

Reports April 2017

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| Our Lady's Bereavement Team (Antonieta Tinney) | |
| Activity since last PPC meeting | |
| <p>Our afternoon of prayers, reflections and activities for the bereaved family of our Parish took place on Saturday 18th March 2017.</p> <p>Around 20 people attended the event.</p> <p><u>Reading and Reflections'</u></p> <p>As the event was held during Lent, the theme of the afternoon was about the "Stations of the Cross".</p> <p>The Bereavement Team is considering a similar afternoon towards the end of the year.</p> <p>At the next Bereavement Team meeting on 17 May at 10.30, we will prepare the programme for our annual evening service of prayers and reflections which will be held in June 2017.</p> | |
| Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are considering getting in touch with the Parish Healing Team to discuss having a possible "shared" Healing Service for the bereaved. Our ultimate aim is to have a strong team that supports parishioners in need of our "ministry" | |
| Objectives set | Who |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make our team more known within the parish Continue to send sympathy cards to newly bereaved families and to also continue to send cards on the first anniversary | All |

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| Area of Activity Report on Ecumenism for Parish Council CTH Annual General Meeting held on 24/04/2017 at Our Lady's Church | |
| Activity since last PPC meeting | |
| <p>There has not been a general meeting of Churches Together in Hitchin since the last Parish Council Meeting.</p> <p>The Ash Wednesday lunch for Christian Aid took place on 1 March at the New Testament Church of God</p> <p>The Women's World Day of Prayer was held on 3 March at St Mark's Church</p> <p>The Lent House Groups began on 6 March</p> <p>The Good Friday Walk of Witness and Service were well attended and the Preacher Dan Drew from the Hub Church which is part of St Mary's preached exceptionally well.</p> <p>We were concerned about the Heritage Foundation's proposed increase in rent for the storage of food etc for the Foodbank. I understand that this has been waived by the Foundation.</p> | |
| Forthcoming Events | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian Aid 14 – 20 May – leaders needed, overall funds were down £1 million last year | |

CTH dates and venues

- Next Meeting - Tuesday 23rd May 2017 at St. Faith's
- Wednesday 20th Sept – Friends' Meeting House
- Thursday 16th Nov – Walsworth Road

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

| Objectives set | Who |
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Area of Activity Health and Safety

Activity since last PPC meeting

Work continues on the fire safety pack. This is an information pack given to any attending fire crew to make them aware of the general building layout and location of items such as fuse boxes, gas isolation valves etc.

Kicked off initiative to arrange fire safety training to be delivered by Precision. We plan to host this for the deanery at our Parish in Hitchin. This process starts with Fr Tom requesting Fr Norbert contact Precision to say that we would like some fire training for the deanery and we are happy to host it at Hitchin

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Fire evacuation training and drills.

| Objectives set | Who |
|--------------------|---------|
| Complete Fire Pack | Richard |

Area of Activity Inter-Faith Relations - Deolinda Eltringham

Activity since last PPC meeting

Members of NHIFF (but not myself) attended the north Herts Community conversation workshop held on 8th March in the Mrs Howard Memorial Hall. There it was presented to us that North-Herts is a hot spot area for loneliness and feeling isolation among the residents. I transcript of the evening information and list of services currently available is provided in the attached document for those looking for that kind of information.

On the 31st March 2017 the Inter-Faith Network UK published:

Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities - in partnership with: the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council. The document contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations.

The Inter-Faith Network for the UK has recently published a booklet: ***Let's Talk: Practical Pointers for Inter Faith Dialogue***. And an on-line link has been circulated to all inter-faith contacts in the county; it is <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications> and is free to download.

The next NHIFF meeting will be on Wed. Apr 26th. There will be a presentation from two Quaker Friends representatives, and we hope to have a visit from Anita Diamond, a Buddhist originally

from Letchworth.

We hope to hear from the part time chaplain at Luton Airport, Martin Stears Handscomb of Tilehouse Street Baptist church, at the next NHIFF meeting, date to be confirmed.

Michael and I have been invited by the Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic faith to attend the celebration event on Saturday 6th May when their Pope Tawadros II will be visiting them here in the UK.

Up-coming event: Sat 17 June at 18:00 the Sikh community will present a cross community event in conjunction with North Herts Inter Faith Forum and other community volunteers, in order to raise funds for the local Foodbank serving Letchworth, Hitchin and Baldock. The evening will see displays of some classical Sikh music and Martial Arts (called Gatka) and also classical Indian dancing and Fashion. Our colleagues from the Afro-Caribbean community will sing songs and recite poems and we will also be joined by a local church Choir. Tickets will be £5.00 each - the Letchworth Heritage will take £2.50 and the rest of all the proceeds will go to the Foodbank (the Trussell Trust Foodbank) whose volunteers work so hard to help our neighbours in need. It is hoped that £700 will be raised – event advertising provided by the Letchworth Heritage Foundation.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Please do ask all questions you may have.

Objectives set

Looking forward to explore the topic of **Faith and Ethics**, explore ethical teachings and values. Still to be decided in NHIFF meetings.

Who

DME/

Area of Activity Justice & Peace

Activity since last PPC meeting

Saturday 11th March our parish hosted in the hall a **Justice and Peace Fairtrade Event 2017** organised by J&P Westminster with guest speaker Mary Milne, the Campaigns Manager for Traidcraft. The event was poorly attended, but the speakers, I am told were very good. Its focus was on getting all local deanery parishes to attend with a view to encourage more in Herts and Beds to also become Fairtrade parishes, but this was not achieved. Frances Chamberlain had her stall, and made local contacts with other Fairtrade stall holders. On the 20th March, Fr. Michael to led this year's OWG Lenten meditation.

APR 22-23: #MERCY2EARTH weekend – the LiveSimply group has organised events for both days.

Currently underway, the *Nuclear Weapon Ban Negotiations* taking place at the UN between March and July 2017, Pax Christi has asked for those that care to write to the MPs and urge that the UK Government take full part in the negotiations. To sign the online Petition to urge the Government to participate in the UN conference to negotiate a treaty to ban nuclear weapons: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/175096>

Taize Birmingham Gathering - participants from 17 different countries have signed up for the young adult [Weekend Meeting](#) in **Birmingham**, 28 April – 1 May. Registration dead-line was 9th April. Don't know of anyone going from our parish.

5th–13th May, international: [Global Divestment Mobilisation](#)

Saturday 13th May – NJ&PN AGM in CAFOD's Romero House, London – in preparation for September's **Creation Day and Creation Time** – sharing ideas and resources. I hope to bring them to the parish.

Monday 15 May, International Conscientious Objector Day. Could we mark the day with intercession prayers of thanks giving for all those who dared to live out their faith at much personal cost? Especially as Pope Francis repeatedly has appealed for nations and companies to put a halt to arms sales and military conflicts.

The 2017 Annual Justice and Peace Conference will take place from **21 to 23 July 2017** at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. On the theme of **A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor: The Challenge of Pope Francis.** I have several booking forms available. It may be possible for Fr. Euloge to attend it, and it would be good to also share the conference with other parish members.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

| Objectives set | Who |
|---|-------------|
| Global Divestment Mobilisation Still hoping organise in the parish a "Good vs Bad Climate Change Investments" an event for November that could be catholic, ecumenical and inter-faith. | PCC/ DME |

Liturgy

Activity since last PPC meeting

With Turbo Trish keeping a tender eye on the ceremonies for Holy Week including Palm Sunday, everything not only went smoothly but was spiritually uplifting and joy filled. Richard Bradford shadowed the proceedings and often added an extra pair of hands to help so we will be in very good hands in the future. Congratulations to the many, many hands who work behind the scenes. We are truly a very blessed parish. Any critique of the services that can be of help in the future will be gratefully received.

As we look to the future:

20th May @18.00 Confirmation. Bishop Paul McAleenan.

25th May @ 20.00 Called to serve the Sick

28th May @ 14.30 Healing and wholeness service

3rd / 4th June Pentecost: Celebrating 40th anniversary of the Church

3rd @ 18.00 Possible Baptism and reception into the church

4th @ 08.30 *5th Year of the foundation of the guild of St Stephen. Altar servers will receive medals.

10.30 an Adult Confirmation followed by parish picnic bonanza & bubbly???

17.00 Focus on Care for the Sick followed by cheese and wine in the hall

11th June @14.00 First Holy Communion mass

17 / 18 & 24 /25 June: Parish welcome to 1st Holy Communion children and families.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

| Objectives set | Who |
|----------------|-----|
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Area of Activity LiveSimply - Ann Milner

Activity since last PPC meeting

Last meeting was 17th March. Next meeting will be 22nd April

11th March the One World Group arranged for J&P Westminster to hold a Fair Trade awareness day primarily aimed at other parishes in the deanery. Unfortunately only one parish was represented – Letchworth. However representatives from several other Hitchin Christian churches came and the presentations were very informative.

Two activities planned to mark **Mercy to Earth** weekend: 22nd April, **Know the Creator through Creation**, a one hour session of video, prayer & reflection
23rd April, **Caring for Creation** by Litter Picking in our locale.
See below under Objectives for other planned activities

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Reaching Out to local 'Eco' Groups: Some contact made during the Laudato Si Event on 24th September but further contact needed.
100 livesimply Ideas Review: to be continued when possible
Parish Wild Flower Garden: Small wooden fence now in place curtesy of Gardening Group, funded from livesimply coffee mornings.
Parish Community Garden: In place and plants growing well. Signage needed both for it and the Wild Flower garden. An appeal will be put into the parish newsletter to ask if there are any sign makers among us.

| Objectives set | Who |
|--|-------------------------|
| Keep monitoring the energy usage of the parish over the next year. | DME |
| 28th May: Livesimply Coffee Morning. This was given to us by another group who found they couldn't do it. Proceeds to go as usual to parish livesimply projects. | LS Team |
| 11th June: Livesimply Coffee Morning. We have taken the unusual step to donate the proceeds to the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) as we felt that the arms trade is the greatest threat to Creation. It also co-incides with Pope Francis' prayer intention for June: "That national leaders may firmly commit themselves to ending the arms trade." | LS Team |
| Discuss the marking of UN World Environment Day (5h June 2017) at Eucharistic Service with Trish | AMM |
| 4th November: Renewable Energy & Divestment Information Day. The hall is booked for an information morning about renewable energy and divestment from fossil fuels. DME will contact some local groups to invite them to take part. | DME/ AMM /LS Team |
| Research office equipment timers | JS |
| Design & produce plaque for Wild Flower Garden | AMM/ DW |
| Make contact with other local 'Eco' groups to share ideas etc. | AMM |
| Investigate feasibility of encouraging participation in Woodland Trust scheme | AMM |

Area of Activity Maintenance

Activity since last PPC meeting

Summary

A modest list of jobs again
Credit - as always - to the usual suspects - also to new vol

Total RadioSilence
following newsletter request
for Plumbing Opinion ... hope to extend a favour
from MPBuild - otherwise may have to pay for guidance



Activity since report of Mar 2017

Imminent/In-hand

0/ sort out proper lo-power solution for spotlights in hall. (JVC)
0/ storage boxes for CribFigures (JVC & JS)
0/ co-ordinate phone and IT upgrades (JVC)

----- snags resolved below this line -----

1304_1/ busted wheel on projector box (JVC)

1004_1/ unstick church front-door after PalmSunday (PJ and JS)
 0804_1/ hall handwash hot tap dripping (JVC)
 0804_2/ Disconnected pew kneeler (screw missing); reconnected - (JVC)
 0804_3/ Gap between Sacristy worktop and wall filled with sealant - (JVC)
 0704_1/ Tony Brennan magic car-park re-fix (Tony B)
 2203_1/ tiles falling off parish house kitchen (JS & PJ)
 2003_1/ loose feet on crucifix support (JVC)
 2003_2/ failed tap in DorisHarris bathroom (JS)
 1203_1/ Divine Mercy Picture & Icons (Eric Fox)
 1203_2/ _another_failed heater in scout hut (OliverRussell)
 0803_1/ new keysafe for shed key (JS)
 0603_1/ Gents toilet latch repaired (JVC)
 0603_2/ busted CTS stand (JS)
 0303_1/ failed D-light os parish office (JS)
 0303_2/ read meter in ChristopherHouse (JS)

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Outstanding Maintenance Snags

0/ Fernox into UCR radiator
 0/ The on/off valve on the towelrail/radiator in Fr E's bathroom is too tight to turn without some immediate fix for leaking.
 Basically it's tight or seized. (or not plumbed in to CH but DHW)
 0/ Toddler area storage overhaul
 0/ magnets<superglue> and silhouette in office keybox
 0/ busted doorlock in link

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett April 2017

Activity since last PPC meeting

Outreach

- Proclaim 15 projects have not moved on because of other commitments but will get going again soon. Meeting with the Diocesan co-ordinator on 28th April. 25th May-4th June the parish will join with the global prayer movement *Thy Kingdom come* and have a novena calling on the Holy Spirit to empower us to be confident witnesses for Jesus Christ in proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God.
- We have an increasing need to support parishioners who need counselling of one sort or another. Am getting more requests for people who can be referred to.
- Fr Euloge will be visiting the housebound and parishioners in care homes on a monthly basis (in addition to the visiting by the EMs) to support their needs for the sacraments of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick.
- Fr Michael has been making regular visits throughout Lent (one per day as least) of parishioners and is currently counselling a number of people and supporting parishioners who are suffering terminal illness.
- Fr Tom continues to visit the sick in hospital and in the parish as well as visiting other parishioners when he can and supporting the bereaved in the parish particular at the time of preparing for the funeral.

- The Masses at the care homes continue with increasing attendance at all – this is an ecumenical outreach and very important for the residents. Fr Euloge will not be developing this ministry at Gosmore Care Home also in conjunction with Teresa Lawrence-Hyde who ministers there.
- Attended workshop on 8th March on Community support. It focused on the needs of older people faced with loneliness. Well attended. Not sure yet where it will lead us but some useful contacts made.
- Fairtrade conference in our parish on 11 March not well attended.

Other tasks

Liturgy

- A further appeal was made for Pre-Ms at all Masses. We have offers for 6pm, 8.30am and 5pm Mass. We still need to find someone to help with 10.30am to support Philippe. We also had two people come forward to shadow the Easter Triduum to ensure we have ongoing support at those services. Training needs to be ongoing in this area.
- Statues are still being repainted by Janina. The Crucifix figure also needs repairing again and a new figure found for the other cross.
- The service books for the Priests and MCs were updated for the Triduum and monitored during the services. Very little needs to be changed and all involved are to be congratulated for delivering a very moving and reverend Holy week. Thanks particularly go to Maeve and Susanna and the Confirmation catechists and candidates for their wonderful Stations of the Cross on Good Friday evening.
- Supported Susanna with the Passover meal which was attended by 90 parishioners and those from St Mary's and also many thanks to the Chamberlains, John Scott and Peter Rock for all their help over the whole of Holy week. The altar of repose was set up beautifully on the Thursday morning thanks once again to a band of willing parishioners.
- Provided organisation and service sheets for blessing of gravestone and plaque and rosemary bush for Peter Wolfe on behalf of Peter Robbins. Thanks to the parish for their financial support and attendance on the day.
- Supported the organisation of the visit by Bishop Paul to the parish. Good attendance at both the Q & A session and the social supper the following week.
- Supported the Wallace family and provided the service sheets for Cissie

IT needs

Attended IT needs meeting with a range of parishioners who are looking at IT solutions for the parish and pastoral team when the building works have taken place.

Side Chapel project

Next meeting has taken place and architect is aware of what needs to be included. He is now drawing up detailed drawings ready for submission for planning permission.

Lourdes Pilgrimage

No further publicity done. Need to extend this to other parishes in the Diocese.

Support of young parishioners

Am helping three young parishioners are doing projects for the parish to support their confirmation and Duke of Edinburgh programmes.

RISO replacement

Spent considerable time preparing information to convince the Diocese to let us have a new machine. It was installed on 19th April.

Permanent Diaconate

Attended meeting about this in Golders Green, with Fr Tom. Gained a lot of useful information to support the parish with publicising this opportunity. We still await the outcome of the commission set up by Pope Francis about women in this ministry.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Need to continue with the Proclaim 15 projects.

Objectives completed from last report**Who****Objectives set****Who**

Publicise Novena for *Thy Kingdom come*

TB

Move Proclaim 15 projects forward

TB

Set up Mass at Gosmore

TB/Fr E/TLH

Prepare check list for Pre-Ms

TB/Peter Rock/BS/WW

Secure costings for Christ figure for crucifix

TB

Invite other parishes to Lourdes pilgrimage

TB/OM

Publicise the permanent Diaconate information to the parish.

TB/TOB

Area of Activity Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett April 2017**Activity since last PPC meeting**

Spoke to the Bishop at his pastoral visit and explained why I am at an impasse with the Diocese about this. Nothing more has been done or heard. I do need to tackle this directly with the Diocese but other things have been more pressing.

Attended safeguarding training organised by PHASE with Helen Bailey, Angela Mngaza and Maeve Green. Very helpful.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Ensure the parish is much more aware of our commitment to Safeguarding

Objectives completed from last report**Who**

Discussed with Bishop my issues.

Objectives set**Who**

Discuss with Diocese the need for all the Diocesan safeguarding paperwork.

TB

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| Area of Activity Website |
| Activity since last PPC meeting |
| New pages set up on website as requested by parishioner groups. Have added a for sale or free page. Not sure about the activity on this. |

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| Area of Activity YOUTH – Teresa Pernak |
| Activity since last PPC meeting |
| <p>We had three successful events organised for children by our Youth Ministry team:</p> <p>1. Funday Sunday mass held on 12 March 2017 was a great success again with 57 children attended of which 16 were newcomers. It was the day when Bishop Paul visited our parish and we believe he was much impressed with our achievements.</p> <p>We are very grateful to Kieran Murphy from Phase who helped us on the day with children's liturgy and activities. The children were really engaged and enjoyed their time. The children's creative work was great and had been presented to the congregation at the end of the mass.</p> <p>2. Children's mass on Sunday 26th March during the 10:30 mass</p> <p>3. Flame 17 – Saturday 11th March 2017 – Conference – the largest National Catholic Youth event of the year took place at Wembley Arena. A great day out for a group of young people from our parish – we had 9 Confirmation programme candidates attended the event with 3 adults assisting them.</p> <p>Westminster Youth Ministry upcoming events:</p> <p>1. The Summit - 28 April Get-together Westminster Youth Ministry is hosting a youth event aimed at those aged 14-18, to take place on the Friday 28 April. The event will be a chance for young people in the diocese to socialise, share a meal together, learn more about their faith and be introduced to a deeper level of prayer and adoration.</p> <p>2. Vitality Park Run - 6 May Sports Westminster Youth Ministry is teaming up with Vitality Park Run to engage in some healthy cardio activity (a friendlier way of saying "run") and make our way around one of the many park routes of London.</p> <p>3. Roma 2017 - 16 June Pilgrimage Join us on an exciting pilgrimage to Rome in June 2017! During this long weekend, we will be led by the Diocesan Youth Chaplain, Fr David Reilly, and the team, as we explore the great sites of the Eternal City, including the Vatican, the Colosseum and much more.</p> <p>4. Youth 2000 Black-Tie Ball - 17 June Ball Join us for our annual, fantastic fundraising ball! An evening of dancing, glamour and most importantly, supporting the mission of Youth 2000!</p> <p>5. Brightlights Unlimited – 23 June Festival Now going for over 20 years, Brightlights is an opportunity for young Catholics to come together – have fun, listen to awesome & engaging speakers, take part in interesting workshops, and hear some great bands & musical talent. All this with awesome times for prayer, and encounter with the Sacraments!</p> <p>6. The Walsingham Way - 30 June Retreat The Walsingham Way is a retreat from 30 June to 2 July for young Catholics considering their vocation</p> <p>7. Summer Camp 2017 - 30 July Camp</p> |

The Chemin Neuf Summer Camp is a summer camp based in Storrington, West Sussex for young people aged 14-18. Since 1992 the Chemin Neuf Community has a long tradition of organising summer festivals and camps for young people. This year the Community is running its first summer camp in England for 14-18s.

8. Faith Summer Session 2017 - 31 July [Conference](#)

Set in the beautiful grounds of Woldingham School, Surrey, the Faith Summer Session is five days of talks on the faith for 16-35 year olds which take place along with daily Mass, opportunities for discussion and social time. The Summer Session gives young Catholics a chance to ask questions about their faith and meet other young Catholics in an informal and prayerful atmosphere.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

To advertise **Flame** conference more to young people in our parish next year and possibly make participation in the event obligatory for Confirmation candidates.

Objectives set

Who

TP