

## **Minutes**

### **Present:**

Father Michael Weymes, Parish Priest  
Jo Shepherd, Chair (JS)  
Rose Anderson – Minutes (RA)

Father Ian Patterson, Barbara Dowling, Ged Downey, Angela Hawthorne, Muriel McKenna, Bill Miller, Amanada Pritchard, Gareth Pritchard, Fionnuala Ratliff, Michael Ratliff, Waveney Miller, Gerard Shepard, Robert Wilson, Olive Donnelly-Wood.

### **Apologies were received from:**

Joan Donnelly, Pat Downey, Pat Hedley, Susan Stoddart, Christine Weddell.

#### **1 Opening Prayer.**

This was led by Fr Michael.

#### **2 Introductory Remarks.**

- a) Jo Shepherd welcomed everyone to the meeting
- b) The Minutes, which had been tabled, of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were accepted as a correct record.
- c) JS thanked RA for standing in and recording the minutes.

#### **3 Safeguarding update.**

JS asked RA to speak on this issue.

- a) RA informed the meeting that the Diocese had undergone an interim audit by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) in May. The report, which is available on the Diocesan Website, together with a letter from Bishop Stephen, showed improvement on actions required from the previous audit. RA reported that a further full audit will take place later this year.
- b) RA advised the meeting that there are changes at the CSSA, including the resignation of the Chair, who had completed his first term of office. The post is now advertised.
- c) Volunteer Census.  
RA informed the meeting that the Census of Volunteers, which had been presented at both Masses the previous weekend, aimed to identify all volunteers and their roles. This would enable the dioceses to categorise roles and enable parishes to thank their volunteers for all of their work. Forms should be handed to Fr Michael or placed in the envelope in the Sanctuary.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Diocese would also use the information to provide appropriate training and support for volunteers.

#### **4 Finance Report**

The report was tabled. Gerard Shepherd (GS) asked those present to note that current income is less than expenditure and referred to the recharges between Sacred heart and St Charles Parishes. These costs cover the management of the presbytery, priest's costs etc. The charges will change with Diocesan input to cover costs of Fr Ian living in the Presbytery at Sacred Heart.

GS commented that the parish had survived the pandemic because of the Standing Orders, however most standing order amounts have not changed since they were set up. GS advised that repairs are required to the Church and Hall roofs and the carpark. Funding for this would come from the Deposit account which is held in the Diocese. Robert Wilson (RW) advised that this currently stands at £232,830. Gift Aid is paid into this account. GS and RW advised that it is possible to claim Gift Aid for a percentage of Cash Donations. RW advised that in the last year £8,000 was received in Gift Aid.

It was also noted that Funerals are the only special services where a fee is paid automatically to the Church. Baptisms and weddings rely on families being able to donate. There was discussion on how the parish income could increase and several suggestions were made:

- Notices for people attending weddings, Baptisms and Funerals.
- Information on the pews, including the availability of the donations machine.
- A Basket at the back of Church inviting donations.
- Inviting people with standing orders to consider increasing them.

## **5 The Partnership.**

JS and GS gave this report.

- Confirmations are now arranged within the Partnership. Preparation Sessions will be based at St Theresa's but the Service for Confirmation may be in any Church in the Partnership. Because of this arrangement it may be possible to offer Confirmation every year.
- Giving Communion to people at home.  
In one parish there are more than 60 people unable to attend Mass and therefore requiring Communion at home. There was discussion about the role of the Extraordinary Minister of Communion and the need for more parishioners to consider this role, including the social and pastoral aspects of home visits.
- The Jesuits. Their tenure will finish soon. They are currently providing the Partnership with days of prayer and reflection on how parishioners can carry out their role. The next day will be at St Mary's school on 16<sup>th</sup> November.
- First Communion preparation has just started.
- Baptism Preparation need more people to help.

## **6 Spiritual and Liturgical Activities.**

First Communion preparation: the first Children's Mass is on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October

The Bible discussion group continues across both parishes

Children's Liturgy should be starting again

RCIA is held across the Partnership

Confirmation: registrations can be received now

Emmaus Group; meets monthly and current discussion is on the Bishop's vision paper. It was suggested that the Bishop be invited to attend one of these meetings.

## **7 Justice and Peace/Outreach**

- Justice and Peace meetings are continuing.
- The Toy appeal should start in November
- There is discussion about a Ceilidh being held before Christmas, possibly at St Charles. Date to be confirmed. The Music Group is considering an event at Sacred Heart for St Patrick's day, possible on 14<sup>th</sup> March
- Centenary Fund: has given donations to Fair Share and will be donating towards the School Crossing Appeal. Amanda Pritchard explained that the Council would not fund

this service and despite various approaches and appeals about the dangerous crossing they still refused.

- Food Festival. JS thanked everyone involved, especially Siann Smith and Gareth Pritchard for organising this very successful event. There were calls for it to be repeated.
- McMillan Coffee Morning. This had also been a great success, raising over £1,000.

## **8 Future Events**

- The Bereavement Service will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> November
- Remembrance Service in the Cemetery. A team has volunteered to lead this.
- Aid to the Church in Need- Red Wednesday Appeal. RA reminded the meeting of this appeal for parishes and groups to raise £500 in the form of steps. They also asked for churches and other public buildings to be lit up in Red on 20<sup>th</sup> November.  
RA advised that she would be meeting with Angela Hawthorne and Barbara Dowling to plan the appeal in the Sacred heart Parish and more information would be available soon.
- The Christmas Tree Festival at St Columba's will take place again this year.
- Christmas - Mince pies and mulled wine after Mass will be organised again this year
- The Carol Service will take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December
- The School Crossing Group are considering holding a cake bake stall- possible on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.
- Bulbs will be planted by the first Communion candidates after Mass on 6<sup>th</sup> October
- Gardens-
  - suggestions are required for fundraising to buy perennial plants for the gardens.
  - There are bats in the church grounds. It was agreed that more bat and bird boxes should be installed. Amanda Pritchard will ask Paulo Nardini for assistance with this.
- VoiceMale concert. It has not been possible to organise this before Christmas.
- The St Oswald's PTA Carols in the Church Hall on a Sunday is to be arranged.
- P.O.S.H. The pantomime will be performed on the evenings of 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January, with an afternoon performance on 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **9 A.O.B.**

- A suggestion was made that an allotment could be created in ground behind the presbytery. A suggestion for a pond was dismissed because of the potential danger.
- Some trees are to be removed because they are dangerous.
- A suggestion was made that there should be a board advertising coffee after Sunday Mass.
- Father Ian thanked everyone for their very warm welcome to the parish and for inviting him to the meeting. He had served almost 49 years as a priest within 5 miles of the River Tyne.
- Father Ian suggested that there should be a disclaimer notice in the car park. Ged Downey suggested that there should also be a notice about the CCTV. GS will speak to Gerarde Turnbull about this.

## **10 Date and time of next meeting:**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## **11 The closing prayer** was led by Father Ian.