

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Opening Prayer.

2. **Present.** Fr Sidon Sagar, Fr Carlo Mazzotta, Desmond DeSa, Tiziana Demurtas, Lavoisier Fernandes, Shenda Holmes, Carole Jones, Ruth Jones, Rachel Wells (School Representative)

3. **Apologies.** Philip Hazell. Lyndon Rodrigues has stepped down from the Parish Council after 4 years of service.

4. Approval of minutes of last meeting and matter arising.

Church Car Park. Action ongoing: The previous quote for the work has now increased, due to an increase in the cost of materials. The Finance Committee is in the process of seeking diocesan approval of this quote. Action closed: Following communication by DDS with the manager of the Centre, the Fordbridge Day Centre is no longer permitted to use the Church Car Park.

*Fire Doors –Health and Safety requirement to replace a **number** of the internal doors on the ground floor in the Presbytery with Fire Doors. Action ongoing: No further action has yet been taken.*

5. Updates.

Finance:

No Finance Representative was present at the meeting as there has not been a Finance Meeting since the last Parish Council Meeting.

School:

Rachel Wells reported on various school activities, including Ascension Liturgy and Marian Procession. The Year 5 Children are still carrying out their visits to a local Care Home. Fr Sidon suggested that a short prayer was said at the start and the end of these visits

Parish:

Organist. The position is now advertised on the diocesan website. Fr Sidon would love to see the old choir members come back if we get someone to play the organ.

St Michael's News. Action closed: A parishioner has agreed to take on the role of editor of the SMN, previous editor Julian Game has agreed to assist. Hoping to get the first trial issue out by July 2023.

Church Flowers. A parishioner (who wishes to remain anonymous) made a donation for the Easter Flowers.

Defibrillator. It was agreed that the parish will not invest in a defibrillator. It is not a legal requirement. It would need someone to take on responsibility for it – to be trained and to maintain it.

Fire Warden Training. This took place at St Francis de Sales, Hampton Hill on 25th April and was attended by Fr Sidon, Fr Carlo, members of the Parish Council, Stewards and Sunday Friends Leader.

Volunteering in the parish. There seems to be a distinct lack of willingness from parishioners to volunteer to look after the general needs of the parish, e.g. Church cleaning, gardening, general maintenance of the church grounds, etc. The parish has to rely on a very small number of loyal and dedicated parishioners, but they need help. Several requests have been put in the newsletter, but limited response. How can we attract people to come forward and volunteer on a regular basis? It may result in the parish having to employ personnel to carry out these roles. Can we perhaps approach local schools asking youngsters to volunteer? Duke of Edinburgh Award?

Fr Sidon is grateful and thanks all the parishioners who work silently and invisibly behind the scenes to ensure the day-to-day running of the parish.

First Holy Communion 2023. Three Masses were celebrated on the weekend of 13/14 May 2023 - 72 children made their First Holy Communion. Thank you to Berne Shanker who led the programme for the first time this year. Despite some problems initially (mainly admin related), the programme was a success. Looking forward to next year, it was suggested that one person is allocated to look after the admin side of the programme, to ensure constant communication with the parents. A dedicated First Holy Communion email ID is in place and communication needs to be via this method only.

The First Holy Communion Breakfast will take place after the 9.15 am Mass on Sunday 21st May.

Berne Shanker would like to keep the children involved in the church post-FHC and is keen for them to grow in Christ. **Action: the possibility of starting up the Followers Group once again? Berne is happy to do it but she will need help; talk to previous leaders, whether they will help initially.**

Assignment by Lavoisier Fernandes. Fr Sidon encouraged all members to read the assignment submitted by Lavoisier - 'What does the Church say about parish pastoral councils? – which had been circulated prior to this meeting. We need to be looking to improve the spiritual life of the parish.

New Parish Council Members. As we have now lost two members of the Parish Council, do we need to recruit more? **Yes, we do need more of the Members to the PC team so that we can slowly migrate to an integral team from Parish Council to Parish Pastoral Council – which embodies both spiritual and materials needs of the parish.**

Confirmation - 10th June 2023 – 43 candidates – celebrated by Canon Paschal Ryan. Ruth Jones was looking for helpers for the Mass as all three catechists have children being confirmed. The SOL group will need to be in the Organ loft as all the pews will be required.

6. Social Activities. *Easter Drawing Competition.* The PC thanked Tiziana for her great efforts in organising the Easter Drawing Competition. There was a great response and

the Presentation of prizes at the 9.15 am Mass on Sunday 23rd April was a lovely parish occasion.

Parish BBQ Fundraising Event – Saturday 17th June 2023. Tickets are on sale after weekend Masses from 20/21 May.

International Food Evening – date set for Saturday 16th September 2023.

7. AOB:

Holy Day of Obligation Masses. Morning Mass at St Michael's and Evening Mass at St David's for The Ascension (Thursday 18th May). Some parishioners are not happy that Mass is not at 7.00 pm in Ashford on a Holy Day.

First Holy Communion. Carole Jones wished to express her personal thanks to Berne Shanker and her team of helpers who made her grandson feel very included and welcome in the First Holy Communion group, despite not knowing many of the children as he does not attend St Michael's School.

Patronal Feast of St Michael – Friday 29th September – celebrate our patronal Feast with evening Mass followed by a reception in the parish hall.

8. Next meeting is on Wednesday, 6th September 2023 at 7.00pm.