

St Aidan's Parish Pastoral Council
Minutes of Meeting held on 7th March 2022 at 7.00pm
at Our Lady's Church

PRESENT: Fr Roy, John Hannacher, Sue Finch, David Curtis
Vivianne Gattoc, Brian Gallagher, Peter Kirk, Vince Smith, Paul Williams (Guest)

APOLOGIES: Anne Parsons, Finbarr O'Donoghue, Deirdre Ley, Shadia Anderson & Debbie Rodgers

PRAYER AND WELCOME: John Hannacher welcomed everyone, and the meeting commenced with a prayer from Fr Roy.

Minutes of the last meeting, held on 9th November 2021, were approved. Fr. Roy pointed out that Richard Robinson would also be joining the Finance Committee at Our Lady's

FINANCE ST. AIDAN'S – Sue Finch confirmed that amount of parish funds at the Diocese was broadly similar to the £137,500 in November. She also thanked those people who had helped in the preparation of the Parish Budget and Strategic Plan as requested by the Diocese.

LITURGY– Vince Smith: The priority is Easter. Helen Detre has agreed to play the organ two times per month but was not going to be available over Easter.
Sarah Gallagher may be able to support the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday masses
Vince is working on the music for the Thursday and Friday and his daughter is planning to sing the Exsultet.

We continue to stream 1 mass per week with a small number of participants. There seems to be small increase in the church congregations on Saturday and Sunday.

We have a shortage of altar servers on Sunday mornings, they all need to have completed their First holy Communion.

Acoustics: Paul asked about the church acoustics and whether there is a problem. Vince explained the background; simply put, the wrong ceiling tiles were used during the church refurbishment which tends to deaden singing in the nave of the church. John added that discussions had taken place with the diocese but they were not supportive of any remedial work. The Diocesan Surveyor was not certain that any work would necessarily resolve the problem. Fr. Roy commented that the diocese would not sanction funds to carry out repairs, particularly if the outcome was not certain. Although it probably would be possible to raise restricted funds if there was sufficient support in the parish.

FORMATION – Brian Gallagher: Confirmation classes continue although some time has been lost to Covid.

The Confirmation Service at St Aidan's is scheduled for Saturday 11th June @ 11:00am.

A Retreat at BLAZE in Milton Keynes is planned for Saturday 14th May. Brian to arrange transport and necessary safeguarding arrangements.

There are 14 children being prepared for 1st Holy Communion at Our Lady's and the mass is scheduled for 7th May at 12:00pm.

It may be possible to have musical support from St Columba's or IHM.
Fr. Roy has asked Mark Holdsworth if the Our Lady's school choir could also attend.

Deacon David asked about retaining the involvement of young people after the completion of their Confirmation. Brian agreed it is an important objective but so far has proved to be very challenging to organise.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL – John for Deirdre: We have re-started the weekly coffee mornings and monthly parish lunches. The next lunch is on Sunday 27th March. We do need more volunteers, currently only two teams are providing the lunches.
Fr. Roy asked Vivianne if the Filipino community could help with monthly lunches. She will investigate.

Thought is being given to the parish holding a Jubilee event although Deirdre would like to see when events are taking place before committing. Fr. Roy suggested Sunday 5th June which is Pentecost.

A social event for volunteers. Fr. Roy would like to arrange something after Easter.

Deacon David and Jane Curtis are prepared to arrange a Quiz Night which they have done before at IHM.

Feast of St Aidan's BBQ and walk on Sunday 28th August.

Annual raffle proposed to be drawn on St Aidan's Feast day to raise funds for the chosen outreach charity.

MAINTENANCE – John for Finbarr

Repair to kerbstones and drain: Work agreed and Tim due to start in February. John to chase. Cost £880.

Lighting - Work underway and the lamp post has been installed with some of the lights. Neighbours have asked about this and Maz will work to ensure lighting meets our needs and not inconvenience them. Cost £1920
Brian asked whether we would need planning consent to install new lighting of this type. John to ask Maz.

Leak in toilet – Flat roof seal with air vent has been treated with a fiberglass surround and the leak seems to have stopped. This needs to be monitored. John to talk with the Vulcana engineer when he visits to service heaters.

A section of white UPVC fascia has fallen off the eaves of the church in recent storms. John has spoken with the diocese who will advise regarding insurance claim. They have instructed a contractor to quote for the repair.

Water leak around sacristy door – weather bar to be fitted & lock broken on Emergency exit near choir. John to progress repairs.

ECUMENICAL – Vivianne Gattoc: World Day of Prayer took place on 4th March. Vivianne thanked all those who volunteered to make it a success. St Aidan's, Methodist and Baptist community represented and £299.65 raised. Deidre will organise the cheque.

Walk of Witness on Good Friday at 10:30am between St George's and Little Chalfont. Vivianne will ensure details go in the Newsletter. Christian Aid week starts on Saturday 7th May

YOUTH – Shadia Anderson: No report at this time.

PASTORAL AREA COUNCIL – Peter Kirk has circulated notes of a recent PAC meeting regarding The Synod describing what each parish is doing. Deacon David also provided comments on the meetings held in St Aidan's and some of the conclusions reached. A note will be circulated to the Parish Council in due course. Fr. Roy is considering some of the points raised.

The new PACs are still establishing themselves and there is going to be a PAC get together in Northampton on Saturday 2nd April from 10:30 to 15:30.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Parish Budget and Strategic Plan: John explained that each Parish has been asked to carry out a Budget review for 2023 and the mid-term which Sue Finch has led and also a Strategic plan looking at the Parish Strengths /Weaknesses etc. and Deacon David provided some background context.

The diocese is currently £3 million in debt even after allowing for the surpluses/deficits held in the account for each parish. We have a surplus in this account which appears to have disappeared until the diocesan funds are back in surplus. Brian asked whether the funds in the Diocesan account belong to the Diocese or the parishes. David was not sure.

The Board of Trustees appear to have allowed this to happen over a number of years and it is thought that the Charity Commissioners are now expecting actions.

Lots of discussion about how the diocese got into this situation and whether they need to have different people in place to ensure the problem does not continue and how are they seeking to reduce their own costs. Tony McNiff is the new COO and is attempting to address the problem. Diocesan interest payments are currently £200,000 pa.

He has produced a financial comparison with similar dioceses and Northampton's costs compare favourably – apart from staffing costs. They are also looking to share cost centres with other Dioceses such as HR services.

Each parish is requested to ask their parishioners to increase their giving by 20% over pre pandemic figures and the levy from each parish to the diocese will be increasing from 23% to 40% over 3 years. All agreed that transparency from the Diocese is important, and it was going to be a difficult thing to ask in the current climate.

It was agreed we would make an appeal to the parish at masses on the weekend of 26/27th March using the text provided by Roger Platt from IHM as the basis.
Sue Finch will arrange the necessary Gift Aid and Standing Order forms and Peter Kirk & John Hannacher will collaborate on the actual wording of the appeal.

Fr. Roy

We need someone to arrange Children's Liturgy – a parent from the First Holy Communion class may be interested. – Action: Deacon David to ask at their meeting

Parish Census – Fr. Roy would like to hold this after Easter, he will produce a template of information we would like to know about new/existing parishioners. Action Fr. Roy after Easter.

Fr. Roy has asked Mark Holdsworth if the Our Lady's School Choir could sing at the FHC mass.

Fr. Roy would like to hold a volunteer's social event sometime after Easter. Possibly after mass one Sunday.

Ukraine: Discussion about how we might best support refugees and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Our Lady's School is working with a polish school which has links in Ukraine – providing nappies etc.

Paul commented that supporting refugee families may be important in the future but providing financial support is probably the current priority. CAFOD is partnering with Caritas in Ukraine.

British Red Cross is partnering with people in Poland.

It probably makes sense to use an established organisation such as CAFOD as they will be able to ensure resources are directed to the people in need.

Is the Polish community at St Aidan's doing anything? Fr. Roy to ask Fr. Roman.

Action: to hold a service at St Aidan's on Sunday 20th March @ 4pm in support of the people of Ukraine, to include prayers and fund raising.

Vivianne to advise the Churches Together community of this service.

Next Meeting will be held on Monday 13th June 2022 at 7pm at Our Lady's

Fr Roy closed the meeting with a prayer.