**ST BEDE’S CATHOLIC CHURCH – CROXLEY GREEN**

**MINUTES**

**Parish in Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 18th January 2017 – 8.00pm**

**PRESENT**

Fr John Wiley, June Jones (Chair), Louise McKenna (Agenda), Paul Bartlett, John Charnley, Colin Conboy,

Maria Gethings, Michelle Hussey, Madeline Leech, David Reilly, Graham Smith, Ursula Bartlett (Minutes).

**1 WELCOME**

June Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2 OPENING PRAYER**

Fr John opened the meeting with a prayer.

**3 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from David Marston.

**4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Weds 14th September 2016**

These were unanimously accepted as a true record.

**5 MATTERS ARISING**

***Growing in Faith Change of Project***

Ursula Bartlett reported that our application for change of project and claim of funds has been successful.

***Installation of Glass Safety Film***

This work is still on our list of tasks.

***Repair to Threshold Plate at the Emergency Exit in Church***

This is still outstanding. Ursula is in the process of obtaining an estimate for this work.

***Hall Partition Door Maintenance***

A one-off inspection was recently carried out. Phil Hendrick attended and observed the nature of the checks. We agreed that due to the extreme cost involved, we could carry out a periodical inspection of the doors ourselves, and invite Accordial to carry out maintenance as and when necessary.

***Finance***

We were advised that we now have a fully functional Finance Committee, and from now on Finance Reports will be periodically issued to the parish.

***Gate Post Signage***

Ursula is still in dialogue with Fastsigns regarding this matter. The process has been delayed due to difficulties with the St Bede’s logo. Although Fastsigns produced the original signs many years ago, they have since upgraded their computer system and no longer have the original image. We have not been able to source the original image, or produce a copy that is good enough. Fastsigns have now ‘re-drawn’ the image, and we are currently awaiting an updated estimate for this work.

***Gardening***

We were advised that following consideration by some of those who would normally help with gardening, it was agreed that the matter of tackling the overgrown shrubs and trees adjacent to the side of the Church and at the back of the Presbytery was beyond our capabilities. Ursula subsequently obtained three estimates for this work, and eventually instructed Jim Ward - Abbots Maintenance, who has completed the task well at a cost of £350.00.

***Pollarding of Trees at Rear of Hall***

Following lengthy dialogue with Three Rivers District Council, we now have permission to implement a 30% crown reduction of the trees at the rear of the Hall, along the boundary of No 3 Malvern Way. A Tree Preservation Order was put in place during the planning stages for the Hall extension over eleven years ago. Paul Empson (professional Arboricultural Contractor), who has been very helpful with advice in the lead up to permission being granted, has provided an estimate to carry out this work, plus removal of a troublesome ash tree (outside of the TPO area), and cut back / reduce the conifer trees adjacent to the Presbytery garden. The Finance Committee has agreed to the estimate of £965 + VAT. Ursula will instruct Paul to go ahead with this work.

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There was some discussion regarding Health & Safety requirements.

Graham Smith raised the matter of the sensor lights in the car parking area. The range needs to be extended to beyond the footpath outside the Hall. Paul Bartlett offered to check/adjust the angle of the sensors.

Paul raised the matter of the heaters in the Church. He found that some of these had been switched off or had their thermostats turned down, following observations from some parishioners that it felt cold in Church. We need to ensure there is a maintenance contract in place for the heaters. Ursula to follow this up.

**6 FINANCIAL REPORT**

David Reilly (Chair of Finance Committee) explained the responsibilities of the Finance Committee, and gave us a brief overview of OPAS (Online Parish Accounts System). We now have the facility to monitor our finances more closely, and plan ahead; using the OPAS budgeting functions.

The accounts have now been reconciled as at 31st December 2016, ready for the Annual Financial Return.

We had a surplus of just over £7000 in our bank account at the end of the year, taking into consideration the following amounts which have recently been paid into our bank account:

Gift Aid rebate – approx £6900

Growing In Faith funds claim - £6400

Start of year bank balance: approx £27500 – these figures are subject to review.

Once the end-of-year financial procedure is complete David will present a report for the parish.

June Jones enquired about the matter of earmarking fundraising money for specific projects. We have recently raised funds intended to be used for the purchase of a weatherproof external notice board and additional storage facilities in the Hall. It may be that we need to use special codes within the OPAS system to identify such funds. David will look into this.

Lisa Shirt advised us that she will soon be liaising with Graham Smith to arrange for hand-over of the Planned Giving task. She will also take on the responsibility for Gift Aid. Lisa plans to make arrangements for a Planned Giving Appeal and raise awareness of Gift Aid within the next few months.

Grateful thanks were expressed to David for taking on the post of Chair of the Finance Committee, and also to Graham for his valuable work with Planned Giving.

**7 CANONICAL VISIT OF BISHOP PAUL McALEENAN**

Fr John spoke about the forthcoming visit of the Bishop on 21st / 22nd January 2017. Bishop Paul will celebrate all the Masses on the Saturday and Sunday, and will also officiate at the United Service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. St Bede’s will host this service on Sunday 22nd January at 7.30pm.

During his visit, Bishop Paul wishes to meet with key members of the parish, including the Finance Committee, Book keepers and Safeguarding Representative.

We have already arranged for the following meetings:

Saturday 21st January

2.30pm – Safeguarding Representative

3.00pm – Book Keepers

4.00pm – Finance Committee

Sunday 22nd January

After 10am Mass – Catechists, First Holy Communion Co-ordinator and Confirmation Co-ordinator

There was some discussion regarding the importance of a meeting for those who regularly attend Parish in Council Meetings. It was decided that we could offer the 3.30pm time slot on Saturday 21st January for this. A number of those present agreed to attend.

The matter of hospitality and refreshments was raised. Louise and June offered to provide refreshments after each Mass over the weekend, and also after the United Service; to provide the opportunity for Bishop Paul to meet parishioners and our Ecumenical neighbours. Ursula formally thanked them for offering to give of their time for this special event, and for their part in building St Bede’s excellent reputation for hospitality.

Fr John advised us that his housekeeper would be providing Bishop Paul with lunch on the Saturday.

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**8 PARISH EVENTS**

**Quiz Night**

Thanks were expressed to Madeline Leech for her major role in the recent Quiz Night, which was very successful. The proceeds are to be used to purchase a weatherproof exterior notice board and provide additional storage facilities in the Hall.

**First Holy Communion**

The First Holy Communion Masses will take place on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th June 2017. We have 21 candidates attending the weekly preparation classes, co-ordinated by Liz Hughes.

The fee for First Holy Communion is currently £45 per candidate. The question of how this is broken down was raised, with a view to maybe reducing the cost if possible. Ursula will follow this up.

**Croxley Revels 2017**

The question of whether St Bede’s will take part in the Croxley Revels this year was raised. Ursula will appeal in the Newsletter to find out whether anyone would like to take this forward.

**Women’s World Day of Prayer – Friday 3rd March 2017**

Michelle Hussey advised us that St Bede’s is hosting this year’s Women’s World Day of Prayer Service. She will provide information so that this can be publicised in the Newsletter.

**9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Grounds work**

Paul reminded us that the Church car park is in need of re-surfacing. This will be an expensive task, and will be considered by the Finance Committee when planning for the future.

Louise pointed out that the paving stones along the path outside the Hall are very uneven, and are dangerous. The kerb stones and edge of step outside the Hall entrance also need to be re-painted. Ursula will look into obtaining an estimate for work to remedy the paving stones issue. However, we could possibly do the masonry painting ourselves.

John Charnley advised us that he will shortly be undergoing knee surgery, and will not be able to mow the grass for some while. We agreed to place a notice in the Newsletter, appealing for help, maybe on a rota basis.

**Pastoral Care**

June raised the matter of pastoral care for the sick and housebound, and put forward her concern that some parishioners may not be receiving sufficient attention. This was noted.

**Church Cleaning**

Ursula raised the matter of Church cleaning. We have for some time been appealing for new volunteers, as the tasks involved are strenuous, and all who currently carry out the cleaning are very senior members of the parish. We discussed the possibility of paying someone to do the cleaning, and Louise offered to draw up a list of jobs so we can evaluate this suggestion.

**Flower Arrangers**

We were reminded that more flower arrangers are needed. We have recently appealed for volunteers, without success.

It was agreed that we need to make a general appeal for volunteers to take a more active part in the running of the parish. A campaign to encourage some of the younger members of the parish to get involved needs to be launched.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 24th April 2017 – 7.30pm

**11 CLOSING PRAYER**

Fr John closed the meeting with a prayer at 10.00pm.

***Ursula Bartlett (January 2017)***