

SS MARY AND JOSEPH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 19 JANUARY 2010

In attendance:

Geoff Doyle, (GD),
Chair: Fr John, (Fr J) part;
Ann Dodd, (AD);
Janice Varney, (JV);
John Gavin, (JG);
Chris Loakes, (CL),
Margaret Elwick, (ME); and
Mike McCallum, (M McC), Secretary.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Jane Gonzalez.

Opening Remarks

GD asked that any actions agreed at PC meetings should be clearly recorded and clarified at the time to avoid any omissions or ambiguities.

He provided copies of the PC's Aims for 2009 and asked each member to review them and submit recommendations for retention, amendment and addition so that an Aims for 2010 could be prepared and circulated. This would ensure the PC has a clear focus for 2010.

Fr John

GD and Fr J brought the Council up to date on the progress made on the Presbytery project. GD had previously circulated a note headed 'New Presbytery Project-Update Jan 2010' (see attached) which stated that following receipt of pre planning approval from Dacorum C.C. (subject to certain requirements) the architects are making amendments to the original plans and these are expected back shortly for Fr John's approval. Formal Planning Consent will then be submitted to DCC. If approved the tendering process will be implemented. Work is anticipated to start in June 2010 provided that the overall costs are within current projections.

JV queried the impact on Parish Centre activities during the demolition and building phases. JG stated that the Parish Centre and car park would need to be closed during demolition (expected to take 7-10 days) but after secure hoardings are placed round the building site there should be no impact on the Centre or car park. JV then expressed concerns about the possible impact on advanced bookings; GD asked that she e-mail him and he will raise this urgently with the architect and then provide guidance on how we should manage our regular and other bookings. It was agreed that we should be insisting on no (or minimal) disruption to Parish activities and income as part of the Tendering process. GD will advise the architects accordingly.

A discussion on the impact of the construction on near neighbours took place and what, if any, communication is needed. It was agreed that the formal Council notification process would suffice.

Fr J informed the PC that he and the parish office are now housed at the Convent and that the Parish Newsletter production process had been streamlined. AD raised the issue of access to the photocopier and agreed to contact the sisters to seek their views.

The subject of local RC/Anglican relations was raised by JV in light of the Vatican's recent pronouncement and the approach received from the Anglican community at Hammerfield. Fr John summarised the background to the approach and confirmed that the Deanery has not received any other approaches to date. He is in contact with Rev Gordon Adams (Hammerfield) and our Diocesan authorities and anticipates that there will be slow and careful progress in addressing many of the related issues. He commented that he continues to have excellent working relationships with the local Anglican clergy. Fr John had to leave the meeting at this point. Following further discussion the PC requested that concerns expressed within the Anglican and RC communities continue to be handled compassionately by everybody involved.

Minutes of previous PC

Minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 8 September 2009 were approved. Actions arising were either completed, ongoing or carried forward. It was agreed that Succession planning would be tabled as an Agenda item at the next PC meeting.

Parish Groups/Committees reports

Youth Ministry

AD introduced the report. In addition to the points included in the report, AD raised the question of whether an appraisal of the HIYA activities as a whole by an outside body should be undertaken. The Diocese is unable to do so and there would be significant costs associated with a secular body undertaking it. This is especially so if there are no obvious and significant problems. Venus's annual appraisal and objective setting would go ahead as normal. In reply to JG's query concerning Venus's appraisal for her work at JFK school, AD stated that she would be assessed within the school system of appraisal as her work there was of a different nature to the HIYA work.

AD then raised the subject of the next World Youth Day to be held in Spain in 2011. The Diocese had decided on a minimum age of 18 for participants, mainly because of child protection concerns. AD queried whether or not 16 and 17 year olds should have the chance to participate in what is a major event whilst recognising the practical difficulties involved. If this was agreed there will be an increased burden on Venus to resolve the many questions and issues arising which will restrict her normal HIYA activities.

After discussion it was felt that we should follow the position adopted by the Diocese.

AD will inform the HIYA management and Venus of our views. Other Parishes will need to consider their response. Fr John will need to be consulted before any decision is made which is contrary to the Diocesan position.

Communication

AD referred to the Three Parishes website which had been delayed by a number of hardware and software problems. Overall progress is now due to be reviewed on 24 January and thereafter Fr John will be asked to approve the overall layout. It is expected that the new site will be launched in March 2010 with the other Parishes following in due course.

AD (our Website co-ordinator) wants newsworthy events past and future to be included on the website and made a plea for any materials (including photographs) to be sent to her.

AD had been working on a Welcome Pack for the parish which would be distributed to each family in the parish and subsequently to all newcomers. A discussion took place on what should be included in the pack, format, loose leaf vs bound, relationship to other information publications. It was agreed that a short history of the parish be included and that Fr J would be asked to write an Introduction. The PC approved the venture and AD agreed to circulate printing estimates to members when received. GD asked AD to explore the possibility of someone in the parish being in a position to undertake the printing.

Justice and Peace/Interfaith

The PC took note of the report. Again, the subject of local RC/Anglican relations was discussed and concluded that we will continue to be guided by Fr John.

Ecumenical

ME presented the report covering activities since the last meeting.

Outreach

The question of whether to pursue the appointment of an Outreach coordinator was raised and discussed. Lack of success in appointing someone to date led CL to query whether one was needed. GD suggested that another attempt be made. AD will put an item in the Newsletter asking for a volunteer.

Liturgy

The PC took note of the report.

Social/Fundraising

GD introduced the discussion under this -Reportøitem for which there is currently no Group leader. He said that Fr John wants the new presbytery to be the main focus for future fundraising once the project was given final approval. There would be a formal announcement at all Masses at the appropriate time.

GD reported that in this context Fr J and the Finance Committee intend to adjust donations to certain external charities, replacing some collections each year with a set donation from parish funds and using the freed up collection opportunities for building fund collections. This would provide a springboard for an ongoing programme of fund-raising and enable all parishioners to participate.

The question was raised as to how this new approach would impact on the PCø's desire, expressed at the previous meeting, that an agreed percentage of the parishø's income should be dedicated to various charities.

A full and frank discussion of the pros and cons of the issue followed. GD provided details of the level of donations given to a wide range of charities over the last 3 years.(see attached). He summarised the reasons why parishioner members of the FC were opposed to the concept and said that Fr J did not feel that now was the time to consider the idea. He is acutely aware of the future -debtø which the Parish will have to repay and the Diocesan expectations about focussed fundraising.

GD suggested that PC members in favour of the percentage proposal put their reasons/views in writing and he would present them at the next Finance Committee meeting (1st Feb). When asked for their views, CL and AD strongly supported the principle which supports our Christian obligation to give to those in greater need, as did JG; ME and JV also expressed their support, but accepted that probably the timing was wrong to propose it. All PC members accepted this but hoped that the subject would remain on the table to be raised again at a more appropriate time.

Hall Management

JV will undertake a pricing review for the Parish Centre and report its findings at the next PC meeting.

Maintenance

The report was noted.

Finance

GD introduced the draft PC budget for 2010 which will be presented by him at the next Finance Committee meeting. The total is £30K with the three most important items, and most costly, being:

1. Replacement of the pews; Quote for 24 pews/kneelers £28K - split 50/50 over 2 years
2. Painting of the Church exterior walls: Estimate £5K
3. Renovation of the entrance porch: Estimate £5K(incl. new doors).

After some discussion on their relative priorities and the likely timing of the finance being available, it was agreed that the Porch would have first priority followed by the pews and lastly the painting. Other relatively minor items to be dealt with progressively. AD suggested that design options for the work in the entrance porch needed to be obtained and GD confirmed this will be done. The repainting of the Parish Centre interior was discussed and JG agreed to look at a low cost option.

The PC approved the Budget proposal for submission to the Finance Committee.

GD advised he had not received the latest Parish financial information but expected to do so at the Finance Committee meeting on 1st Feb.

Parish Pastoral Council Forum

GD informed the PC that this Diocesan project appeared to have been discontinued as Fr Dermot had been recalled by his Order to Scotland. Further enquiries will be made to establish if it will be restarted at a future date.

AOB

Parish Council Photograph:

A photo of the new council will be taken at the next PC meeting or a date convenient to all.

Parking

Following representations by people living near the church concerning inconsiderate parking, Fr John has agreed that an item will be included in the Newsletter and GD will endeavour to speak to the complainant.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the PC will take place on 20th April 2010.

ACTIONS—see attached.

ACTION LIST

<u>1.Chair’s remarks—‘Aims’ review</u>	<u>ALL</u>
<u>2. Fr John</u>	
Advanced Bookings/Presbytery Project	JV/GD
Access to Photocopier	AD
<u>3.Minutes of last meetin - review o/s actions</u>	<u>ALL</u>
<u>4.Youth ministry - WYD 2011</u>	<u>AD</u>
<u>5. Communication</u>	
Printing Estimates	AD
Printing Volunteer	AD
Website-Events contributions	ALL
<u>6. Outreach</u>	
Newsletter item	AD
<u>7. Fundraising</u>	
Formation of new Group	GD
<u>8.Hall Management</u>	
Price Review	JV
<u>9.Finance</u>	
PC Budget presentation/outcome	GD
<u>10.PPC</u>	
Future	GD
<u>11.AOB</u>	
PC Photo	GD
Parking	GD