

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes Monday 12th February, 2024

Attendees : Bernard Hunter, Fr. Michael Copps, Kit Tranmer, Michelle Spears, Andrew Dodd, Paul Turpin, Rob Fernandes, Donna Patros, Mike O'Sullivan, Matthew Ives, Peter Robson

Apologies for Absence: Geraldine Mansbridge, Sarah Dodd, Lorna Spears

Meeting Chair: Bernard; Peter volunteered to take minutes.

Prayer: Michael read from the Gospel of Mark – “Repent and believe the Good News”. He suggested that this would be a good approach as we prepare for Lent.

Minutes of the last PPC meeting (13th December, 2023)

The minutes of the December meeting were approved with a note to add apologies from Paul Turpin.

Diocesan Strategy

Bernard had circulated papers in response to the Bishop's recent Pastoral Letter urging us to implement the Diocesan Vision document.

Of the 12 threads of the Renewal part of the Vision, the Bishop has asked that we prioritise three of them.

- **Thread 1 (Charity)** There are several existing strands including SVP, Foodbank, Marys Meals, FMU, CAFOD. David Underwood has asked for PPC support for Brentwood Caritas Zoom meetings. We thought this an excellent initiative and initially would like to encourage David to pursue it on behalf of the Parish and enlist allies himself; Fr Michael expressed an interest in being involved.
- **Thread 2 (Liturgy)** Matthew and the newly formed Liturgy Committee are focusing on preparing material for use in this year of prayer in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2025. The theme will be the “Our Father”
- **Thread 3 (Education)** There were no contributions on this.
- **Thread 4 (Family)** We felt that we don't do enough for married couples and families. In the past catechists would be more involved, with home visits to help with preparation for Marriage and Baptism. The welcoming team are considering home visits to new parish members.
- **Thread 5 (Formation)**
Peter suggested that a good way of facilitating formation would be to set up Cell Groups. It would give parishioners the opportunity to strengthen their faith, by receiving good teaching and by sharing their reflections on it. It would also be a way of supporting each other in their daily lives. Since it would be a smaller group

than a church full of people, they would feel more comfortable and welcome, and could offer that to others in their neighbourhood.

Peter, Sarah and Donna had recently taken part in a Zoom meeting with the organisers of PECS UK (Parish Evangelisation Cell System). The organisers explained the principles behind the system and the format of a typical Cell meeting. Donna was in favour of the concept, Sarah wasn't present to give her views. The meeting was generally in favour of the idea, but didn't think it wise to try to set up cells throughout the parish, but rather to start small and grow. It was also felt that cells wouldn't necessarily be based on geographical locations, but maybe on shared interests, or existing after-mass coffee groups. And each group should be encouraged to do things their way. Peter stressed that it was necessary to introduce the idea gradually, with special attention to identifying potential leaders. Peter agreed to set up a pilot cell in the meantime.

Thread 6 (Integration) This relates to partnerships, of which we are no longer a part, though that does not stop us from cooperating with other local RC churches.

Thread 7 (Leaders) Not discussed except as a consequence of setting up cell groups which will need leaders.

Thread 8 (Material Assets) We agreed that we already manage these very well. We didn't feel the need to address the partnership implications, since we believed that the Bishop has changed his mind about STOC being in partnership.

Thread 9 (Prayer) We agreed that we don't do enough as a parish, although this should be partly addressed by the Cell Group initiative covered in thread 5 above.

Thread 10 (Priests and People) We felt there was already a good relationship between Priests and People.

- **Thread 11 (Vocations to the Priesthood)** – There were no contributions on this.

Thread 12 (The Young) Mike is asking the Confirmation group what they could offer to the parish; response awaited.
Sarah's plans to initiate a Youth Council were outlined by Bernard in her absence. She will invite students to come for a drop-in session, to be advertised in the newsletter and hopefully through Trinity school. This was applauded by the PPC. It was noted that if we are no longer in a parish partnership, we could consider asking the Diocese for a funding for our very own youth worker.

Schools Report Bernard has had meetings at Trinity and St Antonys, but hasn't yet drafted a report– he will prepare it for the next PPC meeting

Other Projects Update

- **New Sound System** - There are still teething problems with feedback and power. The installers are very responsive and Bernard confident they are able to fix it.
- **Social for new parishioners** – Donna has put on hold the idea of home visiting. But she will organise a social, probably a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in April. Geraldine is helping her with names and administration. It was suggested that ushers and PPC members could also be invited.
- **Parish Concert** – This is being organised by Kathy Wilson as in the past. The PPC agreed that if the event was designed to break even, we would underwrite any shortfall. However, Bernard reported that Kathy prefers to manage the event as before, so the PPC thanked her and suggest that the Parish pays for Becket Centre hiring and programme printing.

Any Other Business

- **Accident** - At a funeral today, a man fell in our car park, sustaining very bad cuts to his face, and being unconscious for a while. It is not known how it happened (whether he tripped or had some kind of seizure) He was taken away by ambulance. Rob will work with Geraldine to get access to any CCTV record of the incident. Also today, a woman using a frame reported that she had twice been bumped by a reversing car. It was proposed and agreed that the PPC should review all significant incidents at each meeting.
- **Chigwell Convent** – Bernard has drafted a letter for Mass attendees suggesting that they should organise to prepare for possible future issues (letter to be circulated to PPC members). The PPC approved that initiative.
- **Car Park** – Mike had circulated a paper beforehand urging us to do something about it urgently. It was noted that costed options regarding a barrier system and an ANPR camera system had been prepared. It was brought to our attention that according to the Owners Occupiers Act, we are breaking the law by having insufficient signage and the absence of clearly marked bays in the turf mesh parking area. It was agreed to put something in the newsletter about the whole issue, what we are doing about it, and asking for parishioners' views on what to do next. We resolved to determine the PPCs policy at next month's meeting, with consultation with stakeholders to follow as necessary.
- **Entrance to Friars Gate** - It was suggested that we request the appropriate authority to extend the double yellow line in order to deter parking which hinders those coming and going from our site.
- **Beggar** – Bernard proposed that, given unease by some parishioners about the likelihood of Vittorio being a participant or victim of organised crime, he should be questioned in Italian to satisfy us that he keeps the money he collects. The PPC approved that plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11th March at 7.30pm