

**ST AIDAN'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – AGM 7th JULY 2019**

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our AGM, the purpose of which is to let you know what is going on in the parish, answer any questions you may have and to elect and agree the Council membership for this coming year.

This year you will only hear reports from Sue Finch on Finance and me. I will attempt to summarise key points from each of the parish ministries. We thought this would make for a shorter meeting although it probably means my report is a little longer than usual.

I am delighted to welcome 2 new members to the parish council – Shadia Anderson who is taking responsibility for Youth and Finbarr O'Donoghue who has taken on Maintenance from Virginia who stood down last year.

The Parish Council meets quarterly and the minutes are posted on the Parish website as are the minutes of this meeting should anyone wish to read them

We are in a very healthy financial state as a result of the generosity of parishioners, more on that from Sue in a few minutes.

Let me now comment on the various ministries represented on the Parish Council – of necessity it will be a brief comment and will certainly not do justice to the work carried out within each area. If you have any questions please let me know.

Formation – (Brian Gallagher)

This year the Parish has been active in preparing candidates for the Sacraments, particularly: Baptism; First Holy Communion and Reconciliation - 26 candidates this year and Confirmation with 27 candidates taking part in the Pastoral Area programme conducted at St Aidan's);

The Confirmation masses took place at St Joseph's on Sunday 23rd June when Bishop Peter confirmed a total of 68 young people from the Pastoral Area.

Children's Liturgy was held during school term times and was well attended.

The need now is to set up and establish programmes for adults and post confirmation candidates. If this is to happen it will require active help and participation from parishioners.

Social & Cultural - (Deirdre Lay)

Social and Cultural have had a good year, coffee after Sunday morning Mass is well attended and monthly parish lunches are going well, both activities provide parishioners with an opportunity to socialise as well as welcoming and getting to know new members of our parish.

We have had panels fitted to the hall ceiling to reduce background noise when the hall is full and our thanks go to a benefactor for their generosity in providing these.

The St. Patrick's Social was, as always, well supported and most enjoyable. Monies raised were donated to MoPSA.

Grand Draw and sale in aid of the parish was held on 25th November, a total of £1544 was raised. Draw £1400, Sale of Fancy Goods £84, Sale of Christmas Cakes £60.

We had a very well attended Share the Journey walk followed by BBQ. Donations amounting to a total of £270 were given for CAFOD.

I am pleased to confirm that we are planning another Parish Walk and barbecue to celebrate the Feast of St Aidan on the afternoon of Sunday 1st September.

Ecumenical - (Vivianne Gattoc)

Participation of St Aidan's parishioners for Ecumenical activities has been slow but it is gradually improving.

We still have an issue regularly attending quarterly meetings with the Churches Together group but hopefully, volunteers are still willing to continue support current arrangements.

We also need to increase Parishioners involvement by highlighting future events in newsletters, and display flyers and posters if provided.

Ecumenical events we have participated in have included:

Summer Arts and Crafts in the Westwood Park Pavilion. [August 2018]
Harvest Celebration, Epilepsy Centre, Chalfont St Peter. [October 2018]
Remembrance Day [Nov 2018]
Christmas Church Service, Epilepsy Centre, Chalfont St Peter [December 2018]
Christmas Carols, Little Chalfont Green [December 2018]
World Day of Prayer [March 2019]
Lenten Celebration [April]
Good Friday Walk and Service and Christian Aid Week Bake sale [April]

Liturgy - (Vince Smith)

The Liturgy provides enhancements to the mass celebrations across a number of areas.

We try as far as we can to ensure Fr. Ken is supported by a regular flow of altar servers and that readers attend all masses. Music for many is an important part of collective worship and so the Sunday masses and the Saturday youth masses together with special one-off celebrations (such as First Holy Communion).

Youth - (Shadia Anderson)

There have been a number of Youth events in our Pastoral Area this year:

The Walk in London and Nightfever in December 2018: This was thought to be very successful, with the Sky Garden much appreciated by all and a prayerful atmosphere with music in St Patrick's Church.

Flame, March 2019, Wembley Arena.

30 places were booked for the Youth Planning Group (YPG) to allocate between the pastoral area. Despite extensive publicity in all 5 parishes, we only managed to take 8 young people to the event, 6 of whom were only 12 years of age.

The event itself was inspiring and uplifting, which many of our young people would have thoroughly enjoyed.

When leaders present were asked how they brought so many and older young people, they did this mainly through the chaplains of their local Catholic secondary schools. A number of improvements are being developed to the promotion of future FLAME events.

Youth Fest, last Saturday afternoon at Our Lady's was arranged primarily for the young people of the 5 parishes in our Pastoral Area:

There were online 7 registrations beforehand, but we recorded 20 young people at Reception - a record for us! They ranged from school years 6 to 12, with the most from year 9. Half of them came from St Columba's; the rest from the other parishes including St Aidan's.

The facilities and provisions were good and there was support and representation from each of the parishes. It was an added bonus having visitors from Ecuador, who all seemed to enjoy the event through their participation in the music and games.

The concelebrated outdoor Mass with 4 priests at the end was a fitting climax to the whole event. But too few young people stayed for it. Lessons have been learned for future events.

Future plans include a visit to Taize probably in October, the possibility of employing a Youth Coordinator to support the parishes in the pastoral area and use of social networking to strengthen communication with young people.

Maintenance – (Finbarr O'Donoghue)

Flat roof above bay window and outside kitchen: A new flat roof & insulation was fitted above the bay window of the presbytery. Also, a new transparent roof was fitted outside the backdoor of the kitchen, making this area a usable space once more.

Boundary wall cracking: A tree growing just outside the boundary wall near the main entrance was identified as the reason for the cracking of the wall. This tree has now been removed & the roots treated to ensure no further growth. Work is now in progress to get the cracked wall stabilised.

Ongoing minor tasks: Several minor maintenance issues were resolved as soon as they were identified throughout and if anyone notices a maintenance issue could they please report it to Louise or anyone on the Parish Council to ensure it gets addressed.

We have also been advised that our drains do not have sufficient fall and are also being affected by our neighbour's tree roots. This is likely to require major repair works and we are waiting to hear from the Diocese regarding the timing of this work.

We have also been advised that the new owner of Beel House next door will be cutting back some of the trees on the edge of their property.

Pastoral Area (Peter Kirk)

Under the guidance of our Clergy parishes are encouraged to work as closely as possible with each other to share in best practice for the good of everyone within the Pastoral Area. The name of which has recently been changes to "Chiltern"

Regular meetings are held in the parishes within the Pastoral Area and our parish is represented by Father Ken, Brian Gallagher and Peter Kirk.

Confirmation preparation is now undertaken on a pastoral area basis and booklets are now regularly produced showing the services at all parishes in the Pastoral Area at Easter and Christmas.

St Columba's and the Immaculate Heart of Mary welcomed Ecuadorian missionaries from 14th June to 2nd July and all parishes in the Pastoral Area were involved in welcoming the visitors. They attended the YouthFest last weekend

At the request of The Bishop, there is presently a focus on growing Lay Ministry throughout the Pastoral Area. With this in mind a Pastoral Area Reflection Day will take place on Saturday 14th September (venue and timings to be confirmed).

In preparation for this, our parish will hold its own Reflection Day on Saturday 20th July and all who are interested in Lay Ministry are encouraged to attend. Details have been communicated in our Newsletter and hopefully there will be good support for this important day.

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 different ways; however we would like more parishioners to volunteer.

Anyone who would like to be involved please contact Louise who will forward your details to the relevant co-ordinator.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to Fr. Ken for his stewardship of the parish, my colleagues on the parish council, our Deacons Peter & David (and not forgetting John Crowshaw who provides support from time to time) and our Parish Secretary Louise for all of her hard work behind the scenes.