

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH – CROXLEY GREEN

NOTES

Parish in Council Meeting Tuesday 14th May 2019 at 7.30pm

PRESENT

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

1 OPENING PRAYER

Fr John opened the meeting with a prayer.

2 APOLOGIES

No apologies received.

3 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Mon 11th February 2019

Copies were made available for those present to read through. These were agreed as true record.

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

The Rosary

The recital of The Rosary, prior to all Masses during the first weekend of the month, was reviewed. It was reported that a small number of parishioners are arriving early to join in at the evening Masses; although not so many at the 10am Sunday Mass. Following a brief discussion, we agreed that we should continue, and it was decided that we would carry on with the present arrangement for the time being.

This led to discussion regarding general involvement in the parish.

David Marston drew our attention to 'Word on Fire' and the work of Bishop Barron, which could provide a resource for spiritual growth within the parish.

Fabian Hiscock informed us of various ways in which we could involve the parish the work of CAFOD; particularly with regard to issues concerning Fair Trade, Justice & Peace, environment, climate change, etc. He suggested that we could encourage our Confirmation candidates to get involved as part of their preparation to receive this Sacrament.

Fair Trade

Our proposed application to become a Fair Trade parish is still ongoing. We need to focus more on purchasing Fair Trade products, wherever possible, for our hospitality events. Fabian suggested that we might set up a Fair Trade Group in the parish, possibly involving the Confirmation candidates, preceded by an appeal to explain the work of CAFOD.

We decided that a separate Parish Development Working Party could be set up to take these ideas forward.

Ursula, Louise, David Marston and Fabian agreed to assist. In the meantime, Fabian agreed to write some notes; explaining his ideas, that Ursula will email the Confirmation Catechists.

Recruitment

Ursula reminded us that we urgently need to appeal for volunteers to help with various ministries across the board in the parish. We particularly need to encourage some of our younger parishioners to become Altar Servers. Danny Risdon has agreed to train those interested. Ursula will request Damien, First Communion Catechist, to speak to the candidates about this.

Flower Group

Louise advised us that some new flower arranging volunteers have recently come forward, in response to an appeal in the Newsletter. This is very encouraging.

It was generally agreed that another Recruitment Drive is needed. This can be taken forward by the Parish Development Working Party.

5 FINANCIAL REPORT

David Reilly gave his report.

Results for 2018

David advised us that the provisional results reported to the previous meeting on 11th February 2019 (see the notes of that meeting) had been confirmed subsequently by the Diocese. He informed us that he would prepare a brief report for parishioners on the same basis as those produced during the previous two years.

Diocesan Audit

David informed us that our plans to purchase a drop safe (see notes from the meeting on 11th February 2019), had been hampered due to an embargo, imposed by the Diocese, on the purchase of drop safes. Apparently a problem had arisen in a parish that needed investigation. Despite requests for an update, nothing had been heard prior to the Internal Audit follow-up visit on 9th May 2019 by Beverley Meakes (who carried out the audit). This meant that some of the recommendations regarding cash security - primarily concerning dual control when cash is being handled - were not feasible.

Beverley indicated that we would not be penalised on account of this, although reported subsequently that her boss had marked us back to being non-compliant on the basis of accuracy and transparency for the external auditors. While David thought that there was an argument that this discriminated against us, it was unlikely that we could alter the position. Nevertheless, our revised score was 91% (described in an email from Beverley as 'fantastic'). Ironically, on the afternoon following her visit, Beverley emailed to say that the embargo had been lifted. This might indicate that this had occurred before 9th May 2019. A safe and additional pouches will be ordered.

Results to 31 March 2019

David reported that OPAS appeared to be complete up to 31st March 2019. As at that date:

Income: £15,079
 Expenditure: £11,299
 Surplus: £3,780
 Bank balance: £25,746

David reminded us that the results included the receipt of £3,802 in respect of electricity (see notes from the meeting on 11th February 2019), meaning that it was arguable that we have only broken even for the period. Finances remain challenging as:

1. There is committed expenditure of some £1,700 in respect of a new soak-away and drain repairs (the latter covered by insurance, excepting a £300 excess);
2. Part of the flat roof is in urgent need of repair (a figure of £5,000 has been mentioned); and
3. we ought to have a reserve to cover six month's expenditure. This is around £23,000, based on the three months to 31st March, and our current bank balance is around £26,000.

David said that he had compared offertories against the same period in 2018 (before the effects of the Stewardship Campaign were felt) and could report that income was up by 13%.

He concluded by looking at the budget for the period. Although this is likely to confuse rather than illuminate due to its nature, David said that the budgeted increase in offertories was 1% for the year compared to 2018 (which included nine months of post Stewardship Campaign income). We have achieved 96% of that budget.

This led to some discussion regarding the Collectors at Mass. Ursula informed us that the role of Collectors would need to be more 'defined', once the new procedures regarding cash security are in place.

Louise enquired whether it was possible to work out whether our energy costs are lower since the installation of the new central heating system. David explained that it would probably take at least a year to track the pattern of usage; especially as the figures would have been distorted due to the sum of £3,802 (mentioned earlier), refunded to us for electricity bills paid in error.

6 PROPERTY & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE (brief update)

Hall Storage

A new built-in double-width cupboard has now been installed in the Hall. This has resolved the issue of storage, which has become critical. The next stage will be to relocate the freezer from the alcove adjacent to the serving hatch. The lower shelves in that alcove can then be removed to accommodate storage of the tables.

David Reilly explained that we were once again reviewing our Hall Hire Terms & Conditions and Hall Hire Agreement, following new examples of these documents received from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Daniel Finch (Finance Committee Member) is currently checking to ensure our version of these documents contains all the points included in the examples from the Diocese.

Annual Spring Clean

Saturday 15th June 2019 at 10am was agreed for a thorough clean in the church.

Louise kindly offered to provide a light lunch for the volunteers. Ursula will publicise this in the Newsletter.

Damage to Driveway

It has been noticed that some damage has occurred along the edge of the driveway, near the entrance. It is thought that grabber lorries, off-loading building materials into the rear garden of No 183 Baldwins Lane, may be the cause. Ursula will report this matter to the owner of No 183.

Flat Roof Issues

Ursula reported that she had met with Chris Fanning and a roofing contractor that morning. She explained that the highest level (over the main Hall area), and lower level (over the kitchen, extended area of Hall and toilets), are now in good condition following work carried out last year. However, there is a third, mid-level; covering the Presbytery side lobby and utility areas, which has only been patch-repaired, and is now in urgent need of replacement. The position of the downpipe from the mid-level roof also seems to be rather awkward.

Additional problems were spotted:

1. A leaking overflow pipe, which was found to be connected to the hand basin in the upstairs living room. On investigation we found that this basin had a partially blocked drain and a badly dripping tap, which looked to be a long-term problem. This is causing a constant stream of water along the previously mentioned mid-level roof, and down to the lower level, immediately above the kitchen ceiling where a water stain appeared some time ago.
2. Perished upstairs bathroom window frame. A new PVC window has, at some point in the distant past, been fitted into the existing wooden frame. This will need attention before next winter.

The roofing contractor will provide an estimate for the replacement of the defective roof, and adjustments to the gully and downpipe from the mid-level.

Drainage Problems

Following a recent cascade of water from the new gutter, adjacent to the side door to the Presbytery, a specialist inspection camera revealed a blocked downpipe and weed invasion in the drain at ground level. Following consultation with Chris Fanning (Senior Diocesan Surveyor), we have been advised to have remedial work carried out to clear the drains, and have a more efficient soak-away installed. The remedial work will be covered by insurance, except for a £300 excess. However, this will involve a further cost of approximately £1400 for the installation of the new soak-away. We have given our consent to go ahead with this work.

7 FATHER JOHN'S REPORT

Fr John reported that Mass attendance seems to be stable, and we have keen volunteers coming forward. He informed us that 15 children made their First Holy Communion on 11th & 12th May, and we have 24 candidates for Confirmation this year. We are grateful to Damien and Karen for their work with the First Communion children, and also to Danny and Paul for their work with the Confirmation candidates.

8 SAFEGUARDING

Ursula reported that Paul Trainor had volunteered to assist Danny Risdon with the Confirmation instruction classes, to fulfil Safeguarding requirements. All DBS checks are up to date.

9 PAST EVENTS

Lenten Lunch

This was very well attended. Thanks were expressed to June, Louise and their team.

Parish Breakfast – St Patrick's Day

Thanks were expressed to Siobhan and Angie for organising this very successful event.

Easter Raffle

Thanks were also expressed to June. This year's Easter raffle raised the amazing sum of £285 which will go towards improvement work in the parish. It was agreed that the beautiful hamper prizes, created by June, most definitely encouraged the sale of tickets.

10 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Croxley Revels – Saturday 22nd June 2019

Paul & Ursula have once again offered to co-ordinate a stall on behalf of St Bede's, providing tea/coffee and cookies. Chris Moan has agreed to sell plants, as in previous years. Robert Phipps has once again kindly offered to provide catering equipment, etc. Ursula will appeal in the Newsletter for helpers.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Croxley Parish Nurse

David Reilly gave a brief update on the appointment of Cathy Scarborough, the Croxley Parish Nurse. She took up her post on 1st April 2019, and is currently employed for 5 hours per week. Her normal working day is Thursday. Cathy has already visited our Thursday Club, and plans to attend all the churches at some point, to explain her role in the community. As this is a completely new post, only time will tell how Cathy's role will evolve. She hopes to network with GPs and various care-giving agencies, and over time will build a team of volunteers to assist with her task.

Church Lighting

Robert Phipps drew our attention to the need to upgrade the church lighting, and asked for this item to be included in the Agenda for our next meeting. Basically, the existing bulbs need to be replaced with energy efficient ones. He has thoroughly investigated the issue and has identified some options. David Reilly agreed to discuss the matter with Robert, with regard to the financial implications, and we can take his ideas forward at our next meeting.

CAFOD Creation Celebration

Fabian advised us of the Creation Celebration Campaign being led by CAFOD; tackling climate change and energy issues. We agreed this is something we could get involved with as a parish; another topic that could be taken forward by the Parish Development Working Party.

Charity Lunch

June Jones informed us of a charity lunch, in support of the Rwanda Sisterhood Association, which will take place on Friday 17th May 2019 at 1pm in St Bede's Church Hall. Tickets priced £12.50 are now on sale.

Thanks

Louise expressed thanks to Ursula and all who are involved in the day-to-day parish responsibilities, as there are at present several projects being addressed.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING / CLOSING PRAYER

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 10th September 2019 at 7.30pm.

Fr John closed the meeting with a prayer at 9.15pm.

Ursula Bartlett (May 2019)