

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

Held at Our Lady Help of Christians, Rickmansworth  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 @ 7.30pm

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

### 1. Welcome and Prayer

Ben chaired the meeting in absentia of Richard. Ben welcomed everyone to the 36<sup>th</sup> JPPC meeting. Father Andrew then opened with a prayer.

### 2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025

- i) The parish pilgrimage to Walsingham took place on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025. There was a full coach of parishioners who attended, mainly from our three parishes. It was a long day, but very successful and Fr Andrew outlined that he would look to do the trip again.

### 3. Discipleship & Evangelisation

The Chosen – The Chosen screenings will finish with the Christmas episode on 6<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm. The attendees have become a cohesive group who are enjoying watching as a group, and Fr Dom advised that they will look to start the next season in 2026.

Young Adults Group – The group has met twice since the last JPPC meeting. There have been around 10-12 attendees, and the meetings have tended to have a structure of a more formal discussion and group chat, before moving to less formal entertainment in the pub! Ben and Fr Dom discussed that they are considering how best to take this forward as a group, continuing to have discussions and voicing opinions as well as receiving advice. There are attendees from each of the different parishes, and who are at different life stages. In addition some have just completed and some are about to begin RCIA, and the group is working on becoming a support network and bringing people together.

Baptisms – Fr Dom shared that he continues to meet with families in their own homes if they express an interest in Baptism, which he feels can make the families more comfortable and makes the first discussions more informal than meeting in the presbytery. The discussions with the families is around them being catholic and continuing in their faith, rather than solely looking for baptism, to encourage continued participation after baptism. The courses continue to run bi-monthly.

RCIA – Fr Andrew gave an update and there are now 6 participants in the RCIA group, with another starting next week. There are four catechists who are involved in helping, and the profile of the attendees currently is mainly younger participants who are either returning to faith, or beginning their journey. Fr Andrew also outlined that more participants can join later in the course if there is additional interest.

Men's Groups - A meeting has been scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to finalise the details of the men's group – what it would look like, how to involve other parishes, and when to begin. Fr Andrew outlined that similar groups in other parishes he knows about are thriving, and whilst this idea has mainly been driven by Chorleywood, they would like for all parishes to be a part of the group.

History of Salvation – Fr Dom confirmed that the series of talks that he will be leading will start on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026, after 6pm Sunday Mass at Our Lady's. He intends to introduce each topic, discuss the associated scriptures, have a two-way dialogue around this, and then to advise how these give direction to us in our current lives. Fr Dom was keen to note that parishioners can understand The Bible, but it is key to the understanding that this is not just wise sayings, but in fact God is talking to us through the words. He advised that this is mainly directed at adults, but feels young adults from 15 years old could also attend. Each session will be one hour, and the series will finish the week before Palm Sunday.

Parish Cell Groups – Discussions continue around the best way to structure these, and they may be re-named 'Life groups' which will involve meeting and prayer. Discussed that it may be that those finishing Alpha who form the basis of a group which would then continue and grow from there.

Community Faith Stall – David updated us on the stall. He said that it continues to go well, although didn't want us to be under the illusion that it is being snowed under. Many people walk by, and people stopping can be hit and miss, sometimes taking a long time for people to approach. It is a slow process. He outlined that St. Mary's are very active on the stall and generally in the community. He gave an example of them giving out knitted angels to children, but some parents not allowing them to be taken – almost being scared of the religion element of the stall. On that note, both Fr Andrew and Hannah outlined that on the Facebook pictures of the event which are posted after each date, the faith stall is never shown. The Churches together signage along with details of The Chosen and the Advent Mass Times will be used at the next market which is on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

GIFT – The latest GIFT had 28 children attending, and entire families are continuing to attend both the active sessions, and the parent Zoom sessions (where more often both parents are attending). The parent's Zoom session builds on from the family sessions, and helps families to understand how to pray as a family. Fr Andrew also outlined that the new resources that

are being used are realistic for family life. At the last family session, Fr Andrew welcomed a priest from Islington, who came to observe as he wanted to take this in to his own parish.

#### **4. Youth Ministry**

Fr Dom discussed the youth group, and advised that he is meeting with the catechists who are involved in this to find the direction they want the group to move in. Currently there are around 11/12 attendees, all girls, from years 7,8 & 9. Not all attendees come to mass regularly or at all, and Fr Dom said it helps children from all types of family set ups at home. He has arranged a format where at each meeting, they consider one commandment (of commandments 3-7 mainly), and then ask three questions to the group: 1. What do people around them say about this commandment, 2. What do they think about it (all attendees have to answer, which is also good for everyone's engagement), 3. What does the Church say about it (this is answered by Fr Dom/catechists. Fr Dom said this works very well, and encourages fierce discussions and really gets the young people interested.

The youth group is important for the children to help understand that what they hear or are told by others is just another way of discussing the topic, and not necessarily fact, and therefore exposing them to the understanding that the teachings of the Church is a good way to improve communication, and not just being told 'you must not...' in every scenario. For example, discussion around the fact that what is seen/reported in the media is a point of view, and this can be misunderstood as fact, and it is important to have various inputs to be able to understand what is being discussed.

Fr Andrew then went on to tell us that the youth group had entered the Diocesan Art Competition, and came runners up! Plans will be to show this artwork around each of the parishes as this is great news.

##### **i) Youth Choir**

Fr Andrew now has 12 regular attendees to the choir, and they have sung at several masses, including the most recent Youth Mass.

An advert for the role was run, and there were two applicants, but unfortunately they pulled out. The advert runs until 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Fr Andrew explained that there are children in the choir who do not usually come to mass, and the events where they sing at mass are reaching families who would not normally come to mass to attend.

##### **ii) Pre-school Children**

A discussion was had at high level around involving those who have children of pre-school or toddler age. Most meeting attendees with children had been to a toddler group run at Our Lady's over many years, however this does not currently run.

Fr Andrew also discussed that there is a version of GIFT which is for toddlers, and runs once a month. Maybe something that long term can be considered.

### **iii) ASCAT Post- Confirmation Discipleship**

The most recent Ignite event was cancelled, but new dates are being set for 2026, and these will be communicated to those who would engage with attending events, as well as in the newsletter.

### **iv) Lourdes Red Caps**

Paula shared the news that the youth group who attended Lourdes were nominated for a Love in Action award, for which the ceremony took place in Westminster Hall. Our group won the award which was fantastic news.

Paula said it was a great opportunity for the group to get back together, and Deacon Liam has asked those involved to be part of an assembly at their schools. Paula's son is a Catholic Leader at JOA, with the aim of highlighting the work and involvement of younger people in our parishes. Fr Andrew raised the possibility of the award being discussed and shown at a future Mass.

## **5. Liturgy & Worship**

### **i) Altar Servers**

Fr Dom advised that many children still are beginning to be Altar Servers, and noted that both he and Fr Andrew try to continue to increase the knowledge of the children as to 'why' things are done during the service, so that they can have a better understanding. We also discussed that there are several very long-term altar servers who have served in other parishes and places, including in Lourdes.

The future intention continues to be to train further Altar Servers, and then to undertake regular refresher training which will be followed by a social event (where food and games are involved!).

### **ii) Adult Choir**

The 'Come along and Sing!' day discussed at the previous meeting had not yet been arranged, although it was noted that one additional person has joined the 9am Chorleywood and 1 the 11am Rickmansworth choirs recently.

## **6. Senior Leadership Team**

Fr Andrew outlined that the SLT have been working over the previous few months with the SLT and Nicky and Alan who are Divine Renovation coaches. This has included discussion about the prayer behind our parishes, and keeping in mind the various things that have been happening throughout the parishes.

Discussions have been had around holding an adoration in March; though a Quarant Ore, or 40 hour exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with constant adoration. The idea behind this would be to involve all parish groups, with each group praying for all parishes and to include two overnight sessions. Fr Andrew outlined that he would like to open and close this with a Mass, and that Lent would be the ideal time to arrange this.

Fr Andrew then went on to discuss that the SLT would like to have a group parish mission or vision prayer. Again, this would involve all parish groups, and would be a prayer for all parishes. Fr Andrew read the prayer that had been created with Nicky & Alan, and said he would like for the mission prayer to be made up from input from different groups represented across the three parishes.

## **7. Faith in Action**

### **i) Community Lunch**

The Community Lunch continues to be well attended with a Christmas community lunch planned for 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### **ii) Caritas Meeting**

Jo and Fr Andrew met with Caritas to discuss their programme which discovers catholic social teaching, where each month, one area is highlighted throughout the year. This programme will expand on understanding of why the work is done, and can help to identify gaps which can then be used to encourage growth in those areas. Jo will continue to work on this.

### **iii) Community/Family Breakfasts**

Discussed at a high level that thought is still being given to involving the young people of the parish (those 14-18) and identifying volunteers to help in this sort of arrangement.

### **iv) Skills Audit**

Fr Andrew advised that it had been 4 years since the last skills audit was conducted at the parishes. He would like to do an updated one, as circumstances of parishioners change and also what the parish needs are over time also change.

### **v) Defibrillator**

Following on from the skills audit discussion, a question was asked about a defibrillator, as a parishioner had been taken ill at mass. Fr Andrew said he has previously investigated this and the cost is around £10,000 and the upkeep also needs to be paid for. Referencing the skills audit, it was also discussed if there are known first aiders at each parish. Fr Andrew outlined that whilst there is no specific list, he and Fr Dom tend to be aware of other parishioners who have medical knowledge (such as doctors and nurses). He also confirmed that the closest defibrillator is at St. Mary's Church in Rickmansworth.

## Parish Development Plan – Discipleship

Fr Andrew read the definition of Discipleship from the Divine Renovation book as follows:

*“Discipleship is the lifelong process of growing, maturing and learning that the believer eagerly enters into if truly evangelized. It includes catechesis, but cannot be reduced to it. It includes growing in faith, knowledge, prayer and identifying one’s God-given gifts”.*

Discipleship is lifelong and we are on a journey which is constantly changing and should be expanding over time.

Updates to the September 2024 plan as follows:

6 months	Cell Groups – continue to be a work in progress. Quarent Ore 40 hours adoration with catechesis in the build up to it Novena / Understanding Mary – took place in 2025, most likely again in 2027. Year of Hope – Continue to spread the message from Pope Leo through the first page of each week’s newsletter.
12 months	Sharing Talent – Skills audit will be re-undertaken, and the newsletter will have a focus on sharing talents throughout the parishes. New ways to grow in prayer – Continued work for the Men’s, Women’s, and Youth groups.
5 years	Extend GIFT to include Confirmation – the Youth Group is generally bridging the time between GIFT ending and Confirmation beginning. Youth Talent – through youth group and Fr Dom’s engagement with the young members of the parishes. Beyond Alpha – Newly arranged talks from January 2026 around Salvation. Vibrant Parish – The recent award received by the Lourdes Red Cap group.

No further additions to be made to this area.

We added that Cell groups are forming through community, and not always consciously. There is also a Catechists group who are aiming to meet more as time goes on. We discussed and considered if there could be a template or conversation prompts/similar which could be used by the groups as discussion starters or prompts for the various groups. However, this would also require someone who knows the ‘answers’ to be able to lead the discussions.

We considered the area of parishioners with partners or children who are not Catholic, and if we could expand on engaging these people. However past Alpha/RCIA, Fr Andrew was not sure of other ways we could expand to these people specifically. He did advise that when meeting families through GIFT, he does always ask the question and if additional family members would like to explore this further. It is a delicate balance between how partners or family members come to the faith, and that the most effective way is to share and talk about faith to others to encourage people to want to engage themselves.

We did also discuss that GIFT continues to be an introduction to further understanding, and that it could be possible for GIFT families to give testimonies.

The Understanding the Mass leaflets are still being produced and taken regularly.

### **Any Other Business**

- i) In January 2026, will be able to sign up for a stall at the Chorleywood Common event day.
- ii) Fr Andrew had a meeting with St. Andrews in Chorleywood, and St. John Fisher were added to the Remembrance Day parade. Discussed the plan to become more involved with Detonate, the children's faith based summer camp which will be in July 2026. The vicar at St. Andrew's also offered their Chorleywood Youth Centre to be used for our parish events in the future.
- iii) The quiz night in October 2025 was a success, and as a community event it really went well. Most of the attendees were parishioners, and it was discussed that another similar event could take place in a further 6 months, and possibly in a different hall such as at St. John's, and that this time the food would be served before the quiz.

We finished our meeting with a prayer from Fr. Andrew.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 @ 7.30pm** Venue: St. John Fisher, Chorleywood.