

## **SAINT PHILIP NERI PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**(Virtual Meeting conducted through Zoom)**

**Present:** Lynn Ireland (in the Chair), Father Chris Matthews, Father Humphrey Agbim, Andrew Collins, Rev. Paul d'Ambrogio, Sr. Catherine Bibby, Rev. Pat Regan, Mike Flynn, Stella McGann, Clare Williams, Matthew Edwards, Steve Goulding, Andy Davies, Bill Griffiths and Graham Lysaght.

**Apologies for Absence:** Rev. Gerard Boyle

### **1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The minutes were approved as a correct record, and any matters arising were included in the agenda.

### **2. Update on Impacts of Covid 19**

Both churches remained open and Father Chris again thanked the teams of Stewards for enabling this to happen, and in particular Steve Goulding and Paul Davenport for co-ordinating. The current situation was improved with higher numbers attending Mass helped by the change in distancing to 1 metre plus which enabled more flexible seating in church. There had been an increase also in people enquiring about Baptisms and Weddings which was being managed appropriately. The Choir might be able to resume after 17<sup>th</sup> May, and in the meantime up to three Cantors could perform over the Easter services. Many thanks to Stella and Kevin for their contributions to the music at Mass on Sundays at both churches.

### **3. New Parish Structures – Membership and Terms of Reference**

The membership of the PPC and the various Teams had been circulated, together with terms of reference for both the Council and the Teams, and the draft Constitution for PPC. All of these documents had been adopted, and copies had been attached to the agenda for reference. It was difficult to take forward the Outreach and Evangelisation Teams in the current circumstances, but both were very important and should be kept on the agenda.

Andy Davies presented a report on behalf of the Finance Team. There were no major concerns at present, fundraising was holding up fairly well despite the current difficulties, and the position would be kept under close review with the

next Team meeting in early May. It was thought that St. Joseph's would present the greater problems as the church was an older building and the house required major repairs and essential upgrades in the medium term. All of this would place increasing pressures on Parish funds. The "Bethlehem 2021" fund and "Easyfundraising" had been welcome successes, and a Grand National Sweepstake together with an Easter Raffle would be promoted shortly to generate more income. Gift Aid on regular contributions to the Parish was important and should be encouraged wherever possible. It was suggested that people outside the parish could be invited to donate financially to help offset the costs of the live stream at Saint Michael's. The grant we received to pay for the first year of streaming will run out soon and the parish will then need to pay the monthly subscription to continue the live stream. This could be promoted through the website and social media.

The initial virtual meeting of the Communications Team had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. The proposed Terms of Reference and use of social media had been discussed recognising that the latter had become most important in the current situation. Website development for the Parish was well advanced and the business would be kept fully up to date. It was intended to publish the PPC minutes on the website, and the draft would be vetted by Father Chris and Lynn to protect confidentiality.

Liturgy Team continued to meet regularly and the Lent and Triduum services had practically been finalised and would be posted on the website shortly. The increased use of social media to help to circulate information was welcomed. Graham updated on the use of video, particularly on the Parish YouTube Channel with more ideas being considered for future developments.

The Parish Census was progressing well, with a high level of responses, the main challenge being to ensure that each form is signed to comply fully with GDPR.

It was therefore agreed that:

- (a) the leadership and roles of the Outreach and Evangelisation Teams be kept under review at the next meeting (**Action: Mike**);
- (b) inclusion of the PPC Minutes on the website be supported (**Action: Father Chris, Lynn and Mike**).

#### **4. Strategic Vision and Objectives for the next 12 Months**

The Council considered what the “new normal” might be? Restrictions in church could continue well into the Autumn. Stewarding in both churches had been successful and was appreciated by those able to attend Mass. Although numbers coming to church were much lower, the arrangements had helped to get to know parishioners better. The current congregation was different to previously, with an average of over 20 at weekday Masses including newer people so other needs were being met. It was noted that Heritage Lottery Fund support was dependent on the Parish showing that we reach out better to the whole Community. More people were moving between the two churches and parishioners were now taking more ownership of issues as opposed to a mainly Clergy based lead. The question was how do we build on this response in pandemic circumstances and plan to deliver more effectively in the future?

The necessary more disciplined approach and the use of Stewards because of Covid had value to be recognised beyond that of the current situation. Many appreciated the more dignified approach to the reception of Holy Communion. A balance needs to be struck between formal and informal measures. We need to be a welcoming community but recognise that stewarding people can be very helpful in managing expectations and understanding of what is required. This is particularly true for visitors to our churches e.g. at funerals. The point was made that the Council should not overlook the worth of what was had in generating Community spirit prior to Covid.

Family attendance at Mass had declined. Encouraging younger people and families back to church was important, noting that this was also dependent on social events which were difficult to arrange at present. Younger people wanted to meet up with friends through church, but also to worship in different ways.

Good and regular liaison with the Schools was key, and they should be heavily involved. A “Welcome Pack” could be prepared maybe for Pentecost (23<sup>rd</sup> May) or at some stage in the Summer. This could be a task for the Outreach Team and it was noted that there was ample resource material to support this.

Livestreaming of services from St. Michael’s had been valuable and should be continued. Similarly the ongoing use of social media involving the Clergy and Deacons was vital for the future. The idea of a virtual Parish evening with a quiz was mooted together with production of a “banner” in due course to say we were “open for business again” to encourage people to return to church. All of this should be considered and progressed by the Communications Team.

It was therefore agreed:

(a) the Communications and Outreach Teams be encouraged to develop the use of Social Media and a “Welcome Pack” to further engage with people post lockdown **(Action: Communications and Outreach Teams)**;

(b) this item be included for further review in the next agenda **(Action: Mike)**

## **5. Further Development of Joint Structures**

This item had been deferred, although it remained important to bring the 2 ends of a diverse Parish together, and much could be achieved through the various Ministries.

It was agreed that this item should be further considered at the next meeting **(Action: Mike)**

## **6. Other Business**

A Safeguarding Training Day had been organised for the Clergy, and one issue which had emerged was that we needed to be a dementia – friendly Church. The possibility of a dementia – friendly Mass was raised and would be considered further at the next meeting.

**(Action: Mike)**

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held by Zoom on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm immediately following Mass that evening.

Mike Flynn, Secretary

