

Area of Activity As I am Gender Diversity Jan 2019

Activity since last PPC meeting

Fr Michael was paid tribute to by LGBT Catholics in Westminster. (Martin Prendergast attended Fr Michael's funeral)

Today, we have celebrated the life and ministry of Fr. Michael Lambert, Augustinian of the Assumption, formerly Parish Priest in Hitchin, Charlton, & Bethnal Green, in a wonderful Funeral Mass in Hitchin. Some of you will have met him at a couple of our earlier Building a Bridge sessions. He was also a moving force in Hitchin Parish forming the AS I AM LGBT+ welcoming group. In fact, this LGBT+ commitment was mentioned twice in the course of today's Liturgy. Fr. Michael was the victim of a road traffic accident on his way back to the parish house from a pastoral visit, and to prepare for a meeting of the parish AS I AM Group. He never regained consciousness and died on Sunday, 2 December. Typically concerned for the well-being of his neighbours, he donated his organs to give others a better quality of life. We remembered him during our pre-Christmas celebration at Farm Street on 9 December, and we will continue to pray for the repose of his soul when we gather for the Farm Street 17.30 Mass on 23 December.

The group wants to ensure that we continue with his initiative to make our parish welcoming to all.

Key points it wants to follow through from previous meetings:

All are welcome sign (in rainbow colours) to be designed for display at the front of the church; a noticeboard to be used for displays and leaflets.

A welcome to our church to be included on the parish website and in the welcome pack (using interesting graphics to emphasise key words)

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, LGBTQ, filthy rich, dirt poor, learning the language. We extend a special welcome to those who are crying babies/toddlers, skinny as a rail, or could afford to lose a few pounds. We welcome you if you can sing like Adele, or like our priests who sometimes struggle with perfect pitch. You're welcome here if you're "just browsing", just woke up or just got out of jail. We don't care if you're overdressed, underdressed, cross-dressed, more Catholic than the Pope or haven't been in church since little Joey's baptism. We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome working mothers, househusbands, starving artists, tree huggers, latte sippers, vegetarians, junk food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems, or you're down in the dumps or if you don't like organised religion (we've been there, too!) If you blew all your offertory money at the dog track, you're welcome here. We offer a special welcome to those who think the earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell or came because Grandma is in town and wanted to go to church. We welcome those who are inked, pierced or both. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down your throat as a kid, or got lost in traffic and wound up here by mistake. We welcome the flexible, the inflexible, tolerant, the intolerant, those who laughed and those who gasped at this welcome. We welcome tourists, seekers, doubters, bleeding hearts and you!

A group of the members got together to look at things to discuss at the next As I Am meeting
Suggestions to be discussed at next meeting include:

- Including on the website an introduction which includes that this was the brainchild of Fr Michael Lambert
- Homilies to include links to wellbeing and inclusion all the time.

- Look at an initiative offering parents a safe space to talk about issues with teenagers – aiming for an initial evening in early May
- Mass for the intentions of LGBTQ+ parishioners and all parishioners who do not feel included.
-

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

The members of the PPC are invited to **Building A Bridge** session on Thursday, 24 January 2019 or on Thursday, 28 February 2019. The theme of this month's session is The Risen Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene. The February session's theme will be The Road to Emmaus.

The Westminster Diocese website which publishes the Cardinal's Diary confirms that Cardinal Vincent will preside at a "Mass of celebration", 17.30, Sunday, 13 January 2019 (The Baptism of the Lord), at Farm Street. Since he wanted to come last year but a convenient date could not then be found, it may be that he wished to mark our 5th Anniversary at Farm Street. The first Farm Street Mass, welcoming LGBT+ Catholics, parents and families, was held on 3 March 2013. **The members of the PPC are invited to this.** Christine Laubin and Trish Bonnett are planning to attend.

Pastoral objectives set in motion since last report

Who

A bidding prayer for LGBT and families is included once a month including of LGBT in sermons/catechesis by direct reference to help raise the profile in our parish

Pastoral objectives set

Who

To raise the profile of **As I Am** in the parish as a source of support for all friends and family members of LGBT people and to ensure everyone knows they are welcome in our parish community.

ALL

Area of Activity

Bereavement Team (Antonietta Tinney)

Activity since last PPC meeting

Our afternoon of prayers, reflections and activities for the bereaved family of our Parish took place on Sunday 9th December 2018.
As the event was held during Advent, the reading and reflections' theme was about Christmas. Unfortunately only 8 people have attended the event.
The team is considering a similar afternoon during Lent.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

- Our aim is to have a strong team for supporting parishioners in need of our "ministry".
- We wish to thank Trish Bonnett for the support and guidance has given to the team.

Objectives set

- To make our team more known within the parish.
- Continue to send sympathy cards to newly bereaved families. Also, to send cards on the first anniversary.

Who

ALL

Area of Activity

Building Project Team (Roger Hyde)

Activity since last PPC meeting

Replacing the Scout Hut. Vision, benefits, objectives.

The commissioned team, comprising Fr Tom, John Scott, David Wilson and myself, have successfully navigated our way through a feasibility study. We will now report to the Pastoral Council, the Finance Committee, major stakeholders and the Parish at large regularly on progress.

We now move to a detailed project planning process.

The aim is to replace the present scout hut with a multipurpose building that would offer more space, be substantially less costly to run and maintain, and make it easier for the parish to run extra pastoral programs, which are at present hindered because of lack of availability of space. It offers insurance against a future that promises to provide less income through the offertory plate and be able to continue to pay not only current staff a fair wage but the extra salaries that will be needed to maintain the premises. It also seems certain that the percentage of the collection paid in assessment to the Diocese will increase in future years as the value of normal income decreases.

The design will provide better facilities for the smaller parish groups that use the hall at present and therefore be more cost effective. It will also have solar panels which will not only show our seriousness of living more simply but help reduce running costs.

The existing Scout Hut is way beyond economic repair and is an unacceptable health and safety liability - condemned by safety inspections. The option of trying to absorb current users into the hall is not realistic.

To date, completing our investigations, our only spend has been £462 for the planning application. Further details of the Business case will come in time. By the experience learned with Grove House and the input from the Diocese at present suggest that we have a strong financial case going forward.

The new build offers a large downstairs space that could be divided into two rooms by a sliding partition. The upper floor would be big enough to be used predominantly for rental purposes thus freeing up the Hall, making it more available for parish use. Note that the revenue from hall rentals pays a large part of the running costs of the parish. It is worth noting that the Diocese expects at least 50% of amenity space should be available for parish use and we will continue to manage the premises on that basis.

It is envisaged some form of facilities management arrangement will be put in place to look after the whole site amenities with a similar rentals system as is in place now.

Based on cost estimates received of around £500K, the project can be funded from Parish reserves, grants and fund raising

As public spaces to hire have reduced in number in recent years, North Herts. Council encourages the provision of community facilities, they have indicated they are willing to fund £50,000 when the business plan shows how it will benefit the community at large.

In addition, we are working with a department that the Diocese have set up specifically to help parishes with securing funding for major projects. They have been particularly positive with our plans.

The new build would house the foodbank, offer support for trafficked people and many Caritas projects being considered, the various Scouting movements, and AA etc. All of which would have access to additional funding to help with overall funding.

Note that funding this project will have no impact on funding for other projects already in hand.

It is also worth noting that the positioning of the new build will allow for easier access to and exit from the car park (as shown on the published plans) and will provide around seven more parking

spaces, but this will not resolve difficulties with parking, there will never be enough car parking spaces, but we are exploring other parking solutions.

It is proposed to remove the existing hut before building the new one - this will maintain parking but also means accommodating hut users in other, temporary locations during the time of the build.

Area of Activity Report on Ecumenism for Parish Council Michael Edwards

Activity since last PPC meeting

The Churches Together in Hitchin AGM was held in St Mark's Parish Church on Thursday Nov 22nd 2018

- Anne Milner has agreed to be the Churches Together in Hitchin Web Site Manager
- The Peace Garden at Friends Meeting House is now complete
- It is proposed to set up a Best Before Cafe in Hitchin along the lines of the one in Letchworth
- 5 Churches from CTH in Hitchin have expressed an interest in combining to run Alpha Courses
- Appointments changes were as follows: Rev Donald Smith from the Built on Faith Apostolic Church will be the Chair: Liz Wills our Caritas representative agreed to be the Vice Chair, no Justice and Peace Officer was appointed, Michael Taylor and John Maguire agreed to be CTH nominated PHASE Trustees
- A Report from the CTH Executive on 13 Nov: A Property Officers meeting was held and common problems and tradesmen both good and not so good were discussed, all CTH members were asked to encourage young people to think about becoming representatives on the CTH, Cherry-Ann Jones and ? agreed to run the 'Somewhere to go' at Christmas and New Year 2018
- Michael Roden the Vicar at St Mary's left to take up a post at Bristol Cathedral but not until he and his student friends reformed their Rock Band and gave a concert at Club 85 raising money for Water Aid. They were terrific it was almost like hearing Elvis and Bill Haley all over again N.B. I am showing my age here
- Our focus on Intergenerational challenges and Combating Loneliness was addressed by a video showing children making friends with old people
- The Orpheus Choir gave a Christmas Concert at Our Lady's
- Doral Hayes the Ecumenical Facilitator of CTH in Herts gave a presentation on '4 Ecumenical Initiatives' to encourage us 1) Local United Missions e.g. the Food Bank and the Hostel for the Homeless 2) National Discussions, the 45 Churches in CTH are meeting at the Focolari Centre 3) Showing how 'Thy Kingdom can Come' e.g. The CTH Pentecost Party in the Market Place 4) Embracing the Other requires listening and communicating what is happening across Herts.

Forthcoming Events

- Carols in the Market Place on Sun Dec 9th at 4.00pm
- Nativity Crib Festival at St Ippolyts Church on 1st and 2nd Dec
- Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Saviour Church on 8th and 9th Dec
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18 – 25 Jan 2019 during which there will be prayers every day in at least one church in the CTH. Prayers will be said in a different church on each day of the week as follows: Fri 18th Redeemed Christian Church of God at the Town Hall, Sat 19th Hitchin Street Angels at Walsworth Rd Baptist Church, Sun 20th Christchurch + a CTH Unity Week Service including the Induction Rev Donald Smith as Chair of CTH in Hitchin, Mon 21st Zeo Church at the Zeo Centre, Tues 22nd Our Lady's Church, Wed 23rd St Mark's Church, Thurs 24th Tilehouse St Baptist Church, Fri 25th Walsworth Baptist Church

- On Sun 27th An Ecumenical Taize Service will be held at St Mark's Church
- On Fri 1st March The World Day of Prayer service will be held at Holy Saviour N.B. Men are included now so no Women in the title!
- Ash Wed 6th March A Christian Aid Lunch will be organised at St Faith's Church
- 11th March onwards the Lent House Groups will be held
- Good Friday 19th Apr 10.30 am United Walk of Witness from Bancroft Gardens and a Act of Worship at 11.00 am in Hitchin Market Place
- 12th to 18th May Christian Aid Week
- Sun 8th or 15th Dec 4.00 pm Carols in the Market Place
- It has been suggested that the CTH hold a joint thanksgiving celebration for the years the churches have all been active in the town during 2019. It will probably be at St Mary's.
- Ideas are asked to help broaden the age range of the members of CTH.

jSuggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

The next CTH Meeting is Mon 4th Feb at Christchurch

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity – Finance Report David Wilson

Activity since last PPC meeting

Parish Accounts for 2018

Work has started on compiling the Annual Financial Return (AFR) for 2018 which has to be submitted to the Diocese by the end of January. The end-of-year figures will be published when they have been confirmed. With accruals for work in progress, a small operating surplus is anticipated.

Parish Budget 2019

The Parish Budget for 2019 has been drafted. Adjustments may be necessary following completion of the 2018 AFR and updates to the repairs and maintenance programmes but, at the draft stage, the Budget shows a small operating deficit.

Parish Rental Charges

The rental charges for use of the Parish facilities have been recalculated to take account of increased costs in a number of areas, notably utility charges, and are in the course of being applied to hire contracts.

Diocese Financial Conference

Fr Tom and David attended the Diocese Financial Conference held in Westminster and were briefed on the 2017 Diocese Accounts. Briefing papers are available for anyone who is interested.

Annual Financial Return (AFR) Training

Cheryl and David attended a training session on completion of the AFR.

Parish Projects

The Finance Committee has continued to support and provide advice on the Parish Projects that are in planning or progress.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations – Trish Bonnett Jan 2019**Activity since last PPC meeting**

Receiving reports from Matthew D'Souza about Data breaches
Friday 23/11 breach from Scammers claiming to be BT and Administrator was taken in and gave them access to the computer. However the attempt did not succeed. Anything like this should be reported immediately to the IT dept.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Need to chase specific email addresses.

Parish database addresses still need to be audited. Will not start this til after return from my holiday in February.

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

Chase the RCDOW email addresses

TB/TO

Do audit on parish database.

TB**Area of Activity Inter-Faith Relations Deolinda Eltringham****Activity since last PPC meeting**

The coming NHIFF is to take place on Wednesday (09/01/2019), so no information is available.

The last **Herts Inter Faith Forum** was on the 11th December 2018. The county has a "Equality and Diversity" calendar web section, faiths are invited to check the 2019 dates for the entries relevant to their faith, and suggest corrections and updates, and share the information:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/our-policies-and-procedures/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-calendar.aspx>

Herts County have launched a campaign to raise awareness of **NHS 111** service in Hertfordshire and they are encouraging people to call the 111 service for urgent advice rather than visit A&E. They would appreciate assistance of all faith groups in raising awareness of this service. Please click the link for their toolkit for stakeholders with suggested social media tweets and downloadable posters : <https://www.healthierfuture.org.uk/hertfordshire-nhs-111-social-media-toolkit#>

Religions for Peace – Protect the Earth Project, Religions For Peace UK is embarking on a 'Protect the Earth' project. Does our faith group/parish group wish to be involved in this project. To find out more, go to <https://rfp.org/act/protect-the-earth/> Does our group wish to work with them. Email address to find out more about *Protect the Earth project*: Jehangir sarosh - jehangirsarosh@me.com

The WHIFG has put together a set of promising public meeting:

Thursday 17th January "**Faith & Social Action - Influence or apathy - Our Choice**" at the Focolare Centre for Unity, 69 Parkway, WGC, AL8 6JG in the afternoon, door open 1:45pm for

2pm start until 4pm.

Further WHIFG dates and topics in 2019 are already set-up:

Tuesday 19th Feb - **Faith and the Family** at WGC

Thursday 14th March - **Co-operations of Faith in Projects** at Hatfield Fire station

Tuesday 23rd April - **The supernatural and religion** at WGC

Tuesday 21st May - **Faith and Politics** at Hatfield Fire station

The Westminster InterFaith **34th Annual Pilgrimage for Peace** will take place on **Saturday 8th June 2019** (Vigil of Pentecost / Shavuot) and will take place in and around Wimbledon in the Borough of Merton.

Faiths Forum for London has been collecting quotes from the scriptures and traditions of the different faiths, which emphasize the importance of trees or allude to the importance of caring for the planet. The aim is to collate these quotes and include them in an **Interfaith Tree Planting Tool Kit**. When it becomes available I will share it so that we can use in any future tree planting event.

I would like to add our congratulations to Sister Elizabeth on the Peace Prize she was awarded. Sr Elizabeth O'Donohoe HC, who has been a loyal and committed member of the Westminster Interfaith team for many years, last Autumn, received an award for furthering the cause of peace through interfaith dialogue and collaboration. She was one of three recipients of an award by the organisers of the Week of Prayer for World Peace, and presented at an interfaith gathering held in the Quaker Meeting House. See <https://rcdow.org.uk/news/award-for-peace/>

Objectives set

Who

DME

Area of Activity Maintenance JohnScott

Activity since last PPC meeting

Credit - as always - to all volunteers.

Magnum Opus tasks here - as well as prosaic ones ...

0000_1/ Reassemble childrens' library triptych in temporary locati

0000_2/ Repair 3vacuum cleaners declog much nastiness (jvc)

0000_3/ mirror so EC occupants see Presbytery doorbell (jvc)

0000_4/ manufacture of small kneeler for Peter Rock when he is i

0000_5/ manufacture of conductor's platform for Sam L.(jvc)

3112_1/ de-wobble replaced pew (js+pj)

2212_1/lectern microphone too loud (me & Peter Eltringham)

2212_2/New equalisation settings lectern&altar mics (P.Eltringham)

1912_1 /obtain &replace lapel microphone for radio set lapel 1 (n

1812_5/investigate altar microphone not working no fault found (i

1812_1/ fix busted kneeler (JVC)

1812_2/ ladies loo - trap1 malfunction (js+pj)

1812_3/ gents loo - urinals _again_ (js+pj)

1812_4/ repair floor before replacing pews (js+pj)

1212_1/ obtain+replace entire radio mic lapel+new Ofcom radio licence(me)

1012_1/ replace lapel microphone for radio set lapel 2 (me)

1012_2/ Obtained new water heater and plumbed it in to Hall kitchen(jvc)

1012_3/ Repaired coffee percolator in Hall kitchen.(jvc)

0612_1/ hall dishwasher constantly calling for salt (S.Gemmel)

0212_1/ light for Caritas-food-parking-spaces by ScoutHut (js)

0112_2/ Fr. M's Kettle on the blink , no fault found (js)



0112_1/ parish ho. kitchen ceiling water damage (js+pj)
 2711_1/ muck-out award-winning skylights and gutters (js)
 2611_1/ change lock on Christopher Ho. front door (js)
 1911_1/ AntiVibration foam under new organ speakers (JVC & JS)
 1711_1/ Fr.M's fence fix (BetterLateThanNever) (js+pj)
 1711_2/ ChristopherHouse doorstep (js)
 1711_3/ new crucifix in church (JVC & FC)

1411_1/ huge task- choir platform in place of old organ (JVC et.al.)

0511_1/ Fr.M failed lamp and disintegrating light fitting (js)
 0000_1/ Replaced three light bulbs in CH flats.(jvc)
 0511_2/ Scoutproof Hut door handles < again > (ME & JS)

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Imminent/In-hand

0/ obtain proposal for hall/church boiler control replacement (js)

Objectives set

Who

0/ fit ChrisHorsfall friction washers to kneelers (js)
 0/fix cable to sound channel 11 (me)
 0/arrange for DM music to re-do the sound equalisation now that the organ has gone. (me)

Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett January 2019

Activity since last PPC meeting

Outreach

- Charmaine Ball has agreed to be the champion for the Best Before Café. Locations being looked for
- First two meditations at Milford Lodge which are going well so far though many of the residents are not readily comfortable with discussion. At moment not planning to continue until after I have had a break.
- Liz Wills has supported the Warm up Feed up initiative which is taking place from the Scout Hall on a Wednesday evening.
- Delivered 4 talks on recycling to Hitchin Girls school. They will be supporting our efforts to raise funds through recycling. The Priory School also collected for a month for the same cause.
- Supported the parish during the recent accident and death of Fr Michael.
- Supporting Elizabeth Dann since her husband died.

Liturgy

- Regular Benediction once a month needs to be promoted widely to ensure attendance.
- **In Memoriam service** took place on 11th November and over 90 people attended.
- Mary Deuchar created and delivered an Advent service on the first Sunday of Advent
- Supported Son Seeker Christ the King event
- Supported the healing service.

- Planned and delivered Fr Michael's funeral.
- Supported the Advent service created by Mary Deuchar
- Helped with Carol service.
- Diane Burleigh has agreed to co-ordinate the readers.

Other support

- Orpheus Choir event was successful and raised over £500 which was unexpected.
- **Side Chapel project** response has been received from the structural engineer. Still waiting for pricing from Architect.
- **Support of Bereavement team** detail in their report.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Need to look at visitors group for those who are lonely – not just about taking communion. Need to cover those who were visited by Fr Michael.

Objectives completed from last report

Diane Burleigh has taken on readers rota

Who

Objectives set

Set up a robust visitors group
Submit side chapel proposal to Diocese

Who

TB/MH
TB/JC/JS/DW

Area of Activity Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett January 2019

Activity since last PPC meeting

Only one person outstanding for initial DBS check. Others paperwork is being completed.

Rechecks have been initiated and several are awaiting Diocesan sign off. Jackie Krobo is working with a long back log – around about 6 weeks.

There has been a problem with e-bulk recently which meant people could not move on from one section to the next. However it has apparently been sorted. In the meantime we ended up doing one paper application to save frustration.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives completed from last report

Almost up to date with backlog of paperwork

Who

Objectives set

Who