

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Opening Prayer.

2. **Present.** Fr Sidon Sagar, Fr Carlo Mazzotta, Desmond DeSa, Tiziana Demurtas, Clive De Souza (Finance Committee), Philip Hazell, Shenda Holmes, Carole Jones, Ruth Jones.

3. **Apologies.** Lavoisier Fernandes, Rachel Porter (School Representative).

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

Fire Doors. Action closed: The new diocesan in-house Health and Safety check team advised that it is not necessary to replace a number of the internal doors on the ground floor in the Presbytery with Fire Doors. The only requirement is for the kitchen door to be replaced.

5. Mission of the Parish Council – move to Pastoral Parish Council.

This will take effect from January 2024, with the mission to help in the Pastoral Activities of the parish, in order that we become a more prayerful parish. A parish is firstly a place of worship and any social gatherings that are organised in the parish come out of the way that we live as a parish, united in a love for Jesus Christ. As a Pastoral Parish Council, we are asked to renew ourselves first, as the voice of the parish, and then look to renew others. Fr Sidon presented each member with a book 'This is my Body', written by Bishop Robert Barron. He asked that we use the book and the assignment by Lavoisier Fernandes (circulated at the previous meeting) as guides to help us in the new role.

Social activities can continue to play an important part in the life of the parish, however we need to be looking to improve the spiritual life of the parish first. Also looking to encourage the Youth of the parish to become more involved.

6. 'The Joy of Christmas' on 9th December 2023.

Ticket sales, £8.00 per adult, £5 per child are now on sale. 80 tickets have been sold so far. The band 'Tribute' will provide the music for the evening, and a local caterer the food. The other items needed were discussed and shopping arranged. It was decided to apply for a TEN licence in order to sell wine on the night (TD to organise). The details of the actual running of the night were also discussed and tasks assigned to the PC members. DDS expressed his thanks to Tiziana for designing the Poster and the Tickets.

7. **Christmas 2023.** As Christmas Day falls on a Monday this year, it affects the Mass timings/Feasts of the Christmas Season. Sunday 24th December is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, however the evening Mass becomes the Vigil Mass for Christmas Day. Sunday 31st December is the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, however the Sunday evening Mass becomes the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, mother of God (New Year's Day – Monday 1st January).

The proposed Mass times are:

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Sunday 24th December

Vigil Mass (Saturday 23rd) 6.00pm

Sunday 24 th	10.00am only
<i>Christmas Eve, Sunday 24th December</i>	
First Mass of Christmas	6.00pm
Midnight Mass	11.00pm (Carols and Readings at 10.30pm)

Christmas Day, Monday 25th December
Mass at 9.15am and 11.30am (no Evening Mass)

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Sunday 31st December
Vigil Mass (Saturday 30th) 6.00pm
Sunday 31st 9.15am and 11.30am

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, New Year's Day, Monday 1st January
Vigil Mass (Sunday 31st) 6.00pm
Monday 1st January 10.00am

8. Welcome Team / Noise during Mass.

During Covid time, it was good to have Stewards to welcome people as they came to church. Following complaints/comments that some Masses are quite noisy (sometimes with adults talking, not only the children making the noise), it was discussed whether the Welcome team might be the ones to approach adults when their children were perhaps getting a bit noisy and ask them to take their child out to the narthex, where they could still follow the Mass on the screen. It was felt that this is a very sensitive subject, that needs to be handled in the correct manner in order not to cause any offence.

The first step might be to display a poster in the narthex highlighting the "Do's and Don'ts" or perhaps an information leaflet in the newsletter.

Other suggestions included encouraging families with young children to sit towards the front of the church and to re-introduce the Book Corner.

9. 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 (up by 300%). A new member of the Finance Committee has been tasked to look through the Utilities Bills and try to identify where any savings could be made. Offertories are stable, however also could look at ways to increase, perhaps encouraging parishioners to sign up for Gift Aid where possible. Parishioners need to be made aware that the parish needs more financial support.

Overall concern that there are potential essential jobs that need to be carried out in the near future, and this needs careful budgeting (Church Roof).

More immediate work needed is on the heating in the Parish Hall. Work is being carried out to identify a leak, which could incur a big (but necessary) expense.

There is National Lottery Funding that might be available - the Finance Committee to work with the diocesan Fundraising Team on this.

School:

RP was not at the meeting but submitted a short report on school activities:

St Michael's Feast Day – Thank you to Fr Sidon for celebrating Mass at school.

Reconciliations – Fr Carlo went to school to hear Confession from 6SL. Need to arrange a date for 6P.

Collective Worship – Every Friday, a class has completed a collective worship based around a theme. Parents write their responses to the collective worship in a reflective book.

Visit from CAFOD for Years 1 to 4 to talk about Catholic Social Teaching.

Manna Foodbank – Donations to the foodbank were collected during 6SL's collective worship.

Mass at St Michael's Church – Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have attended recent Tuesday Masses.

All Saints Day – Mrs Neville and Liturgy Leaders and Followers led a collective worship for the whole school.

Echelforde Care Home - Years 3 and 5 have visited recently.

Advent Carol Service at Westminster Cathedral on Wednesday 26th November - 10 children to attend with Mrs Tillotson and Mrs Neville.

KS2 Carol Concert at St Michael's Church on Tuesday 5th December.

Parish:

Fr Sidon expressed his wish for support from the Parish Council to be the voice of the people, to work together as a team as we become the Pastoral Parish Council.

10. Social Activities

The Joy of Christmas – 9th December (noted above)

Christmas Bake-Off – 10th December. Parishioners asked to sign up for the competition, with judging to take place during teas/coffees after 9.15am Mass.

Action: To advertise Bake-Off in newsletter; to make clearer announcement at Mass when coffees are on, in order to encourage more people to go through to the hall after Mass.

11. Next meeting is on **Tuesday 20th February 2024** at 7.00pm. *Change of day to a Tuesday, as Rachel Porter has other commitments on a Wednesday now.*