

ST AIDAN'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 17th JUNE 2018

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our AGM - its purpose is to let you know what is going on in the parish and enable you to ask questions of council members

I have a very short report to make before my colleagues on the parish council report to you. Copies of all reports will be available on the parish website in the coming days

We continue to enjoy worship in our refurbished church and have welcomed Deacon Peter & Deacon David who now support Fr Ken following Deacon John Crowshaw's retirement last June.

We are in a healthy financial state as a result of the generosity of parishioners and we have just had an audit by the diocesan auditor with excellent results.

The diocese has also recently carried out its 5 yearly maintenance report and identified a number of issues including the flat roof on the presbytery and some damage which we believe has been caused by our neighbour's tree roots, which will be addressed.

Today this meeting is taking place in our recently repainted and equipped hall

The acoustic problem in the church remains with us but we have now engaged with the Diocese in finding a solution and I am confident we will bring this to a conclusion in the coming year.

We are actively engaged in a wide range of local Ecumenical activities including the Chiltern Child Contact Centre where one of our parishioners is a trustee.

There continues to be a number of regular Social and Cultural events including the monthly lunches and weekly coffee mornings which are well attended although we did not run the May Fayre this year because of a shortage of volunteers.

We are looking into installing broadband and cameras in the church to enable services to be streamed to anyone who is unable to attend in person.

Formation in the parish includes preparation for Marriage, Confirmation, Baptism with regular parental courses and First Holy Communion with the First Holy Communion Mass taking place here on 19th May.

Confirmation is now organised on a pastoral area basis with confirmations to take place on 1st July (no one from our parish) and we look forward to a new course starting in October of this year.

Youth activities are also being organised increasingly on a Pastoral Area basis and a Youth Fest was held in Our Lady's School grounds yesterday for young people in Year 6 and above.

Virginia Wedgwood, our Maintenance council member is standing down and I would like to thank her for hard work and commitment during her time on the council. I would also like to mention and thank Steve Gill who was a stalwart of many years in the parish who has moved out of the area.

Finally, on the question of volunteers.

We do need more volunteers to help with the various parish ministries and other activities and I would ask all parishioners to consider whether there is more they can do to help us to grow the parish community of St Aidan's.

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 for his stewardship of the parish, my colleagues on the parish council and to the many people who support the parish every day throughout the year.

Please keep up the good work.

John Hannacher

MINISTRY REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

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

1. PARISH FINANCES AT THE START OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

The financial year started with **£54,165** in hand.

2. PARISH INCOME FOR THE YEAR

- i **General Income** – Offertory income – both through the plate and by Standing Order - are slightly lower than from the previous year. Gift Aid refunds were considerably lower. After the church refurbishment we became a parish 'in debt' and an appeal was made for donations. The generosity of parishioners cleared the debt and their donations generated both a higher offertory and Gift Aid income the previous year as seen in the 2016-17 figures.
- ii **Income from church activities** was again slightly lower than the previous year
- iii **Donations** continued to be made specifically for refurbishment projects.
- iv **The May Fayre** raised £8487.43 for chosen charities and parish projects

3. PARISH EXPENSES FOR 2017-2018

- i **Liturgical costs** increased by £1,400 this financial year. The additional expense was mostly the hire of a marquee for Dcn John's retirement. (The parish refused Dcn John's offer to cover this expense.)
- ii **Property and associated costs.**
Property costs continue to decrease since the refurbishment.
- iii **Restricted Fund Raising and restricted donations.**
£2,474.34 was given to the Hospice of St Francis and £2,000 to the Chiltern Child Contact Centre from money raised from the May Fayre.
The parish share along with other donations will go towards the cost of the painting of the parish hall and the new TV and sound-bar.

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 £76,673.81 in our account.

We are still having conversations with the diocese 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

We continue to encourage parishioners to consider making a regular Standing Order for their Offertory rather than use the plate, and to Gift Aid if possible. This financial year we were able to claim £10,014.23 back in Gift Aid from your donations.

6. FINALLY

I would like to welcome Jon Walden to the Finance team, thank **John Hannacher** for his guidance, and **Philip Patten** for his help with the production of the Financial Statement, and thank our money counters who do a fantastic job.

Sue Finch, Chair of Finance

FORMATION REPORT

1. The main areas of activity this year have been with regard to sacramental preparation, namely baptism, First Holy Communion and reconciliation and marriage.
2. We have also provided a Children's liturgy on Sundays during term time.
3. Although we do not have any candidates for confirmation we have participated actively in the preparation of candidates from across the Pastoral Area for the sacrament of Confirmation which will be conferred on Sunday 1st July 2018. Anyone wishing to assist in the sacrament should please get in touch with me on bjg5@mac.com. In particular singers and musicians would be very welcome!
4. As we witnessed only recently first communion took place on 19th May 2018 and was a very holy and reverent occasion. It has been gratifying to see the first holy communicants in the weeks following and I hope that Corpus Christi went well; sadly I was abroad.
5. The work that has been done by all those involved in the sacramental programmes and children's liturgy has been terrific and of a very high quality. The parish is very grateful to everyone who have helped young couples prepare for marriage; parents prepare for the baptism; parents and candidates who have prepared for reconciliation and first holy communion. We look forward to your continuing contribution and invite others who feel they might be able to support the parish in this way to volunteer.
6. The real task is to build on this excellent work. Next year we will be opening lists for first holy communion and for confirmation. Again, in respect of confirmation the programme will be run on a Pastoral area basis but it is probable that part of the course will be based at St Aidan's. Volunteers to help run the course in terms of administration and content will be needed. Equally as a parish we will benefit from running groups aimed at deepening and expanding our understanding of our faith. We have a wonderful resource in Fr Ken, particularly in his homilies and if we can spend time unpacking them and digging deeper into what he is saying we will be the richer for it. Catholicism is really about a way of life that which has us walking in tandem with Christ as companions and friends as he told the Apostles. This is an aspect of faith we can all enjoyably explore and experience. So if any of us has any ideas on the subject please let me know and we will do our best to put them into action. It would be to our credit if we could establish two or three faith exploration groups over the next few months.
7. I have mentioned Fr Ken but we are also blessed by the attendance here at St Aidan's of Deacons Peter and David. Deacon John was a wonderful Pastor and a very hard act to follow. Our new visiting Deacons are in the same mold and I look forward to working with them in closer cooperation.
8. Louise has also been a stalwart presence in the Office and a source of calm inspiration when things have looked as they might overwhelm our efforts.
9. I have been working on formation matters for a good while now and I am happy to continue for a further year and no one has suggested they wish to take over. That is a shame. Competition is always good. I think that this should be my last year and that new blood and new ideas and fresh energy should be brought to bear. So please consider what you can do for your Parish, come 2019.
10. Presiding over all our efforts and what we do in the Parish is Fr Ken. He never fails to support us and to strike the right note. That this Parish thrives is in large measure down to him.
11. Of course, our deepest thanks and gratitude are reserved for Our Lord, Jesus. He is the rising of the day and the waning of the night. He is our friend and companion, our unfailing help. If we can build our relationship with him we cannot fail. Formation is all about building that friendship. Please become a part of the team.

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 6 parishioners. More support is needed.

St. Patricks Social was, as always, well supported and most enjoyable. 50 people attended. Music was provided by Vince with help from Alice Bergonzi, Andrew McNaughton, Laura and Anna O'Donoghue. The money raised from the evening, £250, went to the Syrian Refugees.

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

May Fayre It was decided after last years May Fayre that due to lack of volunteers during the event it would not be viable to hold such an event this year. It has, for many years been 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. We do rely on volunteers to make it happen. Sadly last year proved to be a lot of work by a few.

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. Anyone who would like to know more please contact Louise our Office Administrator.

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. There is a lot more capability than we have used to date and we hope to explore this in the future. We have recorded the Mass over two week-ends using trial cameras and we hope to be able to live stream the Mass during the next year. This will enable those who are housebound to partake in the Mass from their homes.

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 would welcome any members of the youth who would like to know more to come forward also. Training would be given.

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 our Parish Administrator if you would like to know more and are willing to help.

Deirdre Lay

MAINTENANCE REPORT

The condition report prepared by the Diocesan Surveyor was received in February 2018. It does not contain and particular surprises – the most urgent item is the renewal of the bay window flat roof to the Presbytery.

The tarmac entrance to the Hall was enlarged and renewed during the last year.

The redecoration of the Hall, excluding the kitchen and WCs, has just been completed following minor joinery repairs, with some new ironmongery, signs and new light fittings. It is proposed to replace the rest of the light fittings so that they are all upgraded at the same time. There is a new TV and sound system and new blinds are awaited, arranged by Vince Smith and Deirdre Lay respectively.

Windows and gutters of Church, Hall and Presbytery continue to be cleaned twice a year – Presbytery windows and cleaned four times a year – by WCS Ltd.

The church grounds are well cared for by Bucks & Herts Landscaping group Ltd (formally Fuchsia Landscapes) under the direction of Deirdre.

In the choir area the microphone cabling has been tidied up making it look neater and safer. Some of the chairs have been temporarily tied together and more permanent clips are to be ordered.

Regular checks to the heating installation, fire extinguishers etc as laid out in the Planning Maintenance guide are arranged by Louise.

Virginia Wedgwood

ECUMENICAL REPORT

We continue to work with the other churches, although everyone is struggling with a shortage of clergy. We welcome anyone who would like to get involved in any of the ecumenical activities and a huge thank you to all those who have volunteered, helped and supported the 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 the school holidays on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11am-4pm. It offers craft activities for children as well as refreshments

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 11 am

Women's World Day of Prayer – this was hosted by St. Michael's and was prepared by the women from Suriname

Lenten Talks

Good Friday walk of Witness – walking from our churches in Little Chalfont with a service at St. George's this year

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

Village Day – in Little Chalfont on Saturday 16 June

Restore Hope – various activities throughout the year – www.restorehope.org.uk

Clare Reed