

SS MARY AND JOSEPH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 8 SEPTEMBER 2009

In attendance:

Geoff Doyle, (GD), Chair: Fr John, (Fr J) part; Ann Dodd, (AD); Janice Varney, (JV); Jane Gonzalez, (JGZ); Margaret Elwick, (ME); and Mike McCallum, (M McC), Secretary.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from John Gavin and Chris Loakes.

Opening Remarks

GD advised Council of his intention to stand down from the Chair by the end of 2010 which will complete 5 years in office. This was acknowledged by Council and led to a broader discussion of the need to attract 'new blood' onto the Council. It was felt that people could be co-opted to attend meetings when their particular areas of interest/activity were discussed and give them an insight into the role and workings of Council. JGZ stressed the importance of involving newcomers and young people both in parish activities and the Council.

It was agreed that succession planning and related issues would be an Agenda item at future meetings.

Fr John

GD and Fr J brought Council up to date on the progress made on the Presbytery project. They had attended that day a meeting with Diocesan representatives to discuss the plans produced and presented by the Architects Kyle Smart Associates Ltd following the June meeting and 3 Parishes Open meeting. The Diocese was very supportive of the new plans. Further refinements and options were agreed and the architect will update the plans to reflect these and also review and update the original costing and submit all for final approval.

The views expressed and points raised at the 3 Parishes meetings were tabled at the meeting and the Architect will incorporate them into his revisions where necessary, e.g. construction will meet the required environmentally friendly level needed to obtain Planning Permission. This equates to the standards laid down by the Herts County Council for comparable property. The style of the frontage has yet to be settled and traditional and modern styles will be examined. The final decision will be made locally following consultation with and the views of parishioners.

The Diocese will provide the funding as required during the construction phase.

The project should be completed by late/end of 2010 dependent upon early resolution of the Planning Permission and Contract Tender processes.

AD raised the issue of the Parish Office and various options were suggested. GD said there was no immediate need to resolve this and various options will be explored and a final decision taken and implemented by the end of 2009.

Fr J stated that he had moved to 45a St John's Road, Boxmoor for an initial period of six months with the option to extend this for further periods. He expects his transfer from the Presbytery to be fully completed by late October. His telephone numbers will be unchanged.

The Agenda item on Health and Safety was taken at this point.

Fr J and GD had serious reservations about the use of an external H and S Consultancy as recommended by the Diocese. The flat rate cost of approx £1000 annually per Parish did not reflect individual circumstances and needs.

GD had obtained a "DIY" H and S manual from a specialist source and had drafted a report following a recent inspection of the Parish's premises by JG/GD which he believed would meet our legal obligations.

The 'by exception' report will highlight those items/issues which still need to be addressed after the application of the Risk Assessment process. For example, the introduction of suitably trained Fire Wardens at major liturgical events; centralisation of various equipment/plant inspection contracts and written records of regular/annual checks of Fire protection equipment (including Emergency lighting).

The draft report will be finalised and circulated for comment and action by the end of September. (The Finance Committee will also be informed and circulated)

It was agreed that the Parish should operate its own H and S policy and that a dedicated person needs to be appointed to ensure the H and S policy is implemented and managed effectively.

Fr J raised the need for someone to take over production of the Newsletter from October. It was agreed that an appeal for a suitable volunteer would be placed in the September Newsletters.

There is a need for someone to draft the Bidding Prayers. JGZ undertook to arrange for the Liturgy Group to do this.

Fr J mentioned that there would be a pastoral message from the Archbishop on Sunday 20th September. As the Parish Open Air Mass is that day, printed copies would be available at that Mass.

Fr J raised the issue of the Sign of Peace at Mass and suggested that a range of options be given to the congregations. He would mention these at the Masses on Sunday 13 September.

Fr J was keen for a Mass to be held for all three parish councils, probably in Jan 2010

Minutes of previous PC

Minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 16 June were approved. Actions arising were either completed or carried forward.

Parish Groups/Committees reports

Liturgy

JGZ distributed a paper on Respect and Reverence in Church which covered a number of concerns which had been raised in previous Council meetings. After a fruitful discussion it was agreed the members would provide comments on the paper which would subsequently be distributed to all parishioners.

Little Church had been revitalised, with many new volunteers coming forward.

JGZ made a request for the purchase of new hymn books; GD agreed that £200 could be spent initially.

Catechesis

JGZ reported that RCIA was to begin in the week beginning 14 September; Confirmation classes would commence shortly. New volunteers had come forward for both.

Youth Ministry

AD introduced the report. She stressed the importance of the meeting to be held on 22 September for all 4 parishes to review and plan HIYA activities.

The council wished Venus well in her recovery from a recent illness

Communication

AD introduced the report. She stressed the importance of including material under the new heading of Events on the website. There had been a very favourable response to the August Newsletters.

The Parish website is being updated and the project to introduce a master site and individual sites for all 3 parishes is making steady progress.

The parish contact list booklet is being updated and AD asked everyone to check their current entries.

AD raised again her belief that the activities of the Council should be summarised at all Masses on one Sunday following PC meetings. GD undertook to produce a short speaking note based on the minutes of the meeting which could be used. There were some reservations about the need for and way in which this should be done. It was agreed to implement a 'trial' following this PC meeting.

Justice and Peace/Interfaith

A report was presented by AD. Dick Dodd will speak at the Masses on 15 November, the beginning of National Interfaith Week. It was hoped the parish would hold an event during that week. GD believed the week should be widely publicised in advance. Margaret Slynn is our interfaith representative and GD has promised that we will highlight the week and any related events. AD indicated that Dick Dodd would liaise with Margaret and ensure full publicity (including mention at all Masses by the officiating priest).

Following a short discussion on Amnesty International and the parish's involvement at Christmas, JGZ undertook to provide an item for the Newsletter providing details of how to befriend prisoners of conscience.

A detailed discussion took place on the subject of the parish donating a fixed sum of money to charities/good causes over and above that raised in the second collections. A number of views were expressed on the appropriateness of such activity and, if approved, how it would be handled. The council agreed in principle with the idea and GD would raise the matter at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

Ecumenical

ME presented the report covering activities since the last meeting.

Social/Fundraising

GD reiterated that it is the intention to start a new round of fundraising to support the New Presbytery project as soon as final details can be publicised. He is hoping that the Parish open Meeting in October will provide the opportunity (including an appeal for new volunteers/fresh ideas and someone/committee to take overall responsibility).

Hall Management

JV introduced her report. GD complimented JV on her work over the period. It was agreed that an annual pricing review is essential in view of recent substantial costs incurred to ensure the P/Centre remains an attractive and safe venue. JV would check with other churches, particularly St John's, to compare their pricing structures and make recommendations.

Maintenance

GD linked his report to the earlier discussion on Health and Safety (see above) and emphasised the importance of implementing the formal H and S regime as hard evidence of what has and will be done.

Finance

GD reported that he is attending the next Finance Committee meeting. (14th Sept). The Treasurer's latest report had not been received to date.

Parish Pastoral Council Forum

GD informed Council that the proposed meeting (26/9) with Fr Dermot had been postponed until further notice.

Parish Open Meeting

The meeting will be held in the Parish Centre on 11 October at 2.30pm. All Parish Groups will be invited to put up displays/posters/photos to promote their activities and encourage involvement.

AOB

Fair Trade-GD confirmed we remain registered and has received confirmation that the CWL is an active supporter. Fresh notices will be displayed in the P/Centre and St Joseph's hall to confirm our commitment and to encourage others to support Fair Trade.

Legacies-details of diocesan guidance have been obtained. An appeal, linked to the fresh Fundraising programme (see above), will be planned in due course.

Parish Council Photograph:

A photo of the current Council will be organised.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the PC will take place on 19 or 26 January 2010. To be confirmed with Fr J.

ACTIONS—see below.

ACTION LIST

1. Minutes of previous PC meeting -----All to check outstanding actions

2. Succession Planning-----ALL

3. New Presbytery Project-----GD/Fr J

4. Liturgy

Respect and Reverence-----ALL

Hymn Books-----JGZ

Bidding Prayers-----JGZ

Sign of Peace-----Fr J

Parish Councils (3) Mass date-Fr J

Replacement Pews (costing) --CL

5. Communication

PC reports at Mass-----GD

Newsletter future production-AD

National Interfaith week-----AD

Various notices in Minutes-----AD

6. Hall Management

Pricing Review-----JV

7. Maintenance

H&S report-----GD/Fr J

8. Parish Open Meeting

Groups (displays)-----GD

9. AOB

Fair Trade (posters)-----JV

PC Photo-----GD

Date of next meeting---GD

