

St Hugh of Lincoln, Letchworth Garden City

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting 9 July 2014, 8pm, Fortescue Hall

Present: Fr Jimmy, Alan Scouller (Acting Chair), Ann-Marie Palmer (Secretary), Peter Spreckley, Ian Hunt, Jacquie Maddison, Cliff Marshall, Patsy Marshall, Maureen Hogbourne, Julie Cranston, Alex Rebello, David Legg, Angela Scouller, Pauline Doran, Terry Benson, Sue Card, Philippa Nuttall, Angela Spreckley, Jackie Quinn, Frank Nuttall, Hedy Fletcher, Sr Joan, Trish Haines, Bob Haines, John Cataldo, Adam McConnell-Smith, Antonia McConnell-Smith, Jo Thornton, Mary Allott, Joan Keogh, Morag Fryer, Alan Ryan, Helen Taylor

Apologies: Mary Elvin, Phil Clarke

Fr Jimmy opened the meeting with a prayer.

Fr Jimmy advised that unfortunately Phil Clarke was unable to attend and that Alan Scouller had kindly agreed to Chair in his absence. The meeting was handed over to the Chair.

Before moving onto the agenda Alan took the opportunity to thank Fr Jimmy, Eucharistic Ministers and the whole parish for their prayers and support during his recent surgery. Thank you also to Churches Together.

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held 26 February

Approved.

Matters arising

- DBS (CRB) Checks – Phil will follow up at the next meeting.
- The approval at the last meeting of the Parish Pastoral Constitution was noted and the Chair reminded the meeting that the Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body and a two way communication channel. He explained the meaning and scope of the term consultation.

Any Other Business

- The Chair asked the meeting if there were any urgent matters to be raised under ‘Any Other Business’ and it was confirmed that there were no additional items.

ACTION

Phil Clarke

Financial Report

- The Chair advised that having seen the financial position in the last minutes as at the end of 2013 at approx £15,000, he had been concerned and had requested the up-to-date financial position be put to the Council. Before handing over to Ian Hunt he drew attention to the Diocesan policy over finance matters and compliance with Charity Law.

Ian handed out a copy of income and expenditure statements, with the highlights being:

- Collections have been static at approx £91,000 for the last 3 years.
- An increase in Mass attendance has shown no impact on income.
- The Polish community have been approached and they leave approx 1/3rd of their collection for St Hugh’s, the rest for the priest / Polish ministry.
- Fr Seamus used to retain all of the stipends but Fr Jimmy decided these should go through parish records and he would take a salary. 2013 is the first full year for this.
- An amount of just under £10,000 from Gift Aid will be received later this year.
- Total income for the year running at £120,000 / £46,000 year to date.
- Routine expenditure running at £105,000 pa / £45,000 year to date.
- Some health and safety work needs to be undertaken eg car park.

Finance Report (cont)

Forecasts to 2018

- Income conservative and assumed no increase.
 - Inflation given as 5% - pessimistic view (although everything would not increase by 5%). Bank of England suggest inflation will increase by 1 – 3% over the next 5 years.
 - Net recurring income of £15,000 at the end of 2013 rising to £65,000 by the end of 2018.
 - Diocesan recommendation is for reserves of 50% of expenditure, ie approximately £55,000
 - Largest expenditure being: Diocesan assessment £27,000 (which cannot change)
Salaries (Administrator the biggest cost)
Gas / Electric **
Water / Insurance
- ** looked for alternatives and made some savings but a big bill in April as it had been estimated for some time.*
- Ian advised that the Finance Committee looked to review the role of the administrator with a view to volunteers undertaking some of the work. The meeting were advised that a volunteer was already in place to take on the finance duties. Ian advised that the Diocese were being consulted in how to manage this process.
 - Need to look at ways to increase income. To keep the administrator on the current 20 hours we would need to increase income by £7,000 to net £5,000 – a weekly amount of £135 per week (10% increase).

The meeting were advised that Peter Spreckley (PS) had been asked to review the figures ahead of the meeting to give an independent / alternate view with some of the highlights being:

- PS advised the meeting that himself, Cliff Marshall and Frank Callis had met with Fr Jimmy following the decision to cut the hours of the administrator as they had concerns over the position.
- PS advised that some considerable work had gone into producing the figures but as per the Parish Constitution the PPC should be advised re the health (or otherwise) of the finances.
- Little opportunity to make cost savings.
- Offertory has been about the same.
- Gift Aid / Standing Orders have been static with the majority of parishioners who Gift Aid paying by Standing Order. There are many parishioners who use the planned giving envelopes who could Gift Aid with no additional cost to themselves.
- Expenditure to date is £2,000 ahead of this time last year.
- The forecasts for 2014 – 2018 show no increase in income which is unrealistic and we need to look at options to increase income. We have undertaken the GIF initiative but the Diocesan GIF office can offer assistance here.
- Repairs / renovations – work / urgency – delay for a matter of months? Significant difference in surplus in the short term.
- Why did the Diocese approve a large capital expenditure when they knew that Growing in Faith would restrict the short term ability to increase income / flat growth for the next two years.
- Must increase Gift Aid with a focussed strategy.
- In summary St Hugh's have had it too good for too long. We have completed a number of major works (eg sound system, new Sanctuary, Church Hall renovation, Presbytery renovation) with no significant fund raising (there was a large legacy in 2011 of £74,000)
- £15,000 in the bank at the end of 2013 is too small. Forecast to increase to £65,000 by the end of 2018 but this could be reached earlier with a focus on increasing income and delaying capital expenditure.
- Peter thanked Fr Jimmy for the opportunity to respond.

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| <p>The Chair explained that in Chairing the meeting impartially account had to be taken of the requirements of Diocesan Policy and Canon Law. He then asked the meeting for questions / comments concerning the finance report, with the following points being raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cliff Marshall reconfirmed that looking at our peer group comparison, our expenditure was in line but our recurring income is approx £123,000 against our peer group of £140,000. • What has changed since appointing the Parish Administrator at 20 hours per week in March 2013? <i>When the decision was made at the end of 2012/2013 the flat lining income was not apparent for a number of reasons.</i> • If we cannot afford the Administrator, why has the cleaner been approached for an extra 2 hours per week to clean the hall when this has always been done by a volunteer? <i>There was some question over insurance when cleaning the hall but Ian did confirm that the volunteer avenue had not been considered and this was something that could possibly be looked at.</i> • David Legg advised that it was extremely difficult to increase income from Gift Aid, particularly given that 40% of the parish have pledged to Growing in Faith. Also that routine capital expenditure had been pushed back but there were some issues which needed to be addressed due to health and safety issues. • PS advised that the GIF office have confirmed that other parishes have seen success in income campaigns within 6 months of Growing in Faith. • There was a strong view that the role of the Administrator is working well and is crucial to the smooth running of the parish. The decision to cut the hours was seen as short sighted. • With many parishioners working full time, securing regular, reliable volunteers was seen to be difficult. • The role is very much seen as an essential support to Fr Jimmy. With the sensitivity of many of the issues arising in the parish office, it was felt that continuity was essential and a volunteer is not the same as a person known to parishioners. • The question was raised whether we should have a fundraising committee within the parish; we have had one in the past and raised £100,000 and this helped build a strong parish community. • If we are to look at fundraising / increase in Gift Aid we must take action sooner rather than later. • Summing up, the Chair noted that the numbers at Mass at the weekends had increased by more than 200 between 2012 and 2013 but there had been no increase in total collections. Collections needed to be increased. He advised the meeting that it is not Fr Jimmy's job to ask for more money but the appeal should be undertaken by the laity. The Finance Committee should consider the points made by the Parish Council when advising Fr Jimmy who had the responsibility for making decisions. | |
| <p><u>Update on Growing in Faith / Parish Priest's Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fr Jimmy reiterated to the meeting that GIF is a standalone project and completely separate to parish finances. • GIF is made up of 3 areas – Priests, Caritas and Parish Projects. • It costs £25,000 per year to train a priest over 4, 6 or 7 years. • The number of retired priests is increasing with 40% of active priests due to retire in the next 20 years. • Our Parish project is to be a new Catechetical room. • As at 8 June we have received 164 pledges totalling £311,733 (including Gift Aid). A participation rate of 41% of the parish. Our target was £160,000 with our stretch target to enable us to undertake the parish project of £250,000. | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The architect for our parish project is Colin Smart Associates and Colin Smart will attend a meeting of the Premises Committee in September. Fr Jimmy ran through 3 options that had been suggested for the design of the room and there will be a presentation to the parish in the autumn. Groups in the parish will be consulted on their “wish list” for the new room. • The project has been passed by the GIF Diocesan team. • Ballpark figure of £100,000 for the works. • The amount of work involved in the administration of the Growing in Faith initiative was considerable and Fr Jimmy thanked Ann-Marie for undertaking this on behalf of the parish. | |
| <p><u>Choral Requiem Mass</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patsy Marshall approached the meeting with regard to the possibility of having a Choral Requiem Mass in November to commemorate the World War I Centenary. A similar Mass had been held when Fr Kevin was parish priest. It was felt this was a good idea. <p>Action: Patsy to take forward.</p> | <p>Patsy Marshall</p> |
| <p><u>Christmas Fayre & Raffle</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry Benson advised the meeting that the Parish Christmas Fayre and Raffle would return this year and would be held on Saturday 6th December. • The KSC have traditionally organised the event but Terry advised that support had been reducing in recent years and in fact was not held in 2013. Terry advised that they are hoping for the format to be reviewed and they will be looking for names of helpers after the meeting. • Julie Cranston advised that the St Thomas More PA had offered to help last year and she was sure they would help this year if needed. The idea of a change of venue to St Thomas More was mentioned and this was approved. <p>Action: Julie to approach the school re hosting the Christmas Fayre / confirming the date.</p> | <p>Julie Cranston</p> |
| <p><u>Hall Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacquie Maddison raised the question of how long it takes to have repairs undertaken in the hall and the fact that the delays have led to lost bookings. • Some ideas suggested were a reports book or a white board, where any jobs could be recorded and checked once a week for action. • Frank Nuttall confirmed that he was able to supply a list of trade supplies, eg plumbers. <p>Action: Jacquie to provide a list of any outstanding work.</p> | <p>Jacquie Maddison</p> |
| <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fr Jimmy mentioned the request that had been made at the last meeting regarding hanging a picture of the Mother of Czestochowa in the Lady Chapel. Fr Jimmy advised that he could not see a problem with this and was going to suggest a joint Polish / English Mass to be held on 15 August (the Solemnity of the Assumption). <p>Action: Fr Jimmy to approach Fr Gregory.</p> <p>Fr Jimmy closed the meeting with a prayer.</p> | <p>Fr Jimmy</p> |

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 Certified a true record by the Chairman

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 Date

Next meeting: Wednesday 12th November 2014, 8pm