

ST AIDAN'S PARISH AGM 26th June 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our AGM, the purpose of which is to let you know of the plans for the parish, answer any questions you may have and to elect members of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council meets quarterly and the minutes are posted on the Parish website as are the minutes of this meeting.

My name is John Hannacher and I am chair of the parish council and this is the first year we have been able to have a face to face AGM since 2019. It is good to see your faces here in the room – we all know how difficult it has been over the past years.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to formally welcome Fr. Roy to the parish as our parish priest. He has been a wonderful support and example since his arrival.

Fr. Ken has now retired and is still a part of St Aidan's parish life and I am sure everyone would like to join me in thanking him for his exemplary spiritual leadership of St Aidan's since he arrived in 1999.

Our priorities for the coming year must be to do what we can to restore pre pandemic parish life, increase the number of parishioners who regularly attend mass and parish events and attract younger people and families to contribute to the parish.

We have re-opened our church shop with encouraging results and reconstituted the finance committee to oversee this important part of parish life.

Sue Finch will say more about our Finances in a few minutes.

The pandemic has left its mark on all of us in various ways and although parish funds are in a comfortable position this does not apply to the Diocese. We face the prospect of a significant increase in the Diocesan levy in future years which will impact parish reserves if we are unable to increase our income to meet it. For example, it has increased by £10,000 in the past year.

Let me now read out the reports from the other parish ministries.

Formation – (Brian Gallagher)

This year Brian and other catechists have been active in preparing candidates for the Sacraments, including 20 First Holy Communion and 40 Confirmation candidates confirmed by the Bishop on Saturday 11th June.

Baptismal preparation has continued via Zoom during Covid and now in person

We have been blessed by a dedicated cadre of catechists from across the parishes who have contributed enormous amounts of time talent and energy to sharing and exploring our faith with our young people. As ever more are needed.

As to the future we shall continue to prepare candidates for the sacraments. We shall also if the circumstances are favourable be providing opportunities for everyone

in the parishes to share and explore our faith (perhaps over a glass of wine) as appropriate.

I would also like to record our thanks to Brian Gallagher who is standing down from the parish council after many years of service to Formation in the parish but I am very pleased to say that he will continue to contribute to parish activities.

Social & Cultural - (Deirdre Lay)

Social and Cultural is a key part of parish life with regular Sunday coffee mornings and monthly parish lunches having resumed after the pandemic. Deirdre would be pleased to hear from anyone who could volunteer to assist with Sunday lunches.

There is going to be a thank you party for volunteers on Sunday 7th August.

There are also plans to hold our St Aidan's walk and barbecue on Sunday 28th August, a Christmas Fayre provisionally on Sunday 26th November and a quiz night early in the new year. Full details of these events will be published in due course

We will continue to stream weekend masses as it is felt that they benefit parishioners who are otherwise unable to join us in church.

Ecumenical - (Vivianne Gattoc)

We continue to support ecumenical activities in the local area, including the Walk of Witness and the Christian Aid Coffee morning which raised £722.70.

We also hosted the World Day of Prayer at St Aidan's in March with a service prepared by women from the UK and which raised almost £300. Our thanks to the volunteers from St Aidan's who made it such a success.

Forthcoming ecumenical events include the Remembrance Service on 13th November and Carols on the Green in Little Chalfont on 10th December

We will also be welcoming members of Beyond Difference, an ecumenical movement in Bucks and the Chilterns, members of which will be attending mass and refreshments afterwards on Sunday 3rd July.

Liturgy - (Vince Smith)

The Liturgy Group covers many aspects of the mass which enhances collective worship including music for each Sunday mass and on other occasions (First Holy Communion, and particularly over the Christmas and Easter seasons).

The loss of Gerard and Susan Anderson has resulted in masses being accompanied mainly by guitar and Clavinova. We look forward to welcoming more musicians and singers to the group and our thanks go to our existing band of musicians and singers who enthusiastically lead the congregation in tuneful accord.

We would like to thank Helen Detre for helping us for a short while by playing the organ on Sunday mornings and we are very pleased to welcome James, an accomplished musician and music teacher who has recently joined the parish

As we return to normal parish life we are also grateful for the ongoing contribution from readers at all masses, the re-introduction of Eucharistic Ministers, to respectfully distribute communion, and the altar servers whose training will be a focus in the future. Rotas for these groups will be regularly published.

One area that does need attention however is the children's liturgy. This has not happened for a few months due to the lack of suitable volunteers. It is something that we would like to reinstate at the earliest opportunity and if anyone would like to participate in this please talk to Fr. Roy or someone from the PPC. Your support would be very much appreciated.

Youth - (Shadia Anderson)

It was very encouraging to see so many of our youth participate positively in the recent Diocesan retreat at Blaze in Northampton; and this has led us to think about how we can best serve the needs of our young people.

We would like to set up a Youth Council that meets three times a year, to discuss, share and take an active involvement in the pursuit of creating a supportive and inspiring group of people, who can fulfil their gifts in a variety of ways.

It is intended that the Youth Council will have sessions to develop their leadership skills, talks by visiting speakers from local business entrepreneurs and leaders, pizza and film afternoons, volunteering with local and international charities and supporting parish events.

We would like to continue with the students of the recent Formation groups and extend our reach to include more young people from both our Catholic and non-denominational schools, who are still practising in their faith. We hope that these events will bring more young people into the work of the wider Church.

We will be asking people to sign up using the forthcoming link on our website for details of the Youth Programme Events.

In addition, if you are someone who like to share their experience with the young people about your work or know someone who has used their faith to underpin their vocation, then please contact Shadia.

Maintenance – (Finbarr O'Donoghue)

We have recently improved the car park lighting by replacing ground level lights with a new lamppost with LED light. This may need to be adjusted when the dark nights return.

We will also be installing video recording equipment in the grounds as an important and sensible security measure and making repairs to the car park drainage channels.

Otherwise, there is a steady and important list of maintenance work needed to keep the church, presbytery and grounds in satisfactory condition.

Pastoral Area (Peter Kirk)

The new pastoral area of South Bucks, which now comprises 12 parishes, is still finding its feet although Fr. Roy holds regular meetings with clergy throughout the area,

Conclusion

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank everyone who gives their time freely in support of the parish in so many ways, however, we would like more parishioners to volunteer.

Anyone who would like to be involved please contact Debbie Rogers, our parish secretary whose contact details are available in the weekly parish newsletter and who will forward your details to the relevant co-ordinator.

Fr. Roy would also like to carry out a parish census in the autumn to update our records of parishioners and their interests.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to Fr. Roy for his stewardship of the parish. Deacon David Curtis, Deacon John Crowshaw who provides support from time to time, my fellow members of the parish council and Deborah our parish secretary.

John Hannacher 26th June 2022