

# Minutes of St Cuthbert's Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

30 January 2020

## 1. The meeting opened with a prayer.

**Present:** Fr Andrew Downie, Helen Schofield (Chair), John Marsland (Finance), Andy Doyle, Margaret Doyle, Gil Bolton, Alison McLean; Azaria Bromwich and Beatrice Testa for item on CathSoc only, Susan Penswick (Secretary)

## 2. Apologies: Cliona Kear, Catherine Dyer, Margaret Harvey

## 3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council and Assembly on 7 November 2019 were accepted.

## 4. Matters Arising: None

**5. Financial Report** John Marsland reported that the Deposit Account currently stood at £40,709 and the Current Account at £14,171. The bill for improvements to fire protection in the Presbytery (see item 6b) is, however, outstanding and payment will virtually wipe out the current account balance.

As agreed in Nov, John has been looking into the Chaplaincy account which stands at £41,350. Cost allocations to and from the Chaplaincy Account reflect arrangements agreed while the Dominicans were in residence and so are no longer appropriate. Because the basis on which the Chaplaincy plays a role in the finance of the Parish needs re-examination, John proposes to take the matter to the Finance Council at the end of February.

## 6. Reports from sub-committees/groups:

**a. Catholic Society:** Azaria and Beatrice reported that things were going well. Among other CathSoc activities, they were pleased that the Tuesday morning prayer group numbers had gone up to 15, and that there were a number of students making themselves available for nomination for next year's executive roles.

**b. Building:** Gil Bolton reported that all tasks mentioned at the last PPC had been completed. In summary:

### **Signs to presbytery.**

Still under review.

### **Emergency lights to parish room**

The existing lights were not working and have been replaced. Cost £204

### **Upgrading of fire precautions to Presbytery**

The public protection officer from Durham County Council visited the presbytery to inspect the building for compliance with fire regulations for a "house of multiple occupation". A report was produced by the officer which requires upgrading of the smoke detection to all rooms and bringing doors up to a 30 minute fire standard.

The smoke detection is complete, cost £1510.60p plus vat Total £1812. 72.

Two companies were invited to quote to replace and or upgrade the doors. Redfern Building Services (who carried out work on the boundary walls) won the contract and are due to begin work on the 10th of February. Cost £8009-52 plus vat, in addition there is a contingency of £1500 to replace locks and door knobs.

**Other work** is carried out as and when required.

Alison asked whether the squeaky floorboards in the choir loft could be fixed. Gil said the church was an old building and squeaky floorboards were a common feature of age.

**c. Events Group:** see item 7 - Parish Pastoral Plan.

Gil confirmed that students are welcome to all events and that the Parish would welcome their support. Fr. Andrew pointed out that the Retreat in Daily Life brought the student/parishioner community together, as did the Carol Service.

**d. Churches Together:** no report

**e. Justice & Peace:** no report

**f. Liturgy & Music:** Andy to liaise with CathSoc about Lent and Easter liturgies.

**7. Parish Pastoral Plan:** Following the discussion at the Assembly in November, Margaret Doyle circulated the revised Plan to the Parish. The PPC formally approved the Plan.

A key action item was to revive the Events Group. Gil Bolton has now circulated to the Parish a list of suggestions and a request for support and he will compile responses after this week. He envisions that different volunteers would organize and steer different Events. Alison suggested that a parish social media page may not just publicize events but encourage parishioners to share thoughts, reflections, prayers.

The first new Event would be a Parish dinner in March. A venue is being sought. A second event may be a group booking for "Easter in Art" which will be showing at the Gala in April. Margaret will put a notice up for signing. She will also do a session on the Parish Website at coffee after a Sunday mass.

**8. Update from the Partnership Development Group :** Vespers at Ushaw in December to mark the beginning of the year of the Word, attracted many people from all the parishes involved. The chapel was full and the music and readings were well done.

- **Property and Community Review:** workshops had been held and St Cuthberts and Durham Martyrs were setting to work together in early December when the Diocese directed that the review be "paused". There has been no elucidation of this directive at present.

The initial audit of Durham City showed that many services are already offered. A space to meet does not usually appear to be the problem; committed volunteers seems to be the key issues. There are many volunteer opportunities in Durham which align with Christian values.

Durham Martyrs had continued to identify gaps in neighbourhood services, e.g., mental health support for young men, dinners for children in deprived neighbourhoods during school holidays.

The PPC agreed that it would be best to wait until further Diocesan advice was forthcoming before attempting to progress any aspects of the Review. Helen pointed out that parishioners can contribute to groups already working in Durham City.

- **Development of the Partnership:** There is no suggestion that the move to Partnerships has been “paused” although the need for the new Bishop have time to determine priorities has delayed progress. Sub-group work is continuing with regard to more Open Days but these have not yet been put in the diary.

The west Durham parishes became one Parish in December 2019, now called St John Boste Parish. Fr. Robert will be leaving Langley Moor soon to return to Australia. A retired priest, Fr. Paul, is coming to Langley Moor to be priest-in-charge. St John Boste Parish now has a Finance Council.

John Marsland said that the Partnership Finance Committee is struggling to raise enthusiasm because it is not clear what its role is.

#### **9. Place within the wider Community: Andy Doyle**

Andy asked that the PPC consider rethinking the Parish’s contribution to the Miners Gala. He pointed out that there is much more competition now than in the past and so the parish is earning much less money than it did 10 years ago, despite the hard work involved. What does seem to work is the interest passers-by find in entering the Church and looking around it. Should we find a different way of encouraging the outreach involved in visiting the church on Gala Day?

- 10. Items from the Parish Priest:** Fr Andrew confirmed that the Diocese had determined that it would not be feasible to use the Parish Room to host the homeless. However, he encouraged parishioners to approach Sanctuary 21 who definitely needed volunteers during the Christmas period when student volunteers were not available.

**11. AOB:** Gil will organize an auction of the excess Parish crockery in due time.

**12. Next meeting:** PPC - 26 March 2020, 19.30.

PPC/Assembly AGM – 28 May. 19.00