**Annual Parish Meeting**

**for the year ending 31 December 2019**

**Monday 2nd March 2020**

**MINUTES**

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Led by Fr Shaun Church

2. **Apologies**

None were received

3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 March 2019**

These were received nem. con.

4. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous

meeting.

5. **Parish Priest’s Report – Fr Shaun Church**

Fr Shaun’s report is attached to the minutes and available on the parish website

6. **Finance Operations and Premises Committee report – Carolyn Opie (Chair)**

Carolyn’s report was as follows:

‘In May 2019, the Finance Committee became the Finance, Operations and Premises Committee to coincide with the launch of the Joint Parish Pastoral Council. We met quarterly during 2019 – February, May, August and November. To reflect the additional responsibilities, the Committee welcomed Rosemary Ellis and Malcolm Golin as new Committee members in May.

With respect to the premises during 2019 we have considered the following:

2019 has been a busy year of maintenance repair works focused on repairing damp

problems and water leaks and addressing the actions from the annual Health &

Safety inspection.

* We replaced the flat roof above the rear of the church and painted the wall behind the organ to complete the repairs for rising and penetrative damp.
* Unfortunately, we had just painted the wall when we discovered a separate damp problem on the wall to the side of the organ. We sealed the external wall and tanked, treated and re-plastered the inside wall. We are waiting for a new skirting board to be fitted. We also found new water leaks from the balustrade to the flat roof. The balustrades were capped last week to complete the repairs. We will redecorate later in the year.
* The nature of the building means that it is always susceptible to further leaks.
* We have also considered cleaning – our Cleaner, Daniel, currently works 2 hours a week and does an excellent job keeping the Church looking spick and span. But we have become aware that there are a number of tasks that don’t need doing every week – cleaning the windows, wiping down skirting boards and such like – but that he doesn’t have time to fit in. We have decided to increase his hours to 3 a week and are working with him to produce a schedule of the additional tasks.
* Following the annual Health & Safety inspection, we:
  + Introduced a simple Fire Warden system for Mass on Saturday, Sunday and when the church is full. The duty is not onerous as action is only required in the unlikely event of a fire. With only 8 volunteers, we could do with a few more. Please contact Alan for details.
  + We also upgraded the Fire Door into the kitchen.
* Having found a much cheaper solution than had previously been suggested, we connected the sound system into the lounge in time for it to be in use for the Christmas services.
* I would like to thank Peter Mackie for his excellent work in maintaining the garden, helped periodically by Malcolm and Alan.
* Tasks we are considering for the current year are:
  + Survey and repair the leaded windows at the front of the building – downstairs and upstairs
  + External redecoration and repair of the wooden windows

At each meeting of the FOP the quarterly accounts are considered along with the budget for the year. During 2019, routine income and expenditure has been largely as anticipated and we finished the year having spent just over £2,000 more than we received. We have made significant savings against utility bills; changing supplier has almost halved our gas and electricity costs. We also received some additional income from Gift Aid reclaims, as a previous year payment came through. Our Annual Financial Return to the Diocese was submitted on time at the end of January 2020.

Paying off the loan taken from the Diocese for reordering the Church and refurbishing the flat has continued to be a priority, although we are clear that it cannot be to the detriment of the appropriate running of the Parish. During 2019 we were able to draw down £4,947 from the Parish share of Growing in Faith. We were also able to apply for a grant to cover the VAT on some of the work on the building which was for £1,370. We were fortunate that our tenants in the flat renewed their lease at the end of 2018 so we were receiving rent throughout the year. All of this allowed us to repay £36,000 of the loan during 2019, ending the year with a balance of £74,500. The original loan was £175,000 meaning we have reduced it by just over £100,000 in 3 years.

Copies of the accounts are available in the room and will be pinned on the noticeboard for the next few weeks. I’m happy to take any questions on the accounts now, at the end of the meeting or over the next few weeks.’

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Following the FOPC report there were a number of questions from parishioners. With respect to the expected time for the complete repayment of the refurbishment and reordering loan, it was explained that this could be within a 3-4 year period but should occur by 5 years at the most. Carolyn noted that GIF monies would cease later this year. Other points raised pertained to the excess of income over expenditure which was prudent in order to cover remedial damp works: a bank balance of £25,000 was appropriate given potential costs which could easily be incurred by unexpected building and maintenance works. Once the loan had been completely repaid it could be anticipated that about 25% of any future income from rent would be claimed by the Diocese.

7. **Proposal for a Parish Project – Carolyn Opie**

Carolyn’s report was as follows:

‘One of the things that has become apparent during the year is that there are a number of initiatives that the Parish would like to take forward for which our current income levels would not be sufficient. For this reason we would like to launch a Project Fund. Donations to this fund would be kept completely separate and used only for projects specifically identified for the Fund.

The first projects identified by the FOP are:

* Refurbishment of the piano
* Saving for a new organ – we don’t know how much longer our current organ will last. Refurbishing the piano will ensure that we have an alternative but eventually we will need a new organ.
* Re-upholstering the chairs in the Church
* Reordering the Sacristy
* A long term ambition would be to see if it were possible to build a hall in the back garden, providing a better space for social and fundraising events, and possibly even generating a little income.

These are just our initial thoughts and we would welcome ideas from Parishioners for what they think should go on the list.

I mentioned Growing in Faith earlier, and some of you will be aware that St John Fisher is coming to the end of this five year initiative around now. We will be asking Parishioners who have been contributing to this whether they would consider continuing with their donations, but as a contribution to our new Project Fund instead of to the Diocese. We will also be formally launching the Fund with presentations after Masses in April, once Holy Week has concluded.

I would like to finish with a couple of thank yous. Firstly, I would like minuted my appreciation of the support from Don Williamson who was still organising the Counters Rota up until a couple of months ago. And secondly, my thanks to Marguerite Watkins for her support on the Counters Rota and for doing the banking every week.’

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Questions arisingfollowing Carolyn’s report related to the possibilities for successful planning permission for any hall building project - it was noted this idea was very much a plan for the far future and that no significant feasilibilty study had yet been carried out. The piano refurbishment was considered a priority in order to ensure continuity of liturgical music should the organ cease working.

Fr Shaun expressed his sincere and heartfelt thanks to both Carolyn and Alan Opie for their extremely dedicated and hard work.

8. **Senior Leadership Team Report – Anne Lorrimer-Roberts**

Anne’s report was as follows:

**‘**The Senior Leadership Team was appointed by Fr Shaun with a member from each parish: Anne Lorrimer-Roberts from St John Fisher Chorleywood, Geraldine Page from St John the Evangelist Mill End and Paul Forrest from Our Lady’s, Rickmansworth. I am the member for this parish. We are here to support Father Shaun and Fr Damian in delivering the renewal process for our three parishes.  As members of the team we accept and honour the authority of our priests, but we take a share in responsibility by helping them to do what is needed to ensure our parishes are successful in making joyful missionary disciples and in helping people to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

You may wonder what is the difference between the Senior Leadership Team and the Joint Parish Pastoral Council? Well, the Joint Parish Pastoral Council looks at the bigger picture issues and makes decisions about the longer term vision for our parish renewal process; whereas, the Senior Leadership Team works closely with Fr Shaun and Fr Damian in planning and implementing in the short to medium term how we will practically deliver the Joint Parish Pastoral Council’s vision for our parishes .

The Senior Leadership Team usually meets every two weeks.  Over the past few months we have been assessing the various Ministries and have been working with Father Shaun to lighten his load with, for example, the First Communion Programme so that he is not burdened with the administrative tasks of the programme. We have also been working with him and Fr Damian on further developing the important Ministry of Welcome for our parishes. This has freed Father Shaun to do what is appropriate to his ordained ministry as our parish priest, which is to identify, equip and support lay leaders in our parish’ communities.  This coming year we will be assessing other Ministries to see where there is greater scope to develop more lay leadership involvement and you will be hearing much more about this over the coming months.

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A question was raised following the report, as to what lessons had been learned - Anne replied that a review of the SLT’s activities was planned for the next JPPC meeting.

9. **Joint Parish Pastoral Council (JPPC) and Parish Core Group Report – Toni D’Urso**

Toni’s report was as follows:

‘Over the last year the JPPC has been looking at its purpose and role, and its relationship

with the SLT (Senior Leadership Team), looking at the big picture, undertaking the

development of the strap-line and vision statement for our parishes. This was finally

reached and shared with all at weekend Masses of 18th/19th January 2020, via the

Newsletter and priests’ homilies.

There was a filmed interview with Fr James Mallon followed by discussion on the use of

evangelisation tools e.g. Alpha, bringing an invitatonal and leadership culture into the

parish as a whole.

The proposal was made to run a survey to assess parishioner engagement, to determine

where we are now, and therefore provide a starting point for measuring process.

Parishioners were asked to complete the survey at the weekend Masses of 18th/19th

January 2020.

We have had regular updates on Alpha, the ‘Growth’ series which was run during spring

and summer for those who had experienced an Alpha programme. An Alpha Core Team

was developed to organise future Alphas, building leadership teams including Alpha Youth.

Discipleship groups - three courses were completed in 2019. People were invitied to sign

up and meetings generally took place in peoples homes in small groups, each with a host

and leader.’

One question was raised pertaining to the results of the survey: Toni replied that more than

50% of parishioners had completed the survey, that the data were to be analysed and

reported on to the JPPC shortly, following which there would be feedback to the parishes.

10. **SVP report – Maureen Fields (Chess Valley Conference President)**

**Current Membership**

Chess Valley SVP is now in its 6th year of operation.  
Full members: 18 Auxiliary members: 3 Ongoing Work

**Visits** to the housebound, the elderly, and supporting a young family take place in Rickmansworth and Chorleywood and 2 residential homes. In 2019 members also befriended one other person locally who needed support.

**Material assistance given through the year**: To families in need of help; a one-off payment helping with rent; soft furnishings for a gentleman moving into new accommodation. We have also referred a family needing help with debt management to the CAP (Christians Against Poverty) centre at Mill End Baptist Church.

**Community Lunch:** Usually 25/30 in attendance, sometimes up to 40 and often new people attending. Would like more parishioners from across the three parishes to attend. Always need helpers and these do not need to be SVP members. Please contact an SVP member who can put you in touch with Geraldine Page if you can help.

**Catholic Worker Farm:** Collection of needed items requested in parishes and regularly transported to CWF (long life milk, toilet rolls, cleaning products). Also requested items as Christmas presents for 8 refugee Mothers. These were collected from the three parishes, wrapped and delivered to the CWF. A CWF utility bill was also paid. Any further requests for specific items are purchased and delivered.

**Sponsorship** was given to 2 young children to attend the St John Bosco camp in summer 2019.

**Prison Visits:** Where possible SVP members accompany Fr Shaun on his monthly prison visits to celebrate Mass. The prison officials have tightened security which includes vetting for visitors to make more than one visit annually. This is proving to be a prolonged process.

**Support for Vinnie Packs for the homeless:** 2 SVP members and 2 other parishioners helped put together some Vinnie packs in the Diocesan Social Innovation and Enterprise (SEIDs) Hub in Wembley during November. About 1200 Vinnie packs were distributed by National SVP before Christmas. Donation for Vinnie Packs has been given from our SVP funds.

**Twinnage:** We continue to support a twinned SVP Conference in Andhra Pradesh State on the east coast of India, through prayer, communication and an annual donation. Our Twinnage Officer corresponds with them and received a card from them with a letter from their SVP Central Council explaining the very difficult circumstances in which they work. We have also helped 10 women living in a poor area, which is often flooded, to start up small businesses generating income for them and for their families.

**Student sponsorship:** We have committed to a 4-year term to sponsor a Higher Education student, vocational training for between 1 to 4 students (depending on the length of the training) and school education for 1 student. Sponsorship is paid annually.

**Urgent SVP National projects:** During the year we responded to some urgent SVP National appeals. We donated to Sudan (SVP-run Medical Centres in displaced persons camps, and purchase of a new SVP Water Tanker) and locally, in the UK, to Homelessness (Homeless Support Centre and to Assisting Individual Families

**Finance**

Fund-raising events:

Our Lady’s Advent Fair: 2 of our members organised a stall and raffle of lovely Christmas floral decorations and wreaths in aid of the SVP

Annual National SVP raffle: this proved very popular as we ran out of tickets – but as far as we know there were no big-time winners from our three parishes!

Our Lady’s Social Events Committee ran a very enjoyable Quiz in November in support of the SVP

Waitrose’s Rickmansworth Community Matters token donation scheme supported Chess Valley SVP in September

Income & Expenditure:  
In 2019 Chess Valley SVP spent a total of £7083 on our ongoing projects and one-off aid assistance.

Our fund-raising events and your regular donations via the SVP boxes and in other ways generated an income of approximately £9387, which included a very generous legacy of £2500.

If you are a taxpayer and wish to donate a one-off sum or regularly to Chess Valley SVP you might like to use Gift Aid to increase your donation by 25%. We can supply you with forms.

**Forthcoming dates for your diary:**SVP National Raffle tickets will be sold at all Masses on the weekend of 8th/9th February. 20% of proceeds

will go to Chess Valley SVP for local projects.

The Chess Valley SVP Annual Report for 2019 will be given at all the Masses over the weekend of 14th /15th March with a collection for the SVP at the end of each Mass.

A Coffee Morning to raise awareness of our work will take place after Mass on Friday 20th March. AND FINALLY............ a big THANK YOU for all your prayers, donations and practical support which enables us to do this work. Please continue to pray for us and for the people whom we serve. If you wish to join us, speak to one of us or email us on ChessValleySVP@gmail.com

11. **Youth Ministry Report – Margaret Simon**

Margaret’s report was as follows:

‘A year ago Anke ( our youth worker at that time) began a process to find 5/6 people to work alongside her, looking at the vision for young people in our parishes and then to implement the ideas and decisions. Thus the Youth Ministry Leadership Team, YMLT, was formed.

We have a vision to invite all young people into a loving family where they can experience and encounter the love of God and the joy of the Holy Spirit, and become missionary disciples. The age group is between 11-16, possibly 18. Part of our remit is to support other leaders working with young people on Confirmation, the After Party, and Alpha Youth.

**Confirmation:** 30 or so young people were confirmed in May 2019. This year the course has just started again with 30 or so young people attending the first session.

**After Party**: this is held at Our Lady’s on the first Sunday of the month after the 6 p.m. Mass. This is for everyone but particularly for families with young people where they can socialise, play table tennis etc. This was postponed over the summer while the hall was being refurbished, but has just started again.

**Alpha Youth:** This was run twice in 2019, in Jan to March, and September to December. September had approximately 10 guests plus 10 young people on team helping.

After Anke left, although youth ministry continued, Fr Damian who is responsble for youth, didn’t really have a first hand experience of what we were doing. It became apparent we were dsconnected from the parish vision, the process of empowering leaders through an apprenticeship culture, YMLT and ministries, so we stopped, reviewed, reassessed, and took a step sideways. Fr Damain is now leading YMLT apprenticing Margaret. We are now moving forward again with our plans for this year and a monthly youth group is held on the last Friday of the month at Our Lady’s (the first was on 31 January). The format is socialising, food, games, input, worship song, and prayer. A monthly leaders group workshop, modelling the youth group format, enables us to pilot and experience in order to pass on. It also gives us the opportunity to apprentice the young people, enabling them to take on leadership roles in the future. Alpha Youth is to run in September 2020.

We do not measure success only by numbers but measured in line with the parish vision. The strap-line of the parish vision being ‘Encountering Jesus, Serving Others’.

We believe that the fruits and rewards of Anke’s hard work and the continued hard work of the leaders in youth ministry have been to see so many young people encountering Jesus and serving others. As an example we have had about a dozen people excited and willing to help on team with Alpha Youth after encountering Jesus as a guest.

Many young people’s lives have been touched and transformed through Alpha Youth.

The following comments came from young paticipants:

“I feel more at peace, I feel more loved, I have found a new purpose for life. When someone prayed for me, this was a significant moment for me”

One young leader recently gave a 5/10 minute faith talk to the youth group about how God is on our side, fighting our corner and not to worry when things go wrong or you fail… get up try again, God stands beside you… trust in God. Our dream is that many more young people will grow in similar ways to encounter Jesus and serve others’.

12. **Social Committee Report – Francis Holly**

Francis reported that during the year ending 2019 there had been 2 social events: in February a parish dinner had been held at the West Herts College in Watford with 32 people attending. It was a most successful and enjoyable evening. The summer BBQ haad been organised by the new social committee for the first time - once again it had been very much enjoyed by those attending - a small and unexpected financial surplus had been ring fenced for the parish’s project fund. The committee plans a further BBQ and one other event for 2020. Although it did not occur during 2019, recently the committe had also organised a visit to see a live staging of La Boheme.

Fr Shaun proferred his most grateful thanks for the hard work of the Social Committee and their important contribution to parish life.

13. **AOB**

Following a question regarding the parish’s approach to the Coronavirus situation, Fr Shaun explained that he had taken the decision to adopt the Stage 1 actions, and some directives from Stage 2. from the guidance issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. This advice had been drawn up with reference to that issued by the Government, and NHS guidance from Public Health England.

Maureen Field proposed a vote of thanks to Fr Shaun for his ministry and leadership and for all his work in the parish’s new developments.

14. **Closing prayers**

Led by Fr Shaun Church