

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. **Opening Prayer.**
2. **Present.** Fr Sidon Sagar, Fr Carlo Mazzotta, Desmond DeSa, Tiziana Demurtas, Chris Derby (Finance Committee), Lavoisier Fernandes, Philip Hazell, Shenda Holmes, Carole Jones, Ruth Jones, Berne Shanker (First Holy Communion Catechist)
3. **Apologies.** Rachel Porter (School Representative).
4. **Welcome to Berne Shanker** who was invited to attend the meeting. Berne took over as First Holy Communion catechist and ran the 2023 programme and will run the 2024 programme, applications to open shortly. FS expressed a wish that, as the Parish Council moves towards becoming a Parish Pastoral Council (see item 7), the Catechists in the parish might work together to help this, possibly also linking up with the school. **Action: Berne to make contact with RP.** Berne then left the meeting.
5. **Approval of minutes of last meeting and matters arising.**

*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: A company has carried out a preliminary inspection with recommendations on what is required. The cost of replacing the doors will be quite significant.**

### 6. Updates:

#### **Finance:**

CD reported that there has been a significant decrease in the parish bank account, attributed mainly by a sharp increase in the parish utilities bills and the outlay of the resurfacing of the church car park. The Finance Committee are looking carefully at the utilities bills and trying to identify any areas where savings could be made. The parish is governed by the diocese in its choice of supplier.

Overall concern that, as a parish, we need to look at capping our spending for the time being – looking to decrease costs, while increasing income.

#### **School:**

RP was not at the meeting but submitted a short report that the children have just returned to school for the new scholastic year and have settled in well. We are looking to have a Mass here at school on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September to celebrate the Feast of St Michael and on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September to celebrate the school's Platinum Anniversary. **Action: dates to be confirmed.**

#### **Parish:**

The Folk Group (9.15am Mass) and Sol Choir (11.30am) have now moved to the choir loft. The area has been cleaned and re-arranged to accommodate the groups. Next step is to make the steps up to the choir loft compliant with health and safety requirements.

A young man has offered to play the organ. FS hopes that the previous choir members will then come back to sing.

First Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes. Most parishes in the local area have gone back to their 'pre-Covid' preparation programmes.

Do we need to introduce a Register of Mass Attendance for children before them being accepted on these programmes? Many other churches have this system in place. Catechists must be DBS checked, but there appears to be some backlog from the diocesan Safeguarding Office in obtaining these checks.

Weekend Mass Announcements – now to be read by Reader at the start of Mass.

**Action: DDS to advise Tess De Souza.**

## **7. Mission of Parish Council – move to Pastoral Council.**

FS circulated a copy of an Assignment by Lavoisier Fernandes - 'What does the Church say about parish pastoral councils? The Diocese is asking that we slowly migrate to an integral team from Parish Council to Parish Pastoral Council – which embodies both spiritual and materials needs of the parish. We need to be looking to improve the spiritual life of the parish –to find a way to bring people back to church; attract and encourage youngsters; pass the faith down to our youngsters. What can we do as a parish? How can we make an effort as a team?

Some suggestions were to encourage the Sunday 9.15am Mass to be a Family Mass; an annual Mass for new parishioners; Youth Mass on the Feast of Christ the King (26<sup>th</sup> November), where the children will be involved in the readings, offertory, etc.

How can we encourage parishioners to take up volunteering roles within the parish? Have people got out of the habit of volunteering? Some of our very loyal volunteers are getting older and no youngsters are coming through to take over. Are people hesitant because they do not want to take on too much? We can allocate small, specific jobs to those offering to help – eg tidying up hymn books after Mass.

Suggestions made were to identify the areas where help was needed and then appeal to parishioners for specific help.

We could turn to the diocese for help by way of their Parish Support Team.

**Action: FS asked that all read the Assignment, looking in particular at Stage 1 and Stage 2 – to be discussed at next PC meeting.**

- 8. St Michael's Patronal Feast, Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September.** There will be Mass at 7.00pm, followed by a Reception in the parish hall. No 9.15am Mass that day.
- 9. Parish Groups social get-togethers.** FS would like to arrange this on a regular basis, to thank and encourage all those who help out in the parish in some way. It would take the format of starting with a short period of prayer time and then a reception afterwards. **Action: to update the various groups and then look at dates.**
- 10. Social Activities – fundraising events.** A Bingo Night was arranged at very short notice in August, as a trial event. It was a great evening, enjoyed by all and raised some funds for the parish.  
**Suggestions for future events:**
  - November 2023 – Mental Health Awareness month – arrange a Guest Speaker for the parish (**LF to investigate**)
  - 3 November 2023 – Bingo Night
  - 12 January 2024 – Quiz night

**11. Weekend Mass count** – 23/24 Sept; 30 Sept/1 Oct; 7/8 Oct; 14/15 Oct

The Diocese requests that attendance at Mass for these four weekends is recorded. It is hoped that PC members will cover all Masses.

**12. AOB:**

**Church Flowers.** PH suggested that we have a donations box in the church for Church Flowers. The parish flower arrangers currently only fresh flowers at Christmas and Easter, otherwise artificial flowers are used.

**Parish Mother and Baby Group.** Some new mothers in the parish have asked for such a group. It would be a nice idea, of course would need to find some people willing to set it up. The parish hall is currently booked out every weekday morning, but perhaps it is something that might be considered in the future.

**13. Next meeting is on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm.**