

St. Mary's Joint Parish Council and Finance Committee Meeting

24th January 2024, 7pm

DRAFT MINUTES

1) Welcome and apologies

Present:- Pauline L, Jane M, Sue F, Anne S, Larry C, Malcolm T, Peter T, Sean H, Joanne T, Simon R

Apologies:- Una H, Veronica H, Kate E

Fr Sean led an opening prayer.

Una has offered her resignation from the Parish Council. All expressed their gratitude for her commitment to the parish.

JT to add a note of thanks in this week's newsletter and all agreed to a presentation of flowers on Sunday.

Fr Sean to chair this meeting with a new chair elected at the end of the session.

2) Minutes from the Meeting on 22nd November 2023

Audio / visual: - we haven't needed digital recordings of hymns at mass to date as we've been fortunate enough to have had live cover. Fr Sean conveyed his gratitude to all musicians within the parish.

Vince has spoken to all groups with a view to populating the musician's rota for 2024.

Building: - paving slabs outside entrance to church have been replaced and re-laid. Choir banister has been repaired.

Baptisms:- Alison continues to celebrate baptisms for St Aidan's and St Mary's although Fr Sean will conduct those for adults on RCIA course and children preparing for FHC.

Peter T to speak to Fr Sean re ideas for a Baptism Preparation Course.

Joanne T to arrange altar server training with Alison.

Christmas:- Family Craft day was small but those there seemed to enjoy it and we had 3 families from FHC programme. Thank you to Sue F and Pauline L for all their help.

3) Parish Council Membership

We need to be actively looking to grow the council and get new members onboard. People who will be proactive, bring new ideas, support the parish. All to consider those who may fit the bill and speak to them personally.

There is also a need to start planning for the future of the parish. How to we manage ongoing and new commitments. Where will help and support come from?
Fr Sean is looking to manage his workload and Bishop Stephen has expressed concern over a lack of new priests in comparison to those retiring!

Could some weekday Masses be Eucharistic Services?

Possibly, we have done this on Fridays when Fr Sean has been unavailable but not yet on a Tuesday. We have 3 ministers at St Mary's who can give Eucharistic Service.

Could school take parish fundraiser role in terms of CAFOD, Xmas cards for Prisoners of Conscience etc?

Yes, that would probably work well. It is good that school are involved again in FHC preparation but this should be led by the parish.

If we can bring some thoughts to the next meeting.

4) Parish Social Event

We are starting to take payment for food. Sue and Gillian helping on a Saturday night after Mass, Malcolm and Joanne around on a Sunday. Malcolm is liaising with Palmersville Chippy, will keep them updated with numbers and will ask if they can deliver food. If not Malcolm will be able to collect.

Joanne will set up tables on the Saturday. Fr Sean has already stocked up on mushy peas!

Frank G from St Aidan's has kindly agreed to join us and run a short quiz.

Joanne T to include appeal for raffle prizes in newsletter for draw on the night.

We can provide teas and soft drinks, parishioners can bring their alcohol.

5) Finance Update

Current balance sits at a little under £12K. This is down year on year but paving outside front door cost £8,800 and income remains steady and healthy.

Mechanical garage door needed replacing - £720.00

There will also be significant bill from NE Clean who haven't be sending out invoices.

There was a discussion as to the value of re-introducing collection baskets during offertory. This was done at Christmas and was successful. Concern is that people who donate online (a significant percentage of parishioners) may feel uncomfortable if they don't make offertory on their pew.

It was agreed that we will have volunteers standing at doors at the end of mass holding the baskets. A best of both worlds approach – it makes the opportunity to donate more visible but also has element of human interaction.

6) Items from Fr Sean not on the agenda

Telephone conversation with NE Clean who have not been providing a satisfactory service of late. Apologies given and the situation will be monitored.

Declined a request to hire out hall for party after a baptism. There are security concerns for external hire of the hall so a blanket ban seems most appropriate approach.

Diocese have used the hall for several meetings and have 2 more booked in. We do not charge as these are meetings are not for profit.

Fr Sean asked council members thoughts on bringing back both forms of communion. This has to be something that works for both parishioners and Eucharistic Ministers. There was a concern raised over the end consumption of the precious blood. Members to ask around the parish with a view to possibly reinstate at Easter if wanted.

Safeguarding

Fr Sean attended a Diocesan Safeguarding Session, lots to take forward and incorporate within the parish.

- i) Safeguarding to become a Council standing agenda item
- ii) Joanne T to promote Safe Spaces helplines / support groups in hall

7) Any other business

Larry asked how do we learn about need within our own parish. We support external charities and fundraising campaigns but do we know of families struggling within our own community.

Fr Sean will hear of families connected to the school through headteacher but asked all members to be mindful and check up on people.

Peter T was unanimously elected as new parish council chair.

8) Next Meeting

Wednesday 13th March at 7pm

Fr Sean concluded meeting with a prayer .