

CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART & St JOHN THE EVANGELIST.
LONDON ROAD, BUSHEY. WD23 1BA

MINUTES OF THE AGM OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL HELD ON 18th February 2024

Present

Chioma Abubugba	Jim Hannon.
Simon Blackburn (Chairman).	Richard Jennings (Fabric)
Jane Buckley	Mike Kelly (Finance
Sheila Cronin	Committee)
Isabel Curtin	Ross King
Tony Davids (Treasurer)	Bernadette McNamara
Alain Elias	Fr. Jim McNicholas
David Furber.	James Moran
Marion Gosling	Pat Pinot.
Paddy Gosling (Secretary)	Liz Simpson
Veronica Graham	Anne Marie Tiernan
Linda Hartley	

1 .MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22nd OCTOBER 2023.

- i. As requested at the last PPC meeting, extra cameras are being installed the car park, Inside the Parish Centre (PC) and in the church. Diocesan protocols regarding access to the camera screens will be implemented; Access limited to 2 officers of the PPC following request. Content will be watched by the 2 officers and logged on each occasion.
- ii. After comments about hygiene standards in the kitchen, the area has been inspected. A review of the Job description of those responsible for the cleaning have been reviewed and changes are planned.

2 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. Mike Kelly.

The Committee continues to provide support to Father Jim in his stewardship of the parish and as you will hear from their individual reports there has been progress in most areas of our work. I will not repeat their reviews here.

I would however congratulate Tony Davids our parish Treasurer who submitted the Annual Accounts to the Diocese within 4 weeks of the year end and has already had a clean audit back from the Diocesan team. This is testament to the significant level of work he has put into the recording of our financial reports and the accuracy of his posting to the range of ledgers. Veronica Graham has also assisted in Gift Aid submission which means that the parish has benefited from more than £14,000 in tax rebates claimed against parishioner donations – the most the parish has received in the past 5 years.

Likewise, our independent Annual Health & Safety Audit undertaken in December and overseen by James Moran has only raised one area where we are requested to make an immediate change. James can provide more detail, but this does represent real progress in ensuring that our systems throughout the Church, Presbytery, Parish Centre, and external grounds are safe and adhere to the highest standards.

Richard has been across all of the various property projects being undertaken and he will provide more details on the progress being made and current challenges we face.

In closing I would thank all members of the committee for their generosity in the giving of their time and talents in assisting Father Jim.

3 TREASURER'S REPORT Tony Davids.

A Receipts and Payments table was circulated.

Significant income of £28K from hire of the PC but offset by a 267% rise in bills for Utilities £9K in 2022 but £21K in 2023. Offertory income remains around £61K. Loose Plate £27K. If more people Gift Aided their

offertories, it could achieve £4K more. As reported elsewhere over £14K Gift Aid tax receipts were achieved. There will be significant capital expenses in 2024 which suggests a deficit of £96K.

£27K of Car park upgrade will be met from money raised from GIF but the decoration of the church, the PC and a new boiler. There may also be a claw back of £10K from a bid for a boiler replacement which wasn't used for that purpose.

There is a need for fund raising ideas! We have reserves but the diocese requires a 10-15% surplus.

The poor box contained £200 last year. After a short discussion it was agreed that this would go to the local food bank.

In answer to questions from the floor: we review charges for PC hire every year. Late last year we made comparisons with other local halls. We were at the higher end of the range, but other halls have fewer assets than ours – not least a car park.

4 .ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

After reports of end of year finances, the new year for the committee was marked by the Election to the Offices of Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. Fr. Jim took the Chair for this item. The present Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were proposed and seconded by the meeting and were duly appointed for a further year.

5 FABRIC REPORT Richard Jennings.

An Excel sheet to enable us to monitor the progress of the different projects has been generated. It will be stored in Google Drive with access to committee members and the admin team. Link and password supplied.

Listed below are the current projects running with comments: -

- i. **Car parks resurface / Re lining parking bays.** The Parish Centre car park along with the disabled parking to the front is to have the whole area resurfaced. – **Awaiting funding approval.**
- ii. **Subsidence UPDATE.** The removal of ivy to the rear of the presbytery. – This is a work in progress and must be done over a period so as not to cause damage to the building further. – **Progress review awaited.**
- iii. A works schedule of works has been produced for the decoration Of the church. Quotes are being arranged.
- iv. We are arranging for Engineers to inspect the drains. **Action point.**
- v. **Decorate the Parish Centre.** Work in progress contractor trying to work around hall users which is challenging.
- vi. **Replace the rear of the bar service room** – this was undertaken during decorating program.
- vii. **Resetting the Church Entrance sign and refurbishment** – Awaiting text from Fr. Jim.
- viii. **Memorial Garden.** Need to confirm the positions of the internments. Consideration for the top area to be cleared and made ready.
- ix. **Water feature** needs attention again.
- x. **Red wooden crib.** At the front of the church the Red wooden crib now needs to be replaced due to its age and current state, it is planned that it is removed totally, and the area tidied up. – **will be removed shortly – waiting for arrival of skip.**
- xi. **Hall heating.** Quotes received contractor agreed but now waiting on funding approval.
- xii. **Church Plumbing issues.** Leaking valves in the church x 2 quotes are being sort for their replacement and additional works are required to radiator leaks. **To be sorted during hall plumbing project.**
- xiii. **Kitchen appliances parish centre.** 2 ovens replaced and door handles purchased need fitting along with door hinge plates as required. Over cooker extraction hood is now going to vent to outside.
- xiv. **Church CCTV System.** CCTV system is currently being installed at weekends. Both systems running in tandem. Additional cameras have been noted as requested from past meeting.
- xv. **Additional Parish Centre items needing attention:**

- a. Toilet door locks - repaired RJ / SB.
- b. Kitchen light fittings – change to LED x 2 - to be completed.
- c. Dishwashers to be replaced with a simple one option design which provide all required facilities.
- d. Windows and doors for hall. – External wooden frames need attention repairs and repainting’

Action for all: RJ/SB

From the floor.

- i. **Q.** Can there be reserved car parking space for weekday morning Mass attenders as parking in the presbytery car park is no longer available. It is noticed that the problem is exacerbated by poor parking. **Action.** Letter to school reminding parents to evacuate the car park promptly when child dropped off at the school. **Fr Jim/PAs.**
- ii. **Q.** Is each fabric item costed separately so that items can be prioritised.? **Action:**. This is done at the FC but the cost could be added to the forms described in the item at the top of the report. **Action RJ**
- iii. It was agreed that there could be a Newsletter call for any parishioners with skills to come forward to advise as well as contacting local tradespeople. **Action: Fr Jim/PAs**

GIFT AID.

There is scope for more parishioners to Gift Aid their offerings so a Gift Aid promotion will take place in the parish in March. The chairman also praised Veronica Graham for her hard work in updating the system and securing the £14K tax rebate due to us. (see FC Chairman’s report above).

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT James Moran.

Annual Health and Safety Audit

The annual health and safety audit was carried out in December by the new in-house team working for the Diocese. Generally, there were considerably less actions than in previous years. We will be working through the actions in order of priority during the year.

Defibrillator Training

Thank you to Sandra Gibbs who delivered two training sessions recently covering the use of our defibrillators. The training sessions were attended by 21 people.

Please note we have two defibrillators, and they are fixed to the wall in the Sacristy and the Parish Centre kitchen.

Polite Reminders to all Parishioners: -

1. Lone Working - If anyone is working alone in the church or the Parish Centre, please inform the office or another responsible person when you start and finish.
2. Slips Trips and Falls - As you will be aware some areas of the car park and the footpaths are uneven and in need of repair. Please take care and wear appropriate footwear especially during the winter months. Salt will be applied during icy conditions, but the ground may remain slippery in certain areas.
3. Candles – Please exercise caution when using candles during the Easter services. Always consider other people seated near you, children, and loose clothing.
4. Reporting Concerns - If you have any areas of concern, please inform the office and we will do our best to rectify them.

Action. Notify the wider parish about working alone. (1) **Action: JM via NL**

From the Floor:

- i. **Q** Can we consider switching to electric candles?

- ii. **A.** The chairman checked out the cost of electric candles during the meeting. It was demonstrated that the cost exceeded current expenditure on candles and although electric candles would be a one-off expense it was also noted that the parish acquires a good income from the sale of votive candles.
- iii. **Q.** Should we charge more for hire of the parish centre?
- iv. **A.** A survey of other local hire charges was conducted last year. It was found that our charges were at the higher level which is justifiable; the Car Park is a big asset as is the space and the Kitchen.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i. Thanks to the parish for supporting the appeal for Streaming equipment. All necessary components have now been updated.
- ii. The return of Holy Water to the stoops in the porch was welcomed but guidance needed about the sign of peace. Shake hands?
- iii. There was also a request for the Welcome Ministry to be restored.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Sunday May 12th at 11.45 in the parish centre.

The chairman ended the meeting with a prayer.