

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH – CROXLEY GREEN

MINUTES

Parish in Council Meeting Monday 17th July 2017 – 7.30pm

PRESENT

Fr John Wiley, June Jones (Chair), Louise McKenna (Agenda), Paul Bartlett, John Charnley, Colin Conboy, Fabian Hiscock, Michelle Hussey, David Marston, David Reilly, Graham Smith, Ursula Bartlett (Minutes).

1 WELCOME

Paul Bartlett welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 OPENING PRAYER

Fr John opened the meeting with a prayer.

3 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Madeline Leech.

June Jones advised us she would be a little late and took the Chair shortly after the start of the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Mon 24th April 2017

These were unanimously accepted as a true record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Pastoral Care

David Marston enquired whether we had identified all those whose names appear on the sick list, read during the Bidding Prayers at Mass. Ursula Bartlett informed us that she had checked records in the parish office and was able to identify about half of the names. We agreed that the five names we could not identify should be removed from the list, with a view to re-instatement should this be requested.

6 FINANCIAL REPORT

David Reilly (Chair of the Finance Committee) gave his report.

The accounting information on the diocesan computer system (known as OPAS) was complete up to 31 May 2017. As at that date, expenditure exceeded income by £899. However, there was expenditure of £1,158 included in these figures that was covered by funds received in 2016 under Growing in Faith (as covered in the Minutes of the Parish in Council meeting on 24 April 2017). Excluding this expenditure to give an indication of receipts and payments relating to the period to 31 May 2017 leaves a surplus of £259.

David explained that he had prepared a simple budget on OPAS based on the figures for 2016, but excluding what are known as 'restricted funds' (primarily here, income and expenditure relating to Growing in Faith), to represent 'day to day' receipts and payments. Increasing income by 1% and expenditure by 3% over 2016 gave a budgeted deficit of £836. Taking 5/7ths of this number (to show the budgeted outcome as at 31 May 2017) gave a budgeted deficit of £348, compared to the adjusted actual figure above of a surplus of £259.

The bank balance at 31 May 2017 was £26,240. David emphasised that, while this appears healthy, it could be reduced to below zero if unexpected major work was required. He also stressed that, however these figures are viewed, there is a need for financial prudence.

David drew our attention to the fact that the offertory income to 31 May 2017 was £151 less than in the same period in 2016. Whilst Planned Giving envelope income was £481 higher, bank standing orders were £195 lower and loose plate donations £437 lower. Fabian pointed out that last year's figures also showed a downward trend. Some discussion followed regarding the fact that no collections were taken during the First Holy Communion Masses this year. It was also noted that, aside from the relatively low-key - but encouraging - planned giving drive earlier in the year, there had not been a high-profile campaign for donations since Growing in Faith.

David referred to the Parish Finance Report that was circulated following the end of the financial year. This was made available on the parish website, with the option of paper copies on request. We will repeat this next year, and some thought can be given to what other information we would like to include.

Louise McKenna referred to the matter of identifying funds that have been raised for specific purposes. David confirmed that these can be earmarked in OPAS.

David advised us that we have submitted our Gift Aid claim for 2016-17 for £6,872. We have also been able to submit a late claim for 2014-15, following the discovery of a number of Planned Giving envelopes which it was previously thought had been discarded. If successful, this additional claim could amount to £4,117.

There was some discussion regarding Growing In Faith funds, and a query was raised regarding the use of the money we have claimed back so far – approximately £6,000. It was acknowledged that the history behind this is rather complicated, but basically we have chosen to use these funds for essential work to the fabric of the premises, some of which was urgently needed in order to meet Health & Safety requirements.

David reminded us that we need to identify future work that is required so we can create an ongoing budget. A suggestion of launching a 60th Anniversary Project for a specific purpose was well received.

7 FATHER JOHN'S REPORT

Fr John referred to the Parish Finance Report, and expressed his observation that only a few of the paper copies, available at the back of the church, had been taken. He did acknowledge that we do not know how many parishioners may have viewed the document online.

In response to the general opinion that we have too many Special Collections, Fr John will make a donation from parish funds in respect of selected appeals, rather than take a second collection at Mass.

Fr John reported that the First Holy Communion and Confirmation Masses were very successful. Mass attendance is stable, with a good number of children attending 10am Sunday Mass.

He acknowledged that there are a number of maintenance tasks needed, and agreed it would be a good idea to launch a 60th Anniversary Project.

8 SAFEGUARDING

In her capacity as Parish Safeguarding Representative, Ursula reported that she had recently attended a Diocesan Safeguarding Course. She emphasised the importance of raising awareness of Safeguarding within parishes. One particular issue raised was the ratio of DBS checked adults to children during regular meetings, such as Children's Liturgy, First Holy Communion classes, and Confirmation classes, etc., which is 1:6 for children up to the age of 8. We need to address this. It was suggested that we might recruit volunteers who would be willing to apply for DBS clearance as general Catechists, and make themselves available to assist where needed.

9 MAINTENANCE MATTERS – Updates and New Items

Paul & Ursula Bartlett gave an update.

Tasks recently completed:

Foliage removed from wooden entrance gate at rear of Presbytery.

Replacement tap fitted to basin in Presbytery lobby cloakroom.

Items to be carried out imminently:

Closers on Hall kitchen and lobby doors to be replaced.

White lines to be re-painted on edges of steps and along kerb outside Hall.

Latches on wooden gates to the rear of the Presbytery and Hall to be repaired.

Items outstanding include:

Upgrade to the heating in the Church & Sacristy – 2 heaters are currently out of action and will be costly to repair.

Regular hedge cutting and grounds maintenance – a more reliable and cost effective contractor to be sought.

Replacement of toilet in Presbytery lobby – currently does not function satisfactorily.

Cracks in the Hall kitchen wall, which have stabilised – awaiting final assessment from Chris Fanning (Senior Diocesan Surveyor).

Failing Prunus tree (subject to a Tree Preservation Order) at rear of Hall – Ursula in dialogue with Three Rivers District Council regarding the removal of this.

Items still to be addressed:

Application of strengthening material to windows in Church porch area (Health & Safety requirement)

'No Parking' signage adjacent to yellow hatched area in car park.

It was also noted that one of the garden benches, adjacent to the Garden of Remembrance, needs to be repaired.

Wish List

Resurfacing of Car parking area.

Repair of kneelers in Church.

Ursula referred to some research into the replacement of the floor polishing machine, carried out by Fabian Hiscock. It was agreed that we need a reliable machine to maintain the wooden floor in the Church. The floor polisher we currently have is unsafe and needs to be replaced sooner rather than later. Fabian offered to take this forward.

10 PROMOTING PARISH PARTICIPATION – Recruiting Altar Servers, etc.

There was extensive discussion about the urgent need for more volunteers for all the ministries in the parish. It was suggested that we might organise a recruitment event one weekend, promoting the various posts we wish to fill, plus refreshments in the Hall, after each Mass. This was well received, and we agreed that a sub-committee should be created to take this forward.

11 PARISH LIFE – Planned Events etc.

St Bede's 60th Anniversary - 2018

It was agreed that we should arrange a Mass of Thanksgiving, possibly around mid-September next year. Ursula agreed to contact the Diocese regarding the availability of a high-ranking member of the clergy. We also discussed the possibility of a social event.

Recruitment of Volunteers Event

There was some discussion, and various ideas were put forward. Fabian offered to put together some notes to be used during our appeal. Ursula will gather together lists of ministries and rotas.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

FairTrade

Fabian enquired whether we were any further forward with our intention to become a FairTrade parish. Ursula will contact Eleri Davies, who is a local FairTrade promoter, to ask if she might be willing to give a talk for us at some stage.

Graves at Woodcock Hill Cemetery

Ursula reported that she had received an enquiry from a parishioner, who regularly visits the cemetery, asking whether we have any provision for the care of the graves of former St Bede's parishioners; in particular, that of Monsignor George Leonard. It was generally agreed that it would not be appropriate or possible to take on such a responsibility.

Hall Storage

Ursula presented some information on table storage trolleys, which may provide a solution to our storage challenges. The idea is to avoid storing the tables in the walk-in cupboard, as access is awkward. Some thought needs to be given to the storage of equipment by Hall hirers.

Churches Together Parish Nurse Project

David Reilly informed us that in response to our appeal in the Weekly Newsletter, he has volunteered to join the Parish Nurse steering group, in his capacity as a finance professional. This was very well received.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 16th October 2017 at 7.30pm.

14 CLOSING PRAYER

Fr John closed the meeting with a prayer at approximately 9.50pm.

Ursula Bartlett (July 2017)