

**ST AIDAN'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 5th JULY 2020**

We are unable to hold our AGM this year but, in conjunction with my colleagues on the Parish Council, this report has been prepared to communicate the key points from each parish ministry.

The life of the parish has been on hold since March 23rd and the closure of our church as a result of the Corona virus.

I hope parishioners of St Aidan's and their families have been keeping safe and well during this difficult time.

The government has now advised that churches may open on 5th July for worship although, at St Aidan's we are going to monitor the situation for a while before we re-open.

We will also need sufficient volunteers to carry out the various tasks necessary for a safe opening. Fr. Ken has written about this in recent Newsletters.

The parish is currently in a good position financially and is still receiving income from standing orders from many parishioners to whom we are extremely grateful.

For this reason it has not been considered necessary to appeal to parishioners for additional financial assistance during this time.

Sue Finch's Finance report may also be found on the church website.

Let me now briefly comment on the various ministries represented on the parish council.

Formation – (Brian Gallagher)

First Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes have been postponed.

The new proposed date for Confirmation is 9th October, but this is subject to changes in the rules regarding public gatherings.

The Confirmation programme continued remotely via Zoom, and has now concluded, although there will be a few refresher sessions before 9th October. It is hope that we will be able to begin next year's programmes during the winter term, all things being well.

Social & Cultural - (Deirdre Lay)

Prior to lockdown Social & Cultural was having a good year with coffee after Sunday masses and parish lunches well attended and providing a regular opportunity for parishioners to meet and socialise.

A successful walk and BBQ were again held on September 1st to celebrate the Feast of St Aidan.

It was not possible to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Fr. Ken's ordination in June. This is an important milestone which the parish wants to celebrate as soon as parishioners can safely attend.

Ecumenical - (Viviane Gattoc)

Due to COVID 19 and current lockdown situation, further activities planned this year were suspended. However, the start of 2019 and early months of 2020, we have been fortunate to meet with the Chess Valley Churches together, joined in with the planned services, and met new members of the committee.

We have continually involved with the activities within the locality and we have gained more support from our parishioners. However, we still have a lot to do to improve the level of support to these events.

Activities we have supported 2019-2020

- The Remembrance Service on the Village Green attended by around 100 people
- Carols in the Green moved to village hall because of heavy rain
- Harvest at the Epilepsy Centre
- Service of Christian Unity with hymns, prayers and bible readings
- World Day of Prayer led by women of Zimbabwe with wide representation from the Chess Valley churches

Liturgy - (Vince Smith)

The Liturgy provides enhancements to the mass celebrations across a number of areas and supports Fr. Ken with altar servers, readers and music for weekly masses and special one –off celebrations

We will look into the possibility of installing suitable camera equipment to enable services to be streamed should this be required in any future situation.

Youth - (Shadia Anderson)

This year has been fairly quiet one on one hand, but in other respects, it has given us the opportunity to reflect upon how we can facilitate and meet the emerging needs of the young people at St Aidan's.

We propose to build upon the practice of accompaniment and develop our pastoral outreach in three main areas:

1) **Diocesan level:** Keeping in contact with Northampton Youth Ministry Organisation (NYMO) and advertise their major events on the parish website and newsletter. Video links from the NYMO team advertising those events - e.g. Blaze, Flame and Lux, could be played at the end of the Mass as part of the notices.

There may be parishioners who might just want to get involved in just one or two events that take place every few years – World Youth Day.

2) **Pastoral Area:** We would like our young people to be as active as possible by getting involved in social action and justice activities through the Catholic charity, Million Minutes.

This is an organisation that has deep roots in putting its pastoral moral theology into practice and could support young people in setting up their own initiatives and fundraising activities.

A date will be set to invite Million Minutes to talk to the Pastoral Area and introduce the initiative to the young people and their parents. We will also build upon our links with the local schools and develop the ways in which we can unite our mission of enriching spirituality through community and social action

3) **Parish Centre:** Continues to be the hub for local parishioners who can ask the Youth Team about any of the activities that are taking place at Pastoral and Diocesan Levels. Any social action and justice initiatives could be carried out within the parish area, for example, supporting those who might still be shielding. Planning for trips to Taizé and the London Night walks will take place later on in the year.

Maintenance – (Finbarr O’Donoghue)

A recently bereaved parishioner is arranging for some benches to be installed in the memorial garden which will provide a welcome place for quiet reflection

The redecoration of the fascia above the main entrance has been completed, and new carpet has been laid in the presbytery living room and stairs.

Parishioners may have noticed that some of the high level interior lights in the church were not working. The closure of the church has provided the opportunity to have these replaced which will require mobile scaffolding.

We are waiting to hear from the Diocese regarding repairs to our drainage system

Finally, the new owners of Beel House have removed the trees just outside the boundary fence and made good any broken fence panels.

Pastoral Area (Peter Kirk)

Regular meetings are held in the parishes within the Pastoral Area and our parish is represented by Father Ken, Brian Gallagher and Peter Kirk. Due to the Lockdown, no meetings have been held since 10th March 2020.

In summary, the objectives of the Pastoral Area Council, under the guidance of our Clergy, are for parishes to work as closely as possible with each other and to share in best practice for the good of everyone within the Pastoral Area.

At the main Feast Times of Easter and Christmas, a booklet is produced showing the services at all parishes in the Pastoral Area.

At the request of Bishop Peter, each Pastoral Area has been charged with producing a Mission Plan with the emphasis being on Laity involvement in parish liturgies and activities.

Following a very successful Reflection Day held at Our Lady’s School on 14th September 2019, work is under way on this project. No doubt, Bishop David,

ordained on 19th March, will take this matter forward, when circumstances permit.

Parish Council

The Parish Council meets quarterly and the minutes are posted on the Parish website as are AGM minutes and this report.

I am pleased to say both that Anne Parsons & Vivianne Gattoc, the elective members of the Parish Council representing the parish and Fr. Ken's nominees Vince Smith & John Hannacher have agreed to continue on the council for the coming year.

Although it has not been possible to hold an election I'm confident that parishioners will continue to give them the unanimous support they were awarded at the "show of hands" at the last year's AGM

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 particularly to assist with the opening of the church.

Please contact Louise who will note your details.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to Fr. Ken for his stewardship of the parish and congratulations on the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination on Monday 29th June.

Thanks also to 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.

Keep Safe

John Hannacher

5th July 2020