

St Bartholomew's Parish Pastoral Council minutes 6 March 2024

Present: Christine Lambert (Chair), John Lambert, Teresa Clarke (Secretary), Maureen Kelly, Lizzie Lizzio (Vice-Chair) Martha Moroney Lewis, Nick Dodd, Jackie Tominey, Mathew Carvalho, Mark James

Apologies: Fr Francis Antwi-Darkwah, Eamon Rafferty, Emma Smith, Peter Godwin

1. Matters arising from last meeting on 9 January 2024

Liturgical calendar – This has now been issued for 2024

Altar servers – Some First Communion candidates have started serving on the altar.

2. Priority Group reports

Social Justice and asylum seekers – Reports received. Asylum seekers need large laundry bags as they are moving on before the end of March. These can be stored under the food pantry table. Teresa gave out postcards and fliers about Refugees at Home and the need for host families at the Cathedral last Sunday. She is repeating this at St Stephen's this coming Sunday, and at St Barts on 16/17 March. A refugee was moved from the Noke hotel to the YMCA in Hatfield this week.

Youth – Report received, no additional comments

Building Community – Report received, no additional comments

Spirituality – Report received. An A5 flier of spiritual digital resources will be available this coming weekend.

Ecumenism – Report received, no additional comments

Food Pantry – Report received. The PPC were pleased to hear that although the church had been closed during the weekdays while Fr Francis was away, Jackie has continued to support 5 families.

Heating Fund – report received. On 27/4 we plan to hold a Latin American Evening, subject to sufficient interest. This will be the final event for a while in terms of fund-raising.

Nick Dodd asked all priority group leaders to let him know if new events are being proposed and may need to be added to the liturgical calendar. **Action: all priority group leads**

3. **Tapestries** – A paper on the Stations of the Cross and tapestries had been sent out in advance building on the detail of the discussion at PPC in January 2024. Consultation has now happened with some of our parishioners and one of those involved in making the tapestries in the 1980s. This has confirmed that they are still of sufficient quality to be re-installed, albeit with a few sewing tasks needed. However, it also has raised a question over the proposal to place the existing ones in the parish hall, should the parishioners choose to re-install the tapestries. After discussion it was decided that there was no urgency to act on this as it is not a high priority and they will take some time to actually install, too. Fr Francis will need to confirm his view re the parish hall. In any event, it will be put to the parish to decide by voting which is the preferred option. but there is no timeline currently but looking toward later in 2024.

Action – Christine to speak to Fr Francis at an appropriate time

4. **Synodal Pathway** – Questions were sent out from the Diocese for parish meetings in February, with replies to the Deanery by 6 March. It was felt that the process was too rushed, there was no time to organise the meetings, and the questions are complex and need unpicking. We felt that asking for written replies was not how the Synodal process would work best in St Barts – it should involve discernment, listening and finding a way forward. Christine had shared our approach to our Mission of Evangelisation charts for the parish with Fr Chris Vipers, who commented that 'it was great to hear of a parish "fully alive"'. It was also shared with Dean Anthony Dwyer directly as input for their Diocesan meeting being held on 6 March 2024. We could organise parish meetings maybe after Easter to show that we want to engage in the process. We felt that as a parish we had produced a good Synodal report, and perhaps we should pick out a few actions from our report to discuss at each PPC. The suggestion was that that we could ask for a speaker from the Newman Society as they have recently held a discussion on this topic. **Action: Christine to contact Newman Society**

5. **Strategic discussion "Looking Forward" 12 March 2024** – This meeting has been postponed as Fr Francis is still away. Jackie Harrison has prepared a draft document which will be shared with the PPC later, once Fr Francis has had a chance to review it and decide on his priorities.

Action- Christine to discuss with Fr Francis re timeline

6. **Communications** – The Welcome booklet will be updated this Spring if needed, as it is costly.

There have been some Facebook posts and re-posted items from the newsletter and any group wishing to publish on FB to contact Nick.

50 people have signed up for the Latin American evening (a minimum of 60 are needed to cover costs and make a reasonable return). It is a social and fundraising event. The sub group will meet on 8 March, and tickets will be issued if they agree that there is enough interest to go ahead with this event. Immediate contacts are Katya (after 12 March as she is away), Sharon Cassidy or Christine Lambert.

Newsletter - Nick would like to refresh the newsletter – change the layout, use a template, use colour. He is aware of the tight deadlines each week.

We should populate the PPC noticeboard at the back of church.

The website also needs updating, including content. Chris Blandford is aware of this but is likely to be an adviser only. It is a question of who? and when? we might be able to do this. This is not a priority as we have a functional website.

7. **Maintenance** – The parish had a visit from the Diocesan H&S officer recently. More fire stopping is needed, such as red fire stopping above fire doors, and heat and smoke seals on doors. The fire escape route through the sacristy needs to be changed. New lit up Fire Exit signs are required also. A fire detection alarm system for the sacristy, hall and kitchen is needed. Quotes are being received. The heater in the balcony/ organ loft does not need a large screen – a small polycarbonate sheet will be installed very soon. The costs are manageable for this work.
8. **Bereavement visiting group** – A paper on this topic had been circulated and the proposed approach was agreed. As Stage 1, the group will produce a leaflet signposting what is available and change the process in terms of contact directly with the bereaved. Stage 2 would involve volunteer visitors (who will need to be DBS checked), and trained. Currently the team is Barbara Bliss and Christine Lambert, with inputs from other parishioners, Deacon Anthony and Fr Francis.

9. **Any other business**

Good Friday Walk of Witness - This will start from St Stephens at 10.

Auction - Phil Ahern has been asked if he would host another auction in September.

Heating – John will laminate some instructions on how to turn the heating on. These will be put up by the iPad in the sacristy. At the next PPC FF meeting we will all see how to alter the heating. **Action: John**

Costco surplus food – Mathew has a contact at Costco who can provide surplus food for our church Food Pantry and for the community in St Albans. **Action: Jackie and Mathew to discuss**

Supporting Fr Francis – All of the PPC are asked to think how we can support Fr Francis as he returns from Ghana. We will all aim to keep things as simple as possible so he is not overwhelmed.

10. **Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7 May (Zoom 7.30)**