

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (JPPC)

Held at St John the Evangelist Church, Mill End
8th September 2025 @ 7.30pm

| In Attendance: | Apologies: |
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| Father Andrew Gallagher | David Kendrick |
| Richard Booth | |
| Ben Sadler | |
| David Kendrick | |
| Father Dom Matokovic | |
| Sheila Harrington | |
| Hannah Power | |
| Elaine Price | |
| Dee Vanstone | |
| Eddie O'Sullivan | |
| Peter Kuncewicz | |
| Paula Castree | |
| Margaret Simon (Youth Group representative) | |

1. Welcome and Prayer

Richard welcomed everyone to the 35th JPPC meeting. Father Andrew opened with a time of prayer.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes – 16th June 2025

- i) Updates to the Parish website have continued to be applied.
- ii) Fr Andrew advised that the Government Legislation in relation to the Crime and Policing Bill discussed at the previous meeting had been agreed by the House of Commons, now awaiting approval at the House of Lords. He encouraged all to continue to discuss this matter with our MPs and in the wider community.
- iii) On Saturday 6th September, the March For Life took place in London. This was attended by some from the parish and the feedback from parishioners at the event was positive.
- iv) Brass on The Grass took place once more on Sunday 13th July. As well as the 50+ volunteers who helped with the set up on the previous day (made up of

families as well as individuals), there were 380 attendees on the day itself! The event was very successful, and was featured on the Diocese website and Instagram feeds, as well as an article in 'The Tablet'. It was encouraging to note that there were attendees who were not parishioners, but who came from afar to join the celebration. Fr Andrew has a feedback/debrief meeting in two weeks time to reflect on the successes.

- v) The Jubilee Westminster Way joint parishes event took place on Saturday 6th September (which was the same day as the March for Life). It was again well attended with 50-60 people in attendance and taking part in this pilgrimage in the Jubilee year. Fr Andrew reflected that a walking pilgrimage was part of the JPPC Parish 5 year plan!
- vi) The upcoming Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walshingham is taking place on 20th September. The parishes of Watford and Croxley as well as our own three parishes have a 37 seater coach which is now nearly full.

3. Discipleship & Evangelisation

Fr Andrew outlined that the SLT team now each have individual pathways which they will focus on with him.

The Chosen – The Chosen screenings will begin once more on a Friday evening from October.

Kairos – Anne Lorrimer-Roberts had been seeking assistance in presenting this course to parishioners. The online catechesis had become increasingly popular during the pandemic where people were unable to leave home and also had a good attendance from those who are housebound. However it has been difficult to find the help for Anne, and Fr Andrew having spoken with her about it has suggested that maybe this group has come to a natural end after the two final scheduled meetings. It would be good to start this once again in the future if there was the demand.

Young Adults Group – A date of 16th October is in the diary for a YA meeting. The ideal would be for the group to meet monthly. Fr Dom has been compiling a list of suggested parishioners who may be interested in attending, and the list is currently around 12/15 people. The plan would be to meet, starting with a prayer and on a more formal basis. Then moving on to introductions, then maybe a quiz and then moving on to a pub. The idea is that if the group starts with a more formal discussion or thought around prayer and faith, it stops it from becoming more watered down from a faith perspective. The ideal would be for the group to continue to grow and invite further discussion. It was noted that there are more young people moving to the area, and attending masses in our parishes which would positively impact this group.

Baptisms – Fr Dom shared that there are a good number of families coming to the bi-monthly baptism classes, with 6 families attending the September date, and with around 50% continuing to come to Mass afterwards.

RCIA – Fr Andrew advised that there are 2 candidates already to start in December, as well as one more person who may also wish to begin the process. It will also be advertised in the parishes as we get closer to the start date.

Men's Groups - A men's group is in the early stages of being set up and arranged. This happens at other parishes, and there have been inquiries as to if this could be set up. Francis Holly is looking into this and will take forward. The Catholic Women's League is also gathering momentum.

History of Salvation – Fr Dom discussed that he would like to arrange a series of talks between Advent and Lent of around 8/9 weeks where he would explore the History of Salvation, so that attendees could be immersed and really understand that our journey is parallel to that of those to whom God has revealed himself. He would also consider using the scriptures, to improve knowledge and understanding. These would run possibly on Sunday evenings. Linking to this, Eddie told us about a tour he had been on the previous week of The British Museum. This was a five hour private tour which explored the history of the Bible, and the artefacts contained in the museum around this. We discussed that this may feed on well from the studies in the History of Salvation, and that Fr Dom may in fact know someone who may be able to arrange such a tour (possibly a condensed version) for parishioners.

Parish Cell Groups – Richard advised he is struggling to arrange to discuss this with Beatrix to move this forward. Have agreed to move this area forward at the SLT discussions around Discipleship & Evangelisation.

Alpha – The new Alpha season begins on 15th September, with 15 people confirmed and signed up to begin. Richard also advised that there are sufficient number of helpers to ensure the course runs smoothly. There are new faces to the parish who have signed up, as well as an increase in uptake amongst younger people.

Richard shared that Joanne Kenny had been to Canada to the birthplace of Alpha at St Benedicts, and had in fact obtained the contact details for the person there who set up Alpha and who runs in from its origins. Richard is planning to have a Zoom meeting with this person, and explained that they run Alpha courses pretty much back to back and have constant interest in the programme. We discussed that the ideal would be to have more than one season of Alpha per annum, and by publicising the course through regular banners and through QR codes/information at the Community Stall, there could be a continued interest list which would be used throughout the year.

Community Faith Stall – The Faith Stall continues to attract positive growth. There are many churches joining the stall from the area, and there are a good number of people engaging with the stall, and with enthusiasm. More people are speaking to the team on the stall, and engaging as well as increasing the profile of the parish. It will also advertise other parish activities such as the warm winter spaces which will make a return later in 2025.

GIFT – The new year of GIFT begins on Saturday 13th September. Families continue to sign up and join the programme. Fr Andrew advised that there are around 20 children in the process of making their First Holy Communion at any one time. He also advised that he will

be using a new programme for the parent's sessions which are run alongside the family activities. This programme is called 'The Catholic Parent', and will continue to assist those parents journeying through GIFT with their families.

4. Youth Ministry

Margaret shared that the games played at Brass on the Grass which were organised by the Youth Team were well received, and worked well as they were split by ages.

She shared that there has been a Diocesan competition for which the Youth Group submitted an Art entry. The closing date for the competition is still some time away (November 2025), but regardless of the outcome, could the artwork itself be shared throughout 2026 across the three parishes so that everyone can see the work.

Margaret advised that two new year seven students had already signed up to the Youth Group, and that Fr Dom has promised to design more quizzes for them to enjoy!

The group want to arrange some events at the Church, such as Fairtrade, and Margaret thought that maybe arranging lanyards for the young people involved would be a good way to indicate their involvement.

Margaret also wanted to expand on displaying the youth group activities across the parishes to drive more interest. Fr Andrew advised that he had given the use of the noticeboard at St. John the Evangelist to St. John's school but that they had not really made use of the space. Maybe he could leave this noticeboard for the youth group or possibly for GIFT. Margaret then also asked about using the parishes social media, and Fr Andrew advised the legalities of what is needed in order to use details of any young people.

i) Youth Choir

Following on from 3 of the previous 7 children in the choir leaving after the summer, Fr Andrew has now arranged a new time for the choir to meet at Mill End; Tuesdays at 3.30pm with a start time of 3:45pm, until 4:45pm. Fr Andrew will run the choir for now, and a mum from GIFT has agreed to play the piano for the choir at the regular masses they sing at. Hannah advised that the choir had been advertised on the school WhatsApp groups, and Fr Andrew advised that he had 10 children who indicated they would come to the first practice. If numbers continue to increase, he would look to fill the role as an employed role, however many people are based in London who would be interested in the role. It was also suggested that such a position could also be advertised within the parish, or within ASCAT, and also that it may be an idea to consider exploring the topic with music staff at Joan of Arc.

ii) ASCAT Post- Confirmation Discipleship

Deacon Liam's vision for the ASCAT parishes and trust to have a long term post-confirmation pathway. At the most recent event in July, there were 314 attendees, and there is another event planned for October. Fr Andrew & Fr Dom continue to mention to those children who would engage with attending events.

iii) Lourdes Red Caps

Paula advised us that the group of young people who went to Lourdes earlier in the year were positive about the event. The challenge is to maintain what you have learnt and experienced at Lourdes when you get home, and to keep in contact with the friends made in faith. Paula discussed the possibility of hosting 'get togethers' for those who had returned, so that they can keep in contact and continue their faith journey.

Thanks was given to the parishes for the fundraising efforts which allowed the young people to visit. Another suggestion was that maybe the young people could come to mass or to the various youth groups to speak to others about their experiences.

5. Liturgy & Worship

i) Altar Servers

Fr Dom advised that he has arranged new Altar Server training sessions in September to invite more children to be Altar Servers. Fr Andrew also noted that the Altar Servers are continuing their service for longer, and that there is a good level of experience as older teenagers are continuing to serve as they get older, and are getting more involved in the masses.

ii) Adult Choir

Fr Andrew noted that he would like to increase the number of adults involved in singing in the choir. It has been discussed that a good way to improve engagement may be to arrange a 'Come along and Sing!' day where people could get a taster of the choir, and this is in the early stages of being arranged.

6. Faith in Action

Jo Rodriguez is the SLT who is managing this area.

i) Community Lunch

The next Community Lunch is scheduled for 21st September

ii) Caritas Meeting

Jo and Fr Andrew plan to meet with Caritas Westminster on 17th September. Fr Andrew referenced a meeting with a previous Caritas representative last year was very good at the time but the follow up from the representative was poor and the promised materials and information was not delivered. The hope is that this meeting with the new representative will encourage discussion around how they can support our parishes and ideas for the parishes to undertake also.

iii) Community/Family Breakfasts

It was commented that an idea to draw in families after mass would be to have a family breakfast after Sunday mass. We considered that re-starting the bacon\sausage sandwiches may be a way to draw in people, as well as discussing that it could be an idea which the

young people of the parishes (through the Youth Ministry) could help out or assist, as they also used to do at the community lunches.

On this topic but in a broader sense, it was also considered that a Community breakfast not linked to mass could be arranged, and could be advertised in the area to those of all faiths to widen the invitation and increase the number of people who could come. Although Fr Andrew was happy to consider this and potentially move forward with it, he felt that more thought needs to be given to who the specific target audience would be for this kind of event.

iii) Young People between 14-18

It was acknowledged that there is potentially space for post-confirmation events. Children age 14-18 are difficult ages to reach and to engage with for Church events. There have been ideas discussed previously but the take-up of these has historically been low, and the relationships hard to nurture. It is something that we would like to continue to discuss and keep thinking of ideas of how to engage this age group (computer gaming nights?) and is something to continue to think of and lay the stepping stones for. It is difficult for that age as can be awkward, and is important to have something engaging which these people can stay engaged with or even come back to the Church for.

Peter suggested that we could use the influence of Saint Carlo Acutis and his use of technology to reach out and appeal to the younger generation.

We also heard about a youth group at Hillside which is run by St. Andrews and although no first-hand experience of it, Dee had heard good things from her son and Fr Andrew also knows that their youth group has a good turn-out. Fr Andrew has met with the vicar and this could allow us to get good ideas for our parishes, but he also advised that St. Andrews has a far bigger number of staff and full-time employees who can work on such things which is not the same resources we have.

Parish Development Plan – Evangelisation

Father Andrew reminded us that Evangelisation is us reaching out and sharing our faith with others and this forms the basis for the plan.

Richard advised that he speaks regularly to the Evangelisation wider team.

It was agreed that the Marian Novena was well received last year, but will most likely return in 2026, rather than 2025 due to timings.

Unify in the local area – Fr Andrew advised that St. Peters had only just appointed a vicar after twelve months without one, and so Fr Andrew will meet with them in due course. However, he does have regular meetings with other faith leaders in the area, and the faith stall continues to be a good way to come together with other faiths.

Church events – We discussed the potential to join with other events, and the success of Detonate (the summer youth camp run in the first week of the holidays) was commended.

Inspiring people to spread the faith – This continues through GIFT where last year we had 3 candidates for RCIA, and also the Alpha courses continue to give attendees confidence to discuss their faith with the wider community.

Our Lady’s repository – leaflets have been bought out into the porch of Our Lady’s, as the Chess Valley walk sees a large footfall of people walking past the Church. Fr advised that sometimes people will go into the Church and stop a while, and so the information in the porch is readily available whilst the Church is open.

Understanding the Mass leaflets – whilst initially these were to be aimed at the younger generation of parishioners, there is a good take-up of these on a regular basis from those of all ages, and these continue to be produced and appreciated by all.

Updates to the plan as follows:

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| 6 months | <p>Consider a group of people from in and out of the parish community who would look to evangelise, brainstorming different ideas and considering ways to reach out to the wider community.</p> <p>Cell Groups – to have these started at the latest by Easter at the end of the RCIA programme and possibly as a follow on from Alpha.</p> <p>Men’s Groups – possibly would form from a Cell group, or could be the first of the Cell Groups with others following on.</p> <p>Advent leaflets with mass times/services to be encouraged to be handed out by parishioners or displayed on local community event boards. Could also be taken forwards to Easter.</p> <p>Quiz Night – Ben & Peter are arranging for 25th October 2025.</p> <p>Carol Singing – possibly with other Churches in the areas. We joined with St. Peters two years ago, and such an event does need permissions.</p> |
| 12 months | <p>Corpus Christi event in Watford – could we become more involved (possibly was just a Jubilee year event)</p> <p>Looking into getting a stall at the Chorleywood Summer Fair Day – this year it clashed with Brass on the Grass. Possibly as an addition to the Community Faith Stall.</p> <p>Introduce a weekday evening Mass in Advent/ Lent for those who are working.</p> |
| 5 years | <p>Increase the number of Alpha courses, possibly to two per year.</p> |

Any Other Business

i) Residential Homes presence

Fr Dom confirmed that he has been to local care homes and that they are happy to welcome him in. There has been no response to the details he has left with them, and although the impact from this has been limited, he is confident that they know that Fr Andrew & Fr Dom are present in the community.

ii) Senior Leadership Team

Discussions around the missional prayer journey, and a weekly meeting to ensure that prayer is behind everything that they as a group do. There may be the potential to add in prayer ministries for the parishes in varying forms over time.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 1st December 2025 @ 7.30pm Venue: The Presbytery at Our Lady's,
Rickmansworth