on 21 May 2017. Sessions were held at St Josephs, St Aidan's and St Columba's. Catechists came from across the Pastoral Area. It was an exciting but very exacting time. The candidates showed a degree of commitment and hard work which bodes well for their future faith development. Next year it is intended to continue with a Pastoral Area confirmation programme subject to any changes that the Bishop may make to the Pastoral Areas. A very big thank you is owed to Mary Philpott and Gerard Felix.

I shall be continuing as Co-ordinator for Formation for the next year 2017-2018.

Two matters need to be addressed:

1. We need more volunteers to help in the teaching and preparation of our children. No particular experience is needed. The Holy Spirit will do heavy lifting. Please do get in touch with me or Fr Ken.

2. What can we do for the wider parish? Please let me or Fr. Ken know what aspects of faith development you would like to investigate, discuss or study and we will do our best to organise a group or some such to enable you to pursue your interest in a rewarding and enriching manner.

**Brian Gallagher**

## **SOCIAL & CULTURAL REPORT**

**Monthly Parish Lunches** have been very well supported and successful. The monthly lunches are done on a rota basis by 8 parishioners. Belinda Hurst, one of our volunteers, has moved from the parish and is no longer on our rota. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Belinda for all the help and time that she has given and wish her well for the future.

**St. Patricks Social** was, as always, well supported and most enjoyable. 44 people attended. Music was provided by Vince with help from Alice Bergonzi and Anna O'Donoghue. The raffle raised £130 which was given to CAFOD.

**Coffee** after Sunday morning Mass is going well. Money raised goes to Depaul UK who support the young homeless.

**Celebration Lunch for the Feast of St. Aidan** – this was held on 11<sup>th</sup> September and was a great success enjoyed by 108 Adults and 44 children. We raised £1,200 which was paid into the Parish account.

**May Fayre 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017** is an important event in our calendar, both as a fundraiser, a social event and as way of opening our gates in welcome to the wider community. Total money raised split between Chiltern Child Contact Centre, The Hospice of St. Francis and our own Parish was an amazing **£7,388.00!!**

**Deacon John's Retirement Celebration Lunch, Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017** This was a celebration buffet lunch for invited guests and parishioners. In total 230 sat down for the lunch. There were canapes and drinks before lunch on the lawn outside the presbytery. A wonderful event enjoyed by many.

I would like to thank everyone who gives their time freely in support of all the activities mentioned above. If we are to continue in a similar way for the future we need more volunteers to step forward and sign up to help.

**Deirdre Lay**

## **AV SYSTEM REPORT**

We have a wonderful state of the art Audio Visual System now running in the church.

The system is capable of Audio and Visual transmission via multiple media e.g. CD's, DVD's, iPOD, iPAD, PC and Camera. We have successfully seen a DVD and watched a YouTube video of Bishop Peter. There is a lot more capability than we have used to date and we hope to explore this in the future. Currently we have a working group looking at the possibilities of Live Streaming the Mass on a Sunday.

We are having problems with the acoustics in the church but this is not an issue with the AV system. We have simplified the operation of the system so it is fairly straightforward to operate.

We operate the system on a rota and currently have 5 Adult operators who take overall responsibility of the System at each Mass, Saturday and Sunday. We desperately need more adults to come forward to operate at both the Saturday and Sunday Mass and young people for the Sunday.

We would like to thank all those who currently give their time freely to operate the system.

Without more support we are in danger of not having cover for all of the services which would be a big step backwards. Please give your name to Louise the Parish Administrator if you would like to know more and are willing to help.

**Deirdre Lay**

## **MAINTENANCE REPORT**

We are still trying to see if anything can be done to improve the acoustic quality of the ceiling in the church. If there was an easy solution we would have already done this, so more patient research and some trial measures are required. It may in the end prove impossible and/or too costly to make any changes.

During the last year the outstanding refurbishment items for water and fire safety have been completed. We have also replaced some of the car park lights, with fewer, taller fittings adjacent to the parking area and renewed the tarmac path outside the Hall. The car park tarmac surface is very poor in some places and further repairs will be required.

The security of the Presbytery was also re-examined during the year, resulting in a new glazed screen and entrance door. The rear door was considered sufficiently secure.

New chairs were purchased for the choir in time for Christmas 2016.

The maintenance manual has been thoroughly checked during the year. A maintenance/'How-to' manual has been created together with a maintenance timetable.

The windows and gutters to the Church, Presbytery and Hall continue to be cleaned regularly –ie generally twice year. The grounds continue to be cared for by our usual gardeners to the general satisfaction of all. They are able to add extra visits to clear up after heavy storms. A new volunteer is needed who attends Saturday evening Mass to sweep away leaves should a storm produced debris at the church entrance before Mass – another 'invisible job' that was done by Dcn John.

The maintenance team – Deirdre, Steve and Virginia – are supported by Louise in the office, who is able to deal with the day-to-day repairs and minor maintenance issues that arise.

**Virginia Wedgwood**

## **ECUMENICAL REPORT**

We welcome any member of the parish who would like to get involved in any of the ecumenical activities. A huge thank you to all who have volunteered and helped at our different activities.

We continue to support:

**Food Bank** – open from 9.30-11.30am every Thursday at St. George's church.

**Chiltern Child Contact Centre** – this is open on the first and third Saturday of the month at Amersham Free Church.

**Outreach in the Pavilion in Westwood Park** – this operates during school holidays on Tuesday and Thursdays from 11am-4pm. It offers craft activities for children as well as refreshments to all.

**Services at the Epilepsy Centre** – there are services for Easter, harvest festival and Christmas organised by Churches Together.

**Community Carols on the Green** - in Little Chalfont on a Saturday in December at 11am.

**Service of Christian Unity** – St. Aidan’s hosted a 24 hour prayer vigil which was a new venture and well received by the attendees.

**Women’s World Day of Prayer** – hosted by St. George’s this year and prepared by the women of the Philippines. Next year it will be prepared by women from Suriname.

**Lenten Talks** – the topic this year was the film “The King’s Speech”.

**Good Friday Walk of Witness** – walking from our churches in Little Chalfont with a service at the St. Aidan’s this year.

**Christian Aid** – we joined forces with the Methodists and St. Georges for a coffee morning with cake stall, refreshments, frugal lunch, bric a brac and car washing.

**Village Day** in Little Chalfont in June – promoting Churches Together.

**Restore Hope** – various activities throughout the year- [www.restorehope.org.uk](http://www.restorehope.org.uk)

**Clare Reed**

## **YOUTH REPORT**

Youth Mass is the third Saturday of the month. A huge thankyou to all who participate in the music, readings and altar servers.

As you are aware Compass was launched last year and the sessions commenced on September 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Myself and Brian Gallagher were the representatives from St Aidan’s. Meetings were held every Thursday at Our Lady’s School. A variety of activities were organised including Zumba, Qasar Trip to the Theatre and much more.

The sessions were well attended however due to unforeseen circumstances and lack of leaders the decision was made to postpone Compass. This decision was made the end of January 2017.

The PAC is keen for it to be re launched - I have sent a survey to all the parents that registered for Compass as we need new leaders to take this forward.

I will keep the Parish updated regarding the next meeting which is on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

**Bernadette Hassim**