

All reports October 2021

Chairs report to the Pastoral Parish Council – Roger Hyde
2nd October 2021

The Steering group met with the appointed Architects on Thursday afternoon with their first ideas of our proposed Community Centre.

Our delegated Architect is Laura Watson.

At first view Laura had taken into account all the aspects in our written brief and comments made by stake holder's hope for needs.

A lengthy discussion was help highlighting each of the important points

We looked at single story compared to two story. The planned area for the ground floor encompassed all our needs and some, so the conclusion was to go forward with single story building.

The new hall size some 105.6m square is similar in size to our present hall with good storage. Additional storage areas were discussed and highlighted, Uniform Groups Food bank etc. and storage for visiting customers.

The discussion continued to who would use the Centre and sport activities were added to the agenda, we asked for a high ceiling for badminton and other ball sports which may attract a small club or two.

All the points for the FUWU team have been taken into consideration including secure storage for large refrigerators.

The matter of heating the Centre will be left until later when we get some idea of detail.

Having taken all that on board Richard and Laura have gone away to rehash the idea plus give us a simple sketch of the outside of the single story building insitu so to speak.

We await their next proposal which we can discuss at the next (November) PPC meeting.

Roger Lawrence-Hyde
2nd October 2021.

Finance Committee Report - Pastoral Council Meeting - 5 Oct 2021 David Wilson

Parish Finances

The impact of the COVID pandemic has continued to put pressure on the Parish finances with the day-to-day operating figures showing a deficit of over £10k in the year through to the end of August.

Fortunately, the Gift Aid Tax Rebate and the grants from the Furlough Scheme have offset that deficit and the accounts remain in balance.

Going forward, we will be putting in a further Gift Aid claim, which will help, but the Furlough Scheme has now come to an end and so we will not benefit further from that.


However, as people return to Mass, and, with the introduction of Contactless Giving, there has been a slight improvement in Offertory Income. Also, Hall rental demands are now starting to emerge and, whilst, we do not expect a return to anything approaching pre-COVID use any time soon, we should slowly but surely do better in that area.

Meanwhile, working with Fr Tom, the Finance Committee will continue to monitor the situation and to implement any measures necessary to maintain the health of the Parish finances.

Scout Hut

The Scout Hut has had a refurbishment courtesy of Settle, the NHDC Housing Association Contractor, which has adopted Feed Up Warm Up, which operates its Homeless Drop-In Centre from the Scout Hut, as its charity for 2021. Settle and the Council were also keen to support the Hitchin Pantry service (which as Liz Wills explained at the last PPC meeting) will also operate from the Scout Hut.

David
Chair of Finance Committee
3 Oct 21

Area of Activity Maintenance John Scott	
Activity since last PPC meeting	
<p>Much shorter list this time - covers a month instead of a year.</p> <p>Volunteers are variously compromised so the addressed-snags list is done by contractors and the pending list is growing...</p> <p>Credit is due to Cheryl - who gets much of the task of arranging contractors.</p> <p>I've shown where contractors have been employed , and highlighted where in-house work has either involved significant work or saved us money or distress.</p> <p>### ----- snags addressed -----#</p> <p>Green = task done by contractor Yellow = significant task</p> <p>2809_1/ EC busted door lock made safe (SouthEastSecurity) 2709_1/ replace ParishHouse consumer unit (OliverRussell) 2009_1/ much,much Settle-funded work on ScoutHut (Settle/FUWU) 0209_1/ SquirrelProof ScoutHut roof (Settle)</p>	
Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
Imminent/In-hand repair and catholic-proof the DH Loo < parish > balance hall de-strat fan (Justin?)	

extractor fan in UCR (Oliver ?)
 finish EC door failure (SESecurity ?)
 main gas heating boiler (G&A ?)
 loose handle on living room door Flat2 < parish >
 Get quotes for electrical / safety work (MikeE)
 Re-inspect sacristy corridor roof in rainstorm (js)
*this was stated to be "in hand" a year ago ... haven't found the source of the very occasional drips . have established several bits of structure that aren't leaking **Still outstanding***

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett October 2021

Activity since 2020

Outreach

- Mailshot sent to 1400 parishioners including pastoral letter from Fr Tom, and Cardinal, prayer sheet, request to change to Standing Order, and offered newsletter and / or recording of the Mass to be sent weekly, data sheet for checking to update database and reply paid envelope. They are still coming back 14 months later and it was important to do to reach out to all parishioners
- Set up a buddy system with parishioners who needed help and those who were willing to offer it. Some of the partnerships are still continuing.
- Care homes are now gradually opening up. First service delivered two weeks ago.
- Supported the food provision initiative with Liz Wills getting volunteers to help with driving and delivery of food.
- Attended Landings online to be able to ascertain if we could take it on board in the parish for the Deanery. Also on the Advisory team for Catholic Listeners which is a new telephone helpline services. Hopefully we will be able to have some of our parishioners be a part of the listening team.
- Since we have been opening up we are taking communion to more parishioners – Fr Tom, Euloge, Teresa Hyde, Brenda Pond and Carol Mascarenhas are all visiting parishioners. Teresa is going to train some new parishioners to support the team and we are hopeful that Br Adams will be very involved with visiting also.

Liturgy

- The reintroduction of Mass and the gradual opening up of the church has taken a lot of time and with the help of many parishioners we have been able to fully resume Masses in a covid safe way. To deliver the liturgy we need MCs, Ministers of the Word, Eucharistic Ministers, Stewards and cleaners and everyone has responded to this need. We did not have any offers for the 5pm Mass but will hope to reintroduce that in the next year. The numbers are picking up with over 200 attending this past weekend.
- Exposition reintroduced on Saturday mornings.

- Easter and Christmas services have been supported for two years and we are hopeful for some return to normality this year. We hope to have the church without tape for the start of the new Liturgical year but this will be dependent on the numbers of virus cases locally.
- Lent groups were held on line via Zoom and Scripture reflection was offered online after Easter and now Eucharistic services are being held face-to-face with some attending online via Zoom at the same time.
- The meditation groups are now meeting on Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings.
- The choir and music group jointly worked throughout the past year to support the liturgy in the church and recorded 286 hymns which will continue to be very useful to support the liturgy in many ways. We are very grateful to all involved for the wonderful music they have created.
- We are hoping to reintroduce Children's Liturgy starting at Advent but it will be in a different format until we have more children and members of the liturgy team.

Other support

- Managed the Covid response in the church for 18 months and still continuing to do so.
- Managed the health and safety inspection with the support of Cheryl, Liz and Louise Mahon – ably supported by John Scott getting many things sorted in time for the inspection.
- Fr Tom has asked me to be the parish representative for the Synod Pathway. First event is on 16th October. Full reporting to all the parish council after that.
- Involved with Wintershall last year with the Nativity walk and the Parables of Christ in the summer. Am in the Nativity this year and scripture drama has started up again and I have delivered my first assembly.
- Hoping to support Offley School with its RE delivery. Am encouraging all churches in CTH to support their RE with suitable resources.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives completed from last report

Who

Objectives set

Who

Communicate the requirements of the Synod to all the parish effectively.

Trish

Area of Activity GDPR – Trish Bonnett October 2021

Activity since last PPC meeting

- Two updates for the GDPR Master document have been undertaken.
- The update on the database is still being undertaken. We started with over 1400 family names and are now down to 1230 family names. 385 family names have been qualified. Everyone was written to but we have not had responses from everyone and we still need

to check. It is time consuming but hoping to do more of it now that Matthew is back to help us again.

- We have been maintaining track and trace details as thoroughly as we have been required. There have been no calls for details from the track and trace service.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives completed from last report

Who

The Audit process is now on going.

TB

Objectives set

Who

Sacramental Co-ordinator report Rob Hitchcock

Since the last meeting the sacramental life of the parish has continued despite all the trials and tribulations of COVID. We are on the verge of starting the third set of programmes that I will oversee

FHC

Last year's programme was provided through a variety of platforms from Online to face-to-face and even Hybrid at some points, in total we had 29 candidates. The course had 6 sessions the first half was dedicated to teachings on

1 Reconciliation starting with Original Sin

2 The Mercy of God (New testament & The Divine Mercy Chapel Devotion)

3 How to go to Confession

The second half

4 God speaks with Power- Food Miracles in the Bible

5 The Mass- Looks at the parts of the Mass with a particular focus on Transubstantiation

6 being like Jesus- Vocation & Discipleship

The celebration of the children's 1st confession was a wonderful experience to witness. The children were grouped and given timeslots this allowed for people to move around freely. All three priests were present to help celebrate the sacrament. Whilst the children were waiting for one of the priests to become available the children and their parents were encouraged to take a moment of reflection in front of The Blessed Sacrament which was exposed. The parents were encouraged to take the offer to celebrate the sacrament as a witness to their child. Once the children had celebrated their sacrament and had completed their penance, they received a candle which they took to the alter to light it and leave it in front of The Blessed Sacrament. The celebration of receiving the Eucharist took place in June over three Masses in June. Our Lady's School sent representatives to all the masses.

At the end of the course, I sent an evaluation form to the parents. Ask for their opinions about how they felt the course had gone. There was a small response with mixed opinions, some were happy with the content others were not. However, all those who had expressed negative opinions all highlighted the same item as a negative, this was useful. The negative was the use of 'The Divine Mercy' devotion. The point of this was to introduce the various devotions and variety ways of praying. What the evaluation highlighted was that the parents of our children are not well formed enough to pass on their faith to the children. The final question in the evaluation was "do you feel that your child is well prepared?" most people said yes some said no.

To attempt to overcome this barrier I have redesigned the course entirely for coming year. My main objective this year is to work closely with the parents to empower them in their faith to enable them to transmit it to their children. The course will be conducted with monthly meetings

with only the parents during this time we shall a series of Video from 'Sycamore'. Sycamore uses the same format as 'Alpha'. Between the monthly meetings the parents will sit down with their children journeying together through the 'I belong' book. At the next meeting there will be the opportunity to discuss any barriers or difficulties that may have occurred. The first meeting will take place on 21st September.

Confirmation

The confirmation programme this year was successful. For the first time we operated a new programme rather than the usual 'Alpha' course I changed to the 'Sycamore'. The format is the same as Alpha however, it is Portrayed from a catholic perspective. I had a small team of committed Volunteers, although most of them are unable to commit to the forthcoming programme starting January. I desperately need a strong team of people to assist in the delivery of Catechesis in the parish. As most of the people who helped pre covid have fallen away. Much of the course was delivered on zoom, this had its challenges as the candidates did not show their faces however, they did still contribute through zoom's chat function. One or two of the candidates came off mute to voice their opinion. I think that the course will work better in person.

RCIA

The RCIA group have met constantly throughout the pandemic either online or in person. Since the last meeting. The parish has welcomed several candidates who have been received into The Church. we covered a variety of subjects using a variety of materials. The group is going strong and new people joining the group once it resumes after the summer break. The group will restart on Wednesday 15th September 2021.

Marriage prep

The course was moved to an online platform and was run by Jon and Lucy. The next course will be delivered on Saturday 30th October in person. The fee was reduced to £50 for the online platform, now that face-to-face is being resumed I have increased the fee back to £60 per couple.

Baptism preparation

This has taken place over zoom one to one with the parents. The course is a 1hr zoom call that provides the space for the parents to explore their own faith in the context of transmitting the faith. I encourage the parents that they are not on their own and they have the support of the church and school community. The content consists of a short PowerPoint with a video in the middle with discussion questions and finally answering any practical questions that occur. I have been running this session with parents throughout the pandemic. There is a constant flow of parents coming forward to have their child baptised.

Area of Activity Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett October 2021	
Activity since last PPC meeting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All regulated activity has been suspended but will now start doing DBS checks again. Reviewed the Safeguarding Policy statement and is now published on the parish website. Help to review the safeguarding requirements in the new facilities hire contract. 	
Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to do the new Educare modules and encourage all those who are having a DBS check to do the same. 	
Objectives completed from last report	Who
Objectives set	Who

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Educare training to all group leaders and catechists in the parish. Strongly encourage them to register and do modules. 	TB/MG
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Area of Activity Gender Diversity - As I am October 2021
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Activity since last PPC meeting
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group has not met for 18months and no current plans to meet. The website has been updated with information provided by the Westminster LGBT group and Christine Laubin. |
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Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if we still going to put up the banner. |
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Pastoral objectives set in motion since last report	Who
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Pastoral objectives set	Who
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