

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH – CROXLEY GREEN

NOTES

Parish in Council Meeting Monday 29th January 2018 7.30pm

PRESENT

Fr John Wiley, Louise McKenna (Chair), John Charnley, Maria Gethings, Fabian Hiscock, Michelle Hussey, June Jones, David Marston, David Martin, David Reilly, Graham Smith, Ursula Bartlett (Agenda / Minutes).

1 OPENING PRAYER

Fr John opened the meeting with a prayer.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Paul Bartlett, Madeline Leech.

3 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Mon 16th October 2017

Copies were made available for those present to read through.

4 MATTERS ARISING (not listed on Agenda for this meeting)

Gate Post Refurbishment

It was noted that the gate posts have now been fully restored and the new signage is now in place.

Mass Attendance

Our attention was drawn to the size of the congregation at 10am Mass on Sunday 21st January (First Holy Communion Enrolment Mass): 176, compared to the following week: 97.

5 FINANCIAL REPORT

David Reilly (Chair of the Finance Committee) gave his report. He advised us that the accounting information on OPAS (Online Parish Accounting System) is almost complete up to 31st December 2017. As at that date, subject to final data input, income exceeded expenditure by £5,020. However, included in the figures is:

- a Gift Aid tax refund of £4,092 relating to 2014/15 that would normally have been receivable in 2015.
- a legacy of £2,000.
- expenditure of £2,378 that was covered by the funds received in 2016 under Growing in Faith (the income and expenditure from Growing in Faith are known as restricted funds and are not for general use).

Excluding this income and expenditure to give an indication of ongoing receipts and payments relating the period to 31st December 2017 leaves a surplus of £1,306. The provisional bank balance at 31st December 2017 was £32,259.

David explained that, for reasons he needed to investigate, he was unable to access the 2017 budget on OPAS. A reconstruction of the budget showed that the adjusted income of £72,574 was close to the budgeted figure of £72,017, indicating that the assumption that income would increase by 1% compared to 2016 was not unreasonable. The revised expenditure of £71,269 compared to a budgeted figure of £64,146. Generally, the assumed 3% increase across the various categories of expenditure was reasonably accurate, although, notably, the purchase of fixed assets was some £2,000 less than forecast, while property repairs and renewals was some £6,000 higher. David said that there were likely to be further reasonably significant property costs in 2018, indicating that a 3% increase over the higher 2017 cost would be reasonable.

David advised us that he had prepared a provisional budget for 2018. With the Stewardship Campaign starting in February 2018, he explained that he had increased assessable income by 2%, with non-assessable income remaining at 1% and expenditure at 3%. David said that he had used the actual Diocesan assessment figure. There is some good news here for the Parish, as the way the assessment is calculated has been revised from 1st January 2018, to avoid the previous 'cliff edge' effect of moving across assessable income thresholds. The increase is now more graduated. Our assessment rate has fallen from 29% to 17.25% (a saving of some £5,500). The provisional budgeted surplus for 2018 is some £5,300. David pointed out that this figure appears to be entirely attributable to the fall in the assessment. He added that this is a matter which will have to be addressed and showed how important the stewardship campaign is to the financial well-being of the Parish. David said that the Finance Committee would be considering this further.

David mentioned the financing of the proposed new central heating. This has to be considered in the context of the trend of expenditure increasing at a greater rate than income (see item 6 – Central Heating in Church & Sacristy).

Cost of First Holy Communion / Confirmation Preparation Classes

David reminded us that at the last Finance Committee Meeting the charge for First Holy Communion preparation classes had been discussed, and a reduction from £45 was agreed. Revised charges of £25 per First Holy Communion candidate, and £15 per Confirmation candidate were set. However, OPAS showed that expenditure on catechetical materials was £951 compared to a budgeted £558 (with income being £945). David will investigate this and report back at the next Parish in Council meeting.

Ursula advised us that due to a misapprehension, this year's First Communion parents were requested to pay only £20, which has been allowed to stand and will be reviewed next year.

6 PROPERTY & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE (brief update)

Central Heating in Church and Sacristy – plan for special appeal

The proposed installation of new central heating has been under discussion for some time. Chris Fanning (Senior Diocesan Surveyor) has been consulted, and with his assistance, two estimates have been obtained. The cost is expected to be in the region of £25,000.

We do not have sufficient parish funds to meet the cost of this project, and it seems likely that we will need to secure a loan for part of the expense.

David Reilly drew our attention to guidelines in the Parish Admin Manual, which indicate that a parish consultation must be put in place before proceeding with a project incurring this level of expense. Ursula will arrange for a notice to appear in the weekly Newsletter, inviting parishioners to present any objections and/or concerns in writing within a specified period.

In the meantime, there is no reason why we cannot start making plans for a fundraising appeal to support this project, as part of our 60th Anniversary activities. The 60th Anniversary steering group will address this.

Replacement of Toilet & Basin in Presbytery Lobby

It has already been agreed that the toilet in the Presbytery lobby needs to be replaced, as it does not function correctly. A local handyman had quoted £500 to replace the toilet and provide and aesthetically repair the affected wall tiles and flooring. However, on closer inspection of the cloakroom, it has been noted that the whole area is shabby and in need of a facelift, which would involve a cost in the region of £1,000. At least two estimates will therefore be required.

Ursula advised us that she has been in contact with Bernie McIntosh (local plumber), with regard to the replacement of the mixer tap in the Hall kitchen, which is faulty. She will remind him that he had agreed to take a look at the cloakroom with a view to providing an estimate.

Replacement of Floor Polisher

We were pleased to hear that Fabian has successfully sourced a suitable replacement, and we now have a new floor polisher.

Health & Safety

Ursula advised us that our annual Health & Safety inspection is due to be carried out by Precision on Monday 5th February 2018. We have addressed the majority of the issues highlighted in our last inspection. Ursula & Paul Bartlett and Phil Hendrick (Finance Committee member) have agreed to be present for the inspection.

Church Cleaning – Spring Clean Day

We have recruited some new Church cleaners through our Volunteer Weekend Appeal last autumn. The matter of arranging a deep clean was raised. We agreed it would not be possible to find a suitable date before Easter, so Saturday 28th April was selected. Louise offered to co-ordinate refreshments for the volunteers. We will publicise this in the Newsletter.

Proposed Fence at rear of Hall

Following the removal of the failing tree at the rear of the Hall, we now need to erect a fence. This task has been on our list of proposed work for some while. June offered to obtain some estimates to assist with our projection for future works.

Lamp Post in driveway

This has not been functioning correctly for some months. Attempts to find a local electrician to tackle the problem have failed. Ursula has therefore been in touch with Chris Fanning (Senior Diocesan Surveyor), who has confirmed that the lamp post was installed in 1994. He has provided the contact details of an electrician who should be able to help. Ursula will follow this up.

Hall Kitchen Ceiling

A damp patch was recently noticed on the ceiling in the Hall kitchen, and a slow leak subsequently appeared. A problem with the flat roof was suspected. Louise has contacted Chris Fanning, and a contractor has recently been to inspect. We await the outcome.

7 FR JOHN'S REPORT

Fr John reported that numbers attending Mass are stable.

We have 18 First Holy Communion candidates, and Liz Hughes now has 2 additional adults in attendance at the preparation classes. We are therefore fulfilling Safeguarding regulations.

We have several new Readers at Mass, but more are still needed for Sunday evening Masses.

Two new Eucharistic Ministers have recently been added to the rota, but more volunteers would be welcomed.

We have now heard that Bishop Paul McAleenan will administer the sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday 15th July 2018 at 10.00am Mass. Danny Risdon will once again lead the preparation classes.

Finally, the matter of new central heating for the church is now being addressed.

8 SAFEGUARDING

Ursula reported that she is dealing with ongoing DBS checks, and that two parishioners have requested to be registered for the Educare online training programme. No other issues at present.

9 PARISH EVENTS

PAST

Epiphany Parish Breakfast

This event, intended to mark the start of our 60th anniversary year, was not very well attended. It was generally felt this occasion was not promoted well enough beforehand, and a profit of only £10 was raised. Nevertheless, the breakfast was very much enjoyed by those who did support it.

FORTHCOMING

60th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Celebration Meal – Friday 18th May 2018

We already have several events planned for this year. Newsletter No 1, with a list of dates, was issued before Christmas. The 60th Anniversary sub-committee has now added another date, when a celebration meal will be organised at West Herts Golf Club. More details will be available shortly.

Proposed Concert

David Marston suggested we might organise a concert in the church. We could consider approaching anyone who may have connections with the Purcell School, or similar organisations. This idea was welcomed, and the 60th Anniversary sub-committee will consider this further. It was noted that we may need to check on the regulations for ticketed events.

Day of Recollection For Eucharistic Ministers – Sat 14th April 2018

Ursula advised us that she has been in touch with Mary Crowley at the Diocese, with a view to arranging a Day of Recollection for all the Eucharistic Ministers. Mary has agreed to co-ordinate this. We agreed it would be an uplifting experience for all concerned. Ursula thanked David Marston for his involvement in training our two new Eucharistic Ministers, and will confirm the date with Mary Crowley.

Fairtrade Event / Coffee Morning

Ursula reminded us that Eleri Davies (Methodist Church) has agreed to speak at an event hosted by St Bede's, in order to fulfil the requirement for us to become a Fairtrade parish. Some discussion followed, and it was suggested that Eleri could perhaps speak at one of our Sunday morning Masses, with Fairtrade tea/coffee & biscuits in the Hall afterwards. We agreed on Sunday 22nd April. Ursula will check Eleri's availability for that date.

First Holy Communion 2018

This year's First Communion Masses will take place on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May.

As mentioned earlier, we have 18 candidates, and adequate adult supervision for the preparation classes, in accordance with Safeguarding regulations.

Confirmation 2018

As mentioned earlier, Bishop Paul McAleenan will administer the sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday 15th July 2018 at 10.00am Mass. Application forms will soon be available.

Adoremus – National Eucharistic Pilgrimage & congress (Fri 7th to Sun 9th Sept 2018)

Our parish has the opportunity to send two delegates to this event. This matter was passed to the 60th Anniversary sub-committee.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Proposed Gift to the Parish (in memory of deceased parishioners)

Ursula advised us that she had received a phone call from the daughter of two well known parishioners, who passed away some time ago. This lady wishes to donate a gift to the parish in memory of her deceased parents; preferably it item that could be marked with a plaque. Following some discussion, it was decided a new garden bench for the Remembrance Garden might be appropriate. Ursula will pass this message on.

Proposed Pilgrimage / Retreat

Louise suggested we might organise a visit to Walsingham and/or a retreat or day of recollection at the Niland Centre. She will follow this up and report back.

60th Anniversary Prayer Card

Louise has arranged for these to be printed, and they are now ready for distribution. We decided these could be given out during our forthcoming Stewardship Campaign. The prayer cards are small enough to fit into a wallet or purse. The idea is that we will share the prayer, as a parish, each week at Mass for the duration of our anniversary year.

Receiving Holy Communion

Two Eucharistic Ministers, present at the meeting, raised their concerns regarding the solemnity of Holy Communion. Both reported incidents where a child, clearly too young to have made their First Communion, had approached the Chalice(s).

Following some discussion, we agreed it was necessary for Fr John to make a point of speaking to the congregation, reminding everyone that those not eligible to receive Communion are welcome to approach for a blessing. Reminders from the lectern, from time to time, would help to instruct and encourage correct procedure. It was recognised that some adults may also benefit from this type of guidance.

Churches Together Parish Nurse Project

David Reilly updated us on this project. He represents St Bede's as a member of the steering group, and is also the Treasurer. He will prepare a report for inclusion in the Weekly Newsletter.

Church Hall Insurance

David Reilly advised us that he has been in touch with the Diocese in an attempt to obtain advice and guidance regarding the church hall insurance. A particular concern is storage of items by hirers. This matter is ongoing.

List of Sick Parishioners

The matter of visiting sick and housebound parishioners was raised by David Marston. It appears that some of those we include in our Bidding Prayers receive visits on an informal basis. Fr John was requested to consider visiting those who may not be receiving visits.

CARITAS 'Love in Action' Programme

We did not have time to explore this item. It will be carried forward to our next meeting.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING / CLOSING PRAYER

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 30th April 2018 at 7.30pm.
Fr John closed the meeting with a prayer at 9.30pm.

Ursula Bartlett (February 2018)