

All reports for PPC 13th November 2023

Area of Activity Chair's Report Roger Hyde	
Activity since last PPC	
<p>We have moved on a little from the last PPC meeting.</p> <p>Regarding the new build Scout Hut.</p> <p>We received a plan from Laura for the areas that need to be surveyed prior to agreeing the cost of £7000.00 plus VAT to send this project off for full planning approval.</p> <p>We received a quotation from Chinery Land Surveys for a total of £1,600.00 plus VAT. This will give us knowledge of our Parish site which we do not have. (Or cannot be found)</p> <p>Our total spend for this part of the project would be £10,320.00. This will be the sum requested to spend.</p> <p>The steering group will meet with Fr Justin to discuss this expense and for him to apply to Paolo Camoletto directly when approved.</p> <p>There are now forms that need to be completed to go with this request.</p> <p>At our last meeting the question was asked “what to do with the Doris Harris Room” its future and how it can help the Parish.</p> <p>A good discussion at the next meeting.</p> <p>One question I would ask “How can the Pastoral Parish Council be of more help and support to Father Justin and the Parish?”</p>	
Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
Objectives set/Future Events	Who

Area of Activity – Parish Finances and Administration
<p><u>Parish Accounts 2022</u></p> <p>The Diocese Accounts for the year ending 31 Dec 2022 have been signed-off by the Auditors and will be published shortly. Included in the consolidated Diocese Account are all the Parish Accounts including our own which we will publish as soon as the Diocese Accounts are released. Note that, for ourselves, there are no changes to the figures previously reported.to the Council.</p> <p><u>Parish Accounts 2023</u></p> <p>Offertory income is still well down on pre-COVID levels but, with an increase in Mass attendance and a resulting increase in Offertory income, together with receipt of the Gift Aid Tax Rebate (£25K), there has been an improvement in the state of the Parish finances and the accounts through to the end of August show a small in-year surplus of just over £2000 and we expect to net-out at the end of the year with just a small operating deficit.</p> <p>Going forward, that deficit will need to be actively managed, and, to that end, we propose to run a Planned Giving Appeal early next year and we will be looking to increase the Hall hire and other charges in line with cost increases but there are no plans, at present, to start charging Parish Groups for the use of Parish facilities.</p> <p><u>Parish Priest Handover/Takeover</u></p>

As part of the Parish Priest Handover/Takeover process, the Finance Committee, together with Trish and Cheryl, helped put together briefings for Fr Justin to explain the way that the Parish is organised and run.

Parish Insurance

The Parish Insurance Policy has been updated and renewed.

Presbytery Refurbishment

Work to refurbish the Presbytery which included redecorating and fitting new carpets throughout has largely been completed.

Hitchin Pantry

The Hitchin Pantry continues to support 50 or more families every weekend and there is an ongoing need for volunteers including drivers to help with the pick-ups from local supermarkets.

Parish Projects

The Finance Committee continues to provide support and guidance as required to Parish projects notably the Replacement Scout Hut project, for which we await financial approval to move the next stage which is full Planning Approval from NHDC.

Objectives set	Who

Area of Activity LiveSimply (including Justice & Peace)- Ann Milner

Activity since last PPC

OWLS (One World/livesimply) Group: The One World/livesimply group continue to meet approx every 2 months. The next meeting is 27th November. The group met in early September and chose charities to support in 2024. The range of charities include Garden House Hospice, Prisoners of Conscience, Greenpeace, The Jimmy Mizen Foundation (set up after 16 year old Jimmy Mizen was killed in an unprovoked knife attack in London, the foundation aims to support young people across the UK by challenging them to be the change-makers & peace-makers in their local communities) and Cancer Hair Care in Stevenage. As in previous years, charities were chosen to align as far as possible with Pope Francis' Monthly Prayer Intentions.

A successful CAFOD fundraising Quiz event was organised in September and in November we held our AGM with an extremely informative talk being delivered after the business part of the AGM about the work of the Strawberry Hill Overseas and Community Concern (SHOCC) charity which has its primary focus on the advancement of education and works in such diverse place as South Sudan, Tanzania, Guatemala. In addition, Beata Rozycka (the CAFOD staff member who has taken over from Tony Sheen as the CAFOD Representative for the Westminster diocese) came up to the AGM in order to meet membs of the Hitchin parish.

A member of the group participated in the **Pilgrimage for the Planet** in London in September as part of the Season of Creation. Unfortunately, the planned local **Season of Creation Prayer Walk** along the Oughton River had to be cancelled.

Several members of the group continue to help out with the Hitchin Pantry as well as with the Gardening Group which continues to keep parish grounds in good order.

Justice & Peace: A member of the OWLS group participated in the final stage of a **PeacePilgrimage** from Oxford to London which had been organised by Faith Justice. The Pilgrimage joined a silent vigil against the Arms Fair, held at the Excel centre.

Pax Christi International has released a statement about the war in the Holy Land, calling for a ceasefire and a release of hostages. It can be read here:

paxchristi.net/2023/10/18/statement-on-international-humanitarian-law-violations-in-the-holy-land/

Pax Christi England & Wales hold their annual Advent Service on 2nd December at Holy Apostles, Pimlico followed by a Christmas Market with mulled wine and stalls selling Fairtrade and Palestinian crafts and gifts.

Peace Sunday next year is 14th January.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives set/Future Events	Who
27 th November: Next OWLS Meeting	OWLS Team
2 nd December: Pax Christi Advent	Pax Christi
14 th January: Peace Sunday	

Area of Activity Maintenance – John Scott

Activity since last PPC meeting

I show where contractors have been employed , and highlight where in-house work has either involved significant work or saved us money or distress.

Thanks as always to all volunteers ...
can't over-emphasise what a team effort this is.

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

Green = task done by contractor

Yellow = significant task

- 0811_1/ Improve ChristopherHo wifiðernet (jvc)
- 0811_1/ De-chalk water tap in EC (jvc)
- 0811_1/ Repair & mod altar banner support stand (jvc)
- 0811_1/ Hang refurbished 5th Hitchin Scouts signboard inside the Scout Hut (jvc)
- 0711_1/ Trim door in PH to clear super new carpet (js)
- 0611_1/ Bleed air-2 FanRadiators in church so they get hot (me&js)
- 2410_1/ Repair&Repaint DH Room ceiling after water damage (js&pj)
- 2310_1/ Radio microphone lapel 1 transmitter sent to Germany for repair (ME)
- 1710_1/ Tuesday Club: "Gotta wobbly knob here," fixed by jvc
- 1810_1/ Faulty rechargeable battery replaced (ME)
- 1610_3/ (different) Hoover cable fix + remove ingested biro (jvc)
- 1610_2/ Hooks for brooms installed in Link cleaner's cupboard. (jvc)
- 1610_1/ Stopgap repair to ParishHouse mixer shower (js)
- 1510_1/ Rescue church-cleaning vacuum from oblivion (js)
- 1410_2/ Repair Hall Kitchen Door (js&pj)
- 1410_1/ Re-fix soap dispenser in gents (js&pj)
- 1010_1/ Replace mountain of insulation in DH loft space (js)

0910_1/ DH room repair + associated plumbing tidyup (Bakker&Wilson)
 0710_1/ Sort out water butt & gungy gutter (pj & js)
 0610_1/ Change washer on tap in cleaners cupboard (js)
 0310_1/ Change smoke alarm batteries in ChristopherHouse (js)
 0110_1/ Escort asbestos contractor - survey for new quote. (ME)
 2609_1/ Patch-up Hut fabric near rat ingress (js)
 2509_3/ Rat Trap in ScoutHut (js)
 2509_2/ Supply and fit type B RCBO for hall boiler (JustinBarnard)
 Boiler room light rewired, damaged light replaced
 Malfunctioning fused spur switch replaced.
 Seized Frost thermostat removed.
 Lockable Isolator installed.
 2509_1/ Label and trace and Diagnose hall church heating wiring (ME)
 2409_1/ Changed emergency light bulb tubes & ran burn-in sessions(JS ME)
 2309_1/ EC Busted Window Hinge (PJ & JS)
 2109_1/ Obtain and Replace Fan controller (Mike)

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

car park line repainting
 Design and fit new relay box for hall / church heating system.

Objectives set

Who

Objectives set	Who
Imminent :	
Return match with PAT tester possibly 7th December some extension leads and properly test all the fridge extension leads in the scout hut.	Mike
Replace filters on and clean and check each of fan units in church. i.e. service them	Mike/John
Remove asbestos from parish house airing cupboard and boiler cupboard under the stairs awaiting date and price from diocese.	Diocese

Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett November 2023

Activity

Outreach

Asylum Seeker support

We have continued to collect and deliver items to Needham house – primarily winter clothing and toys, also some make-up and nail varnish. We are still responding to individual needs at the Villaire hotel as new residents arrive. This has included giving lifts to two of the girls to school. Several parishioners helped with that.

I attended a Workshop on support for the AS people – focused on the residents who are getting positive decisions to stay in this country – they have less than 28 days from the decision being made to having to leave the hotel and they have to deal with all the agencies themselves. There is a need for hub in the area to provide helpful information to direct them.

Met with Marie-France Rowland to discuss how we can give her better support her with her casework with the AS residents.

- Had a group from the Day centre visit the church and gave them a simple talk about the history of the church.

Parishioner Support

- Helped the parishioner who had been in a refuge to move into her new house. The Thoelkes are being very supportive of her. Her daughter has come over and we secured a Caritas grant to pay for the carpets and a mattress.
- Helped to plan and deliver the Funeral Memorial Mass for Kevin McCalman and the Bring and share lunch after.
- Catholic Listeners Website was launched on 18th October.
- Supported Eric and Doreen and helped with the preparations for Eric's funeral.
- Visited a variety of parishioners to cover for Fr Tom's absence.

Liturgy

- Prepared and delivered In Memoriam service
- Delivered a reader's training course in Our Lady's School
- Prepared and delivered a Peace service and 12 hours of prayer for Peace between Israel and Palestine. Also continuing prayer on Thursday evenings for an hour's exposition.
- Prepared and delivered a harvest service with Fr Andrew at Milford Lodge.

Hitchin Pantry & FUWU

- Liz is hoping to put in a lottery bid for a support working to manage the Pantry.
- The Bishop is coming on 30th November to provide information about Modern slavery.
- Liz ensured there was information provided to the parish about the support for the homeless that the Pantry and FUWU provide.

Other support

- Met with new head at JHN with Fr Justin and Rob.
- Helping to prepare some resources for the FHC programme to support the parents.
- Prepared materials for the Year of the Council course that Fr Tom is delivering.
- Preparing to get approval for the purchase of the new RISO as current one is not well.
- Supporting the process of recruiting for Rob's replacement and contingency planning if we don't get one in time.
- Still in process of clearing the Doris Harris room.
- Attended the presentation about applying for funding through the National Lottery.
- Attempting to order new IT equipment but the IT department appear to be permanently out to lunch. Will continue to pursue.

Objectives set	Who
2. Preparing and Delivering a presentation of recruiting volunteers in the parish for a Caritas online workshop.	TB
3. Sort a Mass for Ashwood place	TB
4. Deliver Scripture drama at Ashwood place	TB
5. Need to put in a bid for Warm Spaces grants	TB

Area of Activity Sacramental Co-ordinator – Rob Hitchcock 2023

Activity

Firstly, I want to say that this will be my last report for the council as you may have read in the parish newsletter this weekend that I am leaving the parish after almost 4yrs of service. My final day in the parish will be Friday 22ND December. I am moving on to a similar role in Sacred Heart Parish, Wimbledon, in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

FHC

This year's formation for the children has got off to a positive start. The next session is tomorrow. There are 23 children.

Confirmation

Registrations are due to be opened to start recruiting for the new co-hort. I am still waiting to hear back from Maura McBride (Bhp Paul's PA) as to when he has agreed to visit the parish for confirmation I had requested a mid-September date. I had planned to include a day retreat at SPEC centre (Waxwell Farm) I have made contact with them it was agreed to continue the discussion in January as I would know the group size.

Baptism

Next Baptism course should be in February. The last one in October was very well received there were 10 couples in attendance.

Marriage

The October marriage course had 11 couples who all gave positive feedback. The next one is 4th May

RCIA

The group is made up of 1 person who has recently joined he is not baptised.

Schools

My work with both the parish schools continues to grow. I am in and out of OLS helping and advising as best as possible and my work with JHN is still very new but is very positive. I am

working with the school to appoint a Chaplin this is in its very early stages. Myself, Trish and Fr Justin have met with the new head he is very open to us being present in the school.

Area of Activity Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett September 2023

Activity

The DBS checks are beyond slow and the lack of effective communication is frustrating. Nothing more to be said.