

## All reports March 2020

### Area of Activity March 2020

#### Our Lady's Bereavement Team (Antonieta Tinney)

##### Activity since last PPC meeting

Our last meeting was on 30.1.2020.

Our next event will be an afternoon of reflection, prayers and activities on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March, from 2 to 4pm. Trish has sent the invitations to newly bereaved members of our Parish and the notice was put also in our Parish Newsletter.

A repeat of the "D" workshop which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019, has been suggested as it was appreciated by all presents. Trish will look into this and contact the person who will lead the workshop.

##### Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

It is important to have regular meetings. Our aim is to have a strong team for supporting parishioners in need of our "ministry".

##### Objectives set

- To make our team more known within the parish.
- To continue to send sympathy cards to newly bereaved families.
- To send cards on the first anniversary (Trish has printed some lovely new ones).

##### Who

All

### Area of Activity Building committee – Roger Hyde March 2020

##### Activity since last PPC meeting

##### Side Chapel.

Whilst a meeting was being held to discuss Francis Weals (The Architect on the project) latest comments, Cheryl passed a letter to Father Tom.

He opened it, read the comments & showed us the contents.

It was from Canon Peter Newby concerning the Installation of a weekday Chapel.  
Our alternative proposal to the original plan.

In this letter he wrote and I quote:

"The original conception had merit but the donation seems to be running the project rather than provide a means through which the Parish might realise its liturgical and pastoral goals.

I am sorry to have to disappoint you but an internal box will be an unacceptable intrusion into the main body of the Church."

Father Tom and the steering team regrettably halted all work on the project.

If a Side Chapel is needed by the Parish more thought is needed.

## **Scout Hut.**

Very little news to be told here.

After repeatedly progressing reports on any progress the Diocese team namely Alison & Keely have suggest a Skype call to discuss the way forward. This call is expected to happen soon. No date has been agreed as yet.

## **Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**

<b>Objectives completed from last report</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>Objectives set</b>	<b>Who</b>

## **Area of Activity – Finance Report David Wilson**

### **Activity since last PPC meeting**

#### **Annual Financial Return for 2019**

The Annual Financial Return (AFR) for 2019 was completed, signed off by Fr Tom and submitted to the Diocese ahead of the end of January 2020 deadline. It has now successfully passed through initial scrutiny and has been forwarded to the Finance Office for their approval ahead of inclusion in the Diocese Consolidated Accounts.

The Parish Accounts for the year show a surplus of just over £21,000 but adjusted for accruals and other transactions this is reduced to a net surplus figure of just short of £9,500 against a budgeted surplus of £3,500. None of the figures include a set-aside for long-term maintenance and repair arisings, which would tip the scales to a net balanced outcome.

Some of the more notable figures emerging from the AFR are:

- Parish Centre Revenue (effectively Hall Hirings) totalled over £21,000.
- Third Party payments (excluding those from recycling) totalled nearly £12,000, the main individual beneficiaries being CAFOD (£2,400) and the White Fathers (£1,360).
- Donations and Grants paid out totalled £12,200 including £1,600 to the Poor & Needy.
- Donation income, all of which was for Restricted purposes, totalled just short of £115,000, which included anonymous donations of £37,000 for the replacement Scout Hut and £60,000 for the Side Chapel.
- Volunteers Hours were estimated at 1,290 arising from 529 contributions across all the volunteer roles.

#### **Parish Budget 2020**

The Parish Budget for 2020, with no set-aside for reserves, predicts an operating surplus of £7,500.

#### **Parish Audit**

The Parish is scheduled for a Diocese Internal Audit this year but has not been selected for an Audit by the External Auditors. (Note that an Internal Audit covers all aspects of Parish Administration not just the Parish Finances.)

#### **Growing In Faith**

Details are still awaited of the contribution of the Parish to the Diocese Growing In Faith Appeal, which has now been completed.

### **Hall Hire Agreement**

We are still working with Trish and John (Chamberlain) to strengthen the wording in the Hall Hire Agreement pertaining to the safeguarding and safety responsibilities of users.

### **Parish Projects**

The Finance Committee has continued to support and provide advice on the Parish Projects that are in planning or in progress including the now successful bid for a grant from the Cardinal's Fund to fund the appointment of a Youth Worker.

### **Area of Activity** GDPR – Trish Bonnett March 2020

#### **Activity since last PPC meeting**

- Parishioner Alex Pond who was helping has now left and Laura Lambie is now helping with the same task. It is taking quite some time because of everything else which needs to be done in my role.

#### **Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**

- Website needs to be checked for any personal addresses and permission sought for them to be on the website, this includes any email addresses that are in the newsletter which goes onto the website.

#### **Objectives completed from last report**

#### **Who**

The Audit process is now on going.

TB

#### **Objectives set**

#### **Who**

### **Area of Activity** Gender Diversity - As I am March 2020

#### **Activity since last PPC meeting**

- Other suppliers of banners have been identified and circulated to group. No decision made as so few people were able to attend the last meeting.
- Christine Laubin has stepped down from the group
- The group will continue to meet and will respond to opportunities when they present themselves.
- Hitchin Pride taking place in July and we have registered interest in wanting to support the event in some way.
- We have had an offer from Rev Ian Stears-Handscombe to come to us to talk about a same sex partnership and the responses from the church and parishioners.

#### **Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**

#### **Pastoral objectives set in motion since last report**

#### **Who**

- Investigate other suppliers

TB

#### **Pastoral objectives set**

#### **Who**

**Area of Activity** Health & Safety – John Chamberlain January 2020**Activity since last PPC meeting****CCTV**

- Site visit to be arranged with two CCTV providers to obtain quotes for installation of surveillance system, replacement parish IT network and telephone system. Finance Committee and PP agreed that project should go ahead.

**Safety**

- Precision visited on 22nd Jan to carry out annual inspection and PAT testing of electrical items. There were two areas of concern classified as '**Substantial Risk (Potentially Life Threatening) – Significant risks that require urgent action**'. These were;
- 1. Improvements required for further Fire Warden training and some further details of suggested actions to take in the event of a fire.
- 2. Concerns about, "*Storage of combustible materials in the Church / Hall lobby (Link). Significant increases noted since last year.*" Recommendations were advised to, "*Remove items stored in fire exit routes and instigate robust procedures to limit signage made of combustible materials as soon as practicable and ongoing.*"
- Actions are underway to address other issues of less urgency raised in the report.

It was a fair and essentially reasonable 4 hour visit with some interesting points highlighted.

**Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**

Fire evacuation issues are being addressed.

Discussion is required about the increased amount of recycling material in the Link. Chris Horsfall (Prestige) was clearly shaken to see the boxes and bags there. He observed that, "The project, whilst very worthwhile, appears likely to be a victim of its own success."

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

Various repair and installation works completed.

JVC

**Objectives set****Who**

- Carry out Emergency Evacuation of premises before Easter.
- Carry out a fire Warden refresher session
- Prepare evacuation procedures for use by Hall Users.
- Obtain CCTV quotes and justifications for submission to the diocesan authorities.

JVC/TB

JVC/TB

JVC/TB/DW

JVC/DW (funding)

**Area of Activity** Liturgy March 2020**Activity since last PPC meeting**

**Appt of Parish Assistant** – appointment has been made; awaiting DBS checks etc. Suzanna to continue till Easter.

**Parish Youth Worker** – a successful bid to Cardinal Fund – 3-year post; youth worker – awaiting ratification. New parish assistant may be able to fill the post.

**Son Seekers** – last session was good; limited number of sessions for 2020; **Trish** to ask Sarah Pond as possible leader?

**Altar Focal Point**- Fr Tom to share with Parish; Main occasions will be Holy Souls, First Communion

**Advent & Christmas Liturgies** – Overall, the liturgies went very well

**Advent - Advent Service** - Christingle service **2.30 pm** – 13 attended- good to make own Christingles. To build on this experience and opportunity.

**Christ the King** – quite late in organisation; suggest contact Ian Buck and to pop in to talk to Scout, Cubs, Beavers and Rainbow groups ahead of this and Palm Sunday

**Reconciliation** – works well with a simple format.

**Children Nativity** – well organised and managed throughout. Consider getting Our Lady School involved; should there be a children's Mass? to seek the views of the parish – this could be part of a larger parish survey which includes other issues to seek views – eg side chapel.

**24<sup>th</sup> Dec** Christmas Eve - 9.pm – was packed and with children 9+ with their families.

**NB - To check correct wording of Creed for this mass**

**25<sup>th</sup> Dec** Christmas Day - these were well attended and went very well;

**26<sup>th</sup> Dec** – St Stephen's Mass – a lovely Mass if only more parishioners would come to this Mass! To try to find an organist for this Mass

**Lent & Easter** – initial thoughts

**Ash Wednesday** –EM's can also take ashes to housebound and infirm as previously.

**Palm Sunday** – additional **readers** for Passion at all Masses. Help required for setting up / dismantling **sound system** for Procession from garden. Explore possibility of help / interest from JHN school and within Parish. Scouting groups; Music Group at 10.30.

**Good Friday** – Morning Prayer; Walk of Witness; Stations of Cross in evening.

**Parish Council** – to approve finance for Tabernacle covers /veils. (item 10)

### **Ministries**

**EM's Morning reflection** will be on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June** following 10 am Mass – with Fr Andrew. Invitation to be extended to the Deanery.**Fr Tom**

**Readers** – as noted in item 6. Difficult to find readers for 5pm Mass. Readers training course to be arranged. Trish has e-mailed to Readers the Diocesan study sessions relating to 2020 Year of the Word.

**Servers** – Thanks to Fr Tom for sponsoring Annual Guild MC meal. Need to recruit MC's for weekday Masses. Server training in the Summer. To meet parents of 1<sup>st</sup> Communicants to encourage as servers and readers.

**Sacristy** – inventory of physical items completed; To undertake inventory of linen with Teresa.

**Sewing group** (Catherine Muncaster) asked to create **tabernacle covers / veils** in the correct seasonal colours.

**Liturgical Lanterns on Poles** – have been renovated by John Chamberlain and are available for outside use e.g. -Palm Sunday.

**Parish Diary dates** – Leaving do for Susanna; to bring Susanna back for Passover meals!!  
Sr Anne's 80<sup>th</sup> B 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 60 yrs profession on 11<sup>th</sup> August

### **Other Matters –**

**Confirmation candidates** – sending out of daily thoughts; Trish to discuss with Susanna.

**Children in Church** – article sourced by Trish for newsletter. To be placed on an appropriate section of the parish website.

**Liturgy Committee expansion** – to invite a representative from the parish Bereavement Group and Healing Ministries to join the Liturgy Committee.

**Area of Activity Maintenance 28 Feb 2020- JohnScott****Activity since last PPC meeting**

Credit as always - to all volunteers ...  
... much rescue work

a couple of specialist jobs by commercial contractors

newsletter to call for help with  
painting and decorating .



### ----- snags addressed -----#

2402-1/ ChristophHo Gutter police side .. while scaffolding was up ( js )  
1902\_1/ ChristopherHo Roofing fixes ( JamesMosleyRoofing )  
1902\_1/ fix ScoutHut electrical supply ( OliverRussell )  
1802\_2/ diagnose problem with ScoutHut electrical supply ( jvc )  
1802\_1/ ChristopherHo gutter clear - church side ( js )  
0302\_1/ clear valley gutter causing leaks into sanctuary ( jvc )  
0202\_1/ blocked loo in ladies ( js )  
1901\_3/ dodgy pew ( ref Joan Tebbut ) ( js )  
1901\_2/ busted kneeler ( ref Antionette T. ) ( js )  
1901\_1/ H&S Prep the ScoutHut Mezzanine ( JVC )  
1601\_1/ rescue Brownies from dark - after late notification of problem ( JVC )  
0901\_1/ sound system work with supplier ( MikeE )  
0701\_1/ un-de-rail the EC sliding door ( JVC )  
2912\_1/ resolve handheld microphone battery problems ( MikeE )  
1812\_1/ altar microphone cable repairs ( MikeE )

**Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed****Imminent/In-hand**

0/ grubby areas above fan-assist radiators in church.  
0/ repaint clergy dining room ...  
0/ record models/serial-numbers for sound equipment

**Objectives set****Who****Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett March 2020****Activity since last PPC meeting****Outreach**

- Support being given to a number of parishioners who are ill, in hospital or housebound. Encouraging Fr Euloge to make more house visits also.
- Continuing support of parishioner in Whitwell including liaising with social services over accommodation and care needs.



- Visited care home in Northampton with Pam Brannigan for a parishioner who has to leave Gosmore nursing home which is closing in the next two months.
- Supported a parishioner bringing her son home from prison.
- Arranged a group of people to visit and take communion to new parishioner in Sue Ryder, Stagenhoe – set up What's App group to support. Mass celebrated by Fr Tom at Sue Ryder in the chapel for this parishioner.
- Sorted regular visits with communion for an elderly parishioner who used to be visited by Fr Michael whom had fallen off the radar.
- Frank Benucci and I are visited Sr Ann-Marie on 31 Jan – 2 Feb It was a very successful visit and we found her to be in quite good spirits and generally good health.
- Attended Landings Taster Day with Fr Tom and Teresa Hyde – Mike Edwards and David Whittaker also attended a session. The programme is aimed at reaching lapsed Catholics and helping them find a way back. We are hoping to set up a hub for the deanery in our parish. We are awaiting details of further training days as the one booked for 21<sup>st</sup> March is not possible for any of us to attend.

### **Liturgy**

- Supporting Bereavement team with prayer service for the bereaved on 7<sup>th</sup> March and Healing Service on 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- Benediction prepared and delivered focused on unity in the family
- Continue to prepare Masses for care homes and when Fr Andrew says Mass in parish.
- Prepared Lent prayer and reflection leaflet for Ash Wednesday.

### **Other support**

- Discussions with Steve King regarding cleaning and maintenance of hall floor.
- Liaison with Tony Fletcher, local PC regarding Jerry Goff and his unwanted presence in the church. Tony has been to the Sanctuary to ensure they are aware that he is not welcome on the church premises as his behaviour has been disrespectful and at times unlawful. If he is seen on the premises then we are to notify PC Fletcher immediately.
- Did a walk though with John C looking at Health and Safety issues prior to the inspection. Grateful thanks to John for everything he did to prepare for the inspection and his actions subsequently.
- Supported the Wintershall education team who delivered the reflections and Stations of the Cross for the Catechist training day organised by the Evangelisation team. Attended by 4 other in the parish.
- Negotiated a new contract with RISO saving over £1000 on the previous contract.
- Attended two days of the employment tribunal for the staff from Our Lady's School.

**Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**

Objectives completed from last report	Who
Prepare for the Year of the Word	Pastoral team
Objectives set	Who
Complete survey regarding side chapel (still awaiting internal options)	TB

<b>Area of Activity</b> Sacramental Preparation - Susanna Hawksley	
<b>Activity since last PPC meeting</b>	
<p><b>Baptism</b> All set to deliver my last baptism course over the next two weekends. Lots of interest in this one.</p> <p><b>First Holy Communion</b> The children received the sacrament of Reconciliation on 1<sup>st</sup> February; all went well. I have some children doing this later because of being behind as parents have missed sessions. The preparation for the sacrament of Holy Communion is now commencing.</p> <p><b>Confirmation</b> We haven't met for ages – we had to cancel a session because of Storm Ciara and then it was half term. We will have to add a session in at some point. The requirement to come to 5pm Mass is being well adhered to (I am pleasantly surprised!) and I have had some parents saying how happy they are about it. I am really hopeful that we can move this forward, under Robert's guidance.</p> <p><b>Marriage</b> The next day for this is 4<sup>th</sup> April.</p> <p><b>RCIA</b> We have, as usual, a steady trickle of people coming for Confirmation and one or two for Reception. I don't think we will have anyone doing anything major at Easter – it all depends on people's readiness.</p> <p><b>My job</b> I am super pleased to have Robert Hitchcock stepping in to take over my work: he started properly on 24<sup>th</sup> February. It will be a fairly long handover period – I will have to deliver some of the catechesis because Robert has commitments from an earlier job that he can't ignore. I am working on an as-needed basis until Easter. You will be able to escort me off the parish premises in the summer (that's as accurate as it gets at present). I have told him what a magnificent team the PPC is and he can't wait to begin attending meetings.</p>	
<b>Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed</b>	
<b>Objectives set</b>	<b>Who</b>

<b>Area of Activity</b> Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett January 2020	
<b>Activity since last PPC meeting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maria has sent out emails to those people who now need to update their DBS check..</li> </ul>	



Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the facilities hire contract to ensure that we have got all the safeguarding and policy requirements in place for our facility users.</li> </ul>	
Objectives completed from last report	Who
Objectives set	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review hire contract</li> <li>Promote Educare training to all group leaders and catechists in the parish. Strongly encourage them to register and do modules.</li> </ul>	<b>TB/DW</b> <b>TB</b>

<b>Area of Activity</b> YOUTH – Teresa Pernak
<b>Activity since last PPC meeting</b>
<p>1. There were no Son Seekers activities since the last PPC meeting.</p> <p>2. Our parish application for funding from the Cardinals Appeal for a Youth Worker has been awarded in full of £45,000 that will be spread over the next three years. A huge thank you to Helen Bailey, David Wilson, Trish Bonnett and Susana Hawksley for their work and efforts that resulted in such a fantastic success.</p> <p>3. On Saturday 25th January from 8:30 - 10am our Church was hosting the Youth Forum meeting chaired by Kieran Murphy from PHASE. Helen Bailey, Sarah Pond and Teresa Pernak attended the meeting. It was great opportunity to learn about other Christian churches in Hitchin parishes lives and hear about what they do for the young people.</p> <p>There are few upcoming events that may be of interest to our parish families:</p> <p>1. Big Day Out. 23-24 May at Wiston House, West Sussex.  <a href="https://bigchurchdayout.com/south">https://bigchurchdayout.com/south</a>. This is a family friendly festival and this year's event will include a youth village. Discounted tickets are available for the weekend via this link:  <a href="http://bcdo.group/2020/hitchin-churches-together">http://bcdo.group/2020/hitchin-churches-together</a></p> <p>2. Central Baptist Association is holding a course on safeguarding titled: "Excellence in Safeguarding".  It covers an introduction to safeguarding issues and practices for those working with children, young people and adults at risk.  This is a Level 2 course (general introduction) and suitable for new volunteer workers or those wishing to refresh their training. It is also suitable for trustees but is not intended to explore trustee responsibilities in depth.  Saturday, April 4th, 2020 (9.30-1.00pm), Walsworth Road Baptist church, Hitchin SG4 9SP, cost £5 per person.</p> <p>The Forum also hosted a guest speaker Denise Garrell who is keen to start a new group in town for children and young people (Y6/11+) with additional needs – such as ASD, Asperger's, Dyspraxia. The main aims of establishing such a group would be to build relationships for young people who don't have meaningful relationships with their peers and may feel very isolated at present. Also, to build fellowship under a faith umbrella and to help the young people to grow up in their faith. Denise is keen to know what appetite there might be within the churches to set up such a group and whether there are already young people within our churches who may benefit from attending such group in case they are currently not attending any groups or clubs. Denise is happy to set up a meeting to progress this idea and she asks to forward this info to anyone in</p>

the churches who may be interested. Those interested can contact her directly emailing: [denise.garrell@ntlworld.com](mailto:denise.garrell@ntlworld.com) to express their interest in exploring this idea.

Other matters:

The Council has just started a new youth centre on Nightingale Rd (in the Elderly Day Centre).

<b>Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed</b>	
<b>Objectives set</b>	<b>Who</b>
	TP