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

Held at St. John Fisher, Chorleywood
7th September 2026 at 7:30pm

In Attendance:	**Apologies:**
Father Andrew Gallagher	Jo Rodrigues
Ben Sadler	Paula Castree
Hannah Power	
Dee Vanstone	
Sheila Harrington	
Claire Johnson	
Lucy Insua	
Father Dom Matokovic	
Peter Kuncewicz	
Clare Hallett	

1. **Welcome and Prayer**

Ben welcomed us to the 40th JPPC meeting.

Fr Andrew then began the meeting with a prayer, and we used the Parish Prayer for Rickmansworth, Mill End & Chorleywood.

2. Apologies – as noted above

3. **Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

Fr Andrew confirmed that the leaflet outlining all the different groups across the parishes is now available for people to read, take, use at stalls and to give to new parishioners. It's a living document so can be updated or changed as necessary, and outlines just how much is going on across our parishes. It is on display next to the other documents welcoming new parishioners in the porches at all three churches.

4. Discipleship

Young Adults Group – The group continues to meet regularly, and over summer went together to the cinema and also another visit to the pub. Fr Dom was not able to attend these meetings as he was away, but Ben advised that this shows that the group are not solely reliant on having Fr Dom attend, and continues to form stronger bonds.

The focus will continue to be the inclusion of formation focus sessions as this is important to incude in the group, as well as the social update.

In relation to the previous contact with Caritas, there has been no update as yet, and the new member of staff at Caritas is still due to reach out, although Ben then noted that he may make contact with them directly if they don't do so themselves.

The YA group continues to be a good talent pool for volunteers for parish events or similar, and the group ran the bar at Brass on the Grass, and also are involved in the organisation of the upcoming Quiz Night.

The Chosen – is being shown once more on Friday evenings. As at our meeting date there have been 2 meetings, and there has been a good turnout with lots of attendees.

Faith & Friendship Group – This has been running for over three years. Having spoken to Anne who runs the group, she had noted that numbers had gone down, and so Fr Andrew is going to speak to her to discuss how the group can continue to thrive – does it need more promotion, or to change time, etc?

Men's Group – Francis who runs the group is keen to have at least one representative from each of the three parishes to try and co-ordinate the groups meeting, and not just from one parish. Fr Dom suggested that Deacon Liam could potentially attend the group to give a talk.

Prayer & Life Workshops – This culminated with a retreat day on the Saturday before our meeting, and Fr Andrew commented that it was a beautiful day. The workshops themselves went well, with around 8/9 people completing the whole 15 week course, and feedback from attendees was positive.

RCIA – Fr Andrew has three candidates so far, with a planned start date of November. He will continue to discuss and approach those who may also wish to enter this journey.

5. Evangelisation

Alpha – The team who have previously been running Alpha have advised that they would like some time out from doing so, and it has been agreed that there will be a one year break until the next course begins, with plans that Alpha will begin again in September 2027, and the team then may also have additional members or be rebuilt.

Chorleywood Village Day – This happened in July, and Dee told the group that it was a very good day. The position of our stall was near to St. Andrews Church, although it was noted that our signage was less when compared to other similar stalls to ours, and that a banner may be a good addition for future years.

Lucy said the day was pleasant. People stopped to chat and it was a mix of people who stopped at the stall. It was difficult in some instances to move the discussion around to Church life and activities, as the volunteers were keen not to make people feel they were being canvassed. Although some conversations around this did happen, it didn't always feel it was the right situation.

Dee explained that St. Andrews stall (for example) had colouring and other activities for children, which could be an idea for future years to encourage people to stop and take time at our stall.

Lucy noted that the people who tended to stop were parishioners, or family members or parishioners, or other people who knew the volunteers on the stall. Ben asked if there was a good representation which it was confirmed there was, and it was also discussed that it was a nice way for parishioners to connect with one another as well.

Fr Andrew outlined that just being there and part of the community was also important, as there have been people over the years who come to Our Lady's from Chorleywood, not knowing about the existence of St. John Fisher. Increased visibility is always good.

Jane Irwin lent the team items from the regular Rickmansworth stall to the Village Day, and they tried to emulate how the market stall is set up. Dee also noted that the new 'What's On' leaflet was great to have, the pitch itself was in a good position, and there was good teamwork.

Peter asked about the demographic of the people who visited the stall. It was confirmed that details were not taken from those who visited the stall, so there was no follow up potential from getting any information, and the intention was more to just chat to people and to highlight that the Church was there and part of the community.

Sheila and Dee then expressed hope that over time the footfall and impact will improve over time, just as the regular Ricky Market stall has, and finally Ben commented that the market doesn't always attract just local people.

6. **Families & Youth**

GIFT – GIFT had a further 7 families join over the summer. Fr Andrew outlined that over the summer there was almost one First Holy Communion every Sunday! It is up to each family which Mass they choose to celebrate at for the child. At one particular Sunday Mass, there was one family who celebrated two Baptisms and two First Holy Communions which was a joyous celebration. It was also attended by the Parish's SLT Divine Renovation coaches, and was an outwards expression of how this plays out across our parishes.

Youth Choir **-** Fr Andrew has appointed Roseanna, who starts the day after our meeting with the children at their regular Tuesday after school Choir practice. Rosanna interviewed for the position in July and Fr Andrew was impressed with her skills. She will also undertake all of the safeguarding, risk assessments and administration for the Youth Choir as well as leading the children. There have been more new joiners to the Choir, bringing the total to around 14/15 children. Hannah also noted that the choir gets advertised every week in the St. John's School newsletter.

Youth Group – It was agreed at a meeting in May that the group will move to a Sunday at 4pm. Discussions were undertaken with families, and it was noted that this would clash less with clubs/activities on a Tuesday, which may help to attract more boys to the group. Fr

Andrew has six new helpers already, including Ben's wife Sabrina who is organising the group. It was also noted that more young adults are returning to help with groups such as this.

The plan is that the group will be the same format as the current iteration, and will include food, activities, and a faith input which Fr Dom will assist with. The first of these groups will be on 4th October, and leads on to going to 6pm Mass immediately after the group.

Children's Liturgy – Liz Townsend who has run the liturgy for 15 years has advised that she will be stepping down, although there are other volunteers who will keep the liturgy going. Numbers can be quite variable, but it is important that this group continues.

7. Liturgy & Worship

Reconciliation Leaflet – Are now available and on display at all Churches for parishioners to use.

Music – Susana who leads the choir and music at Our Lady's has advised that she is stepping down from the role. Fr Andrew advised that Dallas will take over from her when she does.

Altar Servers – Currently advertising for new Altar Servers to join the team, and there is training for new joiners on 19th & 22nd September. There are already a few children who have expressed their interest in becoming servers.

Holy Communion Ministers – Sheila noted that it was important that people know that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can bring Communion to those who are housebound, and that this is not on the 'What's On' leaflet – although Fr Andrew did confirm that this is in the newsletter when there is space.

8. Faith in Action

Jo was unable to attend the meeting, but Ben read her update, captured below:

"An update for my Love in Action project- we hosted Scott Albrecht from the Catholic worker farm in July to talk about the CST principle of Community and Participation. He gave us ideas on how we can support the farm as part of our action plan.

We are hosting a workshop on the 6th and final CST principle on Care of creation on 17th Sept and Jane Irwin will talk about her role as director of Sustainable Three Rivers. In Nov we will then start writing the action plan!"

We then discussed that the culmination of the work will start to happen in November. Sheila told us that she had been to the last workshop and that it was very interesting to learn about the Catholic Workers Farm and that the feeling was that a great number of people want to know what they can do to help, or how they can actively help out.

We discussed the resources that have been handed out to parishioners, and we confirmed to Fr Andrew that these had been read, and Lucy commented that having the commentary in

the newsletter was also a good way to tie it in, as Catholic Social Teaching is such an important part of coming to Church.

We also discussed how CST can be brought into other groups such as the youth group/ young adults group, and how discussions could align with the topics covered by CST.

As Sheila said, people are very often looking to be given specific ways that they can help and so could though be given to how we can use CST to involve other groups of parishioners who would want to help with different areas of parish life. Lucy also wondered if we could use the charity aspect or a specific charity to tie this in with CST.

Fr Andrew advised that when it is all pulled together in November may be a good time to discuss the charity element. He also advised us that the CST learning that we have all experienced should actually be done across 6 consecutive weeks, rather than the 6 months we have chosen. The SLT felt that doing it all across six weeks may be overwhelming for everyone!

Brass on the Grass – Fr Andrew advised that there were 330 attendees which was a great turnout. There were also 71 helpers who assisted with setting up the event which was great, and we discussed that the early recruitment drive really worked with getting people on board to help, and gives people specific ways they can offer their help.

On the day itself there were parishioners in all groups of people but also new people who weren't necessarily parishioners but who came along with family or friends in a place which may feel more comfortable for those who would not want to go straight into a Church.

SVP Community Lunch – The next lunch is coming up soon, and there will be an appeal for more volunteers to help with this. The group has been running for 10 years, and they would like an injection of new people to help. The group also links strongly to CST and Love in Action.

Quiz Night – The next Quiz Night will be on 24th October 2026. Last year the team members were made up of almost all parishioners, and this encouraged people to mix and mingle with one another. There will be around 120 tickets available, and will be a general knowledge quiz. It is also good to have all three parishes represented.

Friends of the Holy Land – Fr Andrew advised us that this group will speak in January at Masses to highlight people joining organisations which help in the Holy Land. Fr Andrew told us that many charities reach out to him to ask for time at masses to speak, but he cannot accommodate all.

Strategy & SLT – Following on from previous meeting discussions, Fr Andrew advised us that the SLT strategy and reflection day was held in August. The SLT watched and used the video on this topic from Divine Renovation. Fr Andrew shared with us all the outcome for us to review and consider:

SLT Reflection Day 29/08/2026

What is the dream?

A parish where:

1. Joy, happiness and love attract others.
2. Scripture, prayer, liturgy and sacraments are at heart of daily life – a natural part of people's day.
3. Seamless youth ministry from childhood to young adulthood, where the Church always feels like home.
4. Inspiring others to grow in their faith and be disciples.
5. We are a community, a family where everyone is welcomed, supported and valued, beyond the Church doors.
6. Psychological safety – questions can be asked in a safe space.
7. Understanding Catholic teaching.
8. Everyone is growing together in a personal relationship with the Trinity.
9. This all leads to Love in Action.

Where do we want to go?

i) Connect Group – Begin with 1 group, with 1 host and 1 facilitator. Fr Andrew to think of members and invite them.

ii) Apologetic Talks – feeling we need to give more opportunities for people to understand Church teaching, so they can then spread the good news. Perhaps Easter season.

iii) Social Media Strategy – with a Youth Media Officer to try and engage the younger members of our parish.

iv) Social Committee – to bring together the many volunteers from the skills audit and Brass on the Grass, to move forward with more activities in the parish.

Father Andrew also gave us the Four Pillars that were used as discussion topics and also outlines what strategic objectives need to be for each area.

Using the outline above, Fr Andrew and the SLT identified the gaps where the JPPC can look at and consider ways that we could meet the overall objectives. These were i) and ii).

i) The formation of groups for prayer and community. The thought is to start with 1 group, rather than lots of smaller groups. But with the intention to grow. Connect groups would consist of maybe 10-15 people who would meet regularly every fortnight. These would consist of a time of prayer, formation and socialising. The aim is that these help people's sense of community, and improve their faith and understanding, and with larger parishes it also provides a way of parishioners supporting each other in faith.

ii) Faith understanding would be around topics that people have questions around (such as Fr Dom's History of Salvation talks that happened previously).

Peter asked how these action points would be completed, would it all be added to Fr Andrew's plate? Fr Andrew explained that no, the SLT and other groups would be identified to take the

lead in different roles. Some points are already being done, and the discussions helped to identify gaps or where more help is needed.

For example the JPPC could help with point ii) in looking at what questions would people want to explore or have answered through these types of groups.

9. Parish Development Plan – Worship

We reviewed the existing plan and this has been updated on the separate document.

Discussions were:

Quarant'ore – Could we add another to the 5 year plan? An awful lot of work to arrange for this to be held annually, but as a connecting and spiritual event it was great. We agreed to add this to the 5 year plan, and thought maybe Lent is a good time to hold this.

Stations of the Cross – Is Friday evening the best time to hold this, and could this be held at multiple times across the week? There will always be clashes for people and holding it more than once would give people more options.

Sheila explained that generally it's dark during Lent and this may hold people back from attending. We discussed that Mass on a Friday morning has a good number of parishioners attending regularly, around 35 people, and a demographic who would likely want to stay for Stations of the Cross. As Stations of the Cross is led by parishioners, it may work for this to be an added option.

We also discussed that a Family Stations of the Cross may also be a beneficial addition, to encourage families to take part at a level appropriate for children.

Preparing for Mass: It was noted in the group (and also on Jo's notes) that arrival times to Mass are getting later, and that the preparation time is getting louder and leaving less time for people to appropriately prepare for Mass. Fr Andrew outlined that it is difficult because people prepare for Mass differently, but that congregating before Mass in a porch is not the quiet prayer that preparing for Mass requires.

The reader at each Mass do encourage people to enter into silent prayer, although some do choose to omit this sentence from the welcome speech. We discussed that it is something that could be added to the newsletter, but we also discussed that it may be what is needed is a gradual cultural change rather than calling people out against behaviours, and that change can begin with us.

Evening Masses in Holy Seasons – The additional weekday Masses in Lent were well received, and attendance increased week on week during Lent. If we continued to do this in Lent and also Advent then we could also announce this to the Deanery and include other people from in the wider area. It was also thought that if there were a consistent group of people who were attending these Masses, this could also lead to new social opportunities.

Advent Leaflets – We discussed the advent leaflets, and help to spread the word by people passing these on to others in their local community. We discussed printing additional copies for people to hand out although this would of course come with an additional cost. Social Media can also be used to spread the word of what is happening across the parishes. Sheila also mentioned that if there are new people in your local area (people moving into houses for example) this is a great resource to share with them so they know what our parishes are offering at this time.

10. Any Other Business

Fr Andrew noted that a number of the JPPC will have come to the end of their tenure in February 2027 (Ben, Hannah, Dee, Sheila, Paula & Peter). He may ask people to stay for an extra year, but also encouraged existing members to let him know of anyone who they may know who would be interested to join as this would be good to encourage the community and spread the word of the JPPC.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will take place on 30th November 2026 at St. John the Evangelist, Mill End at 7.30pm.

12. Concluding Prayer

This was led by Fr Andrew, and brought the meeting to a close.