

## **SAINT PHILIP NERI PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Present:** Lynn Ireland (in the Chair), Father Chris Matthews, Father Humphrey Agbim, Andrew Collins, Rev. John Birch, Sr. Catherine Bibby, Rev. Gerard Boyle, Mike Flynn, Stella McGann, Matthew Edwards, Andy Davies and Graham Lysaght.

**Apologies for Absence:** Bill Griffiths, Clare Williams and Steve Goulding

#### **1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

The minutes were approved as a correct record, and any matters arising were picked up elsewhere on the agenda.

#### **2. Parish Priest's Update**

(a) Father Chris confirmed that he would be leaving the Parish on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August to become the Dean of Shrewsbury Cathedral. He was extremely sorry to be leaving and had really enjoyed his five years in Birkenhead. It had been a time of great challenge with the formation of the new Parish of Saint Philip Neri, the need to develop community engagement and lay working, at the same time as managing the impacts of the pandemic. His successor as Parish Priest would be Canon Niall Mullaley from Ellesmere Port who would arrive in early September. Father Mullaley was well known to Father Chris, was very impressed with the progress made in Saint Philip Neri with improving lay involvement, and was very much looking forward to his move in a few weeks' time. Father Humphrey would be looking after the Parish over August.

All of the Priests and Parishes changes for the Diocese would be included in the Newsletter for 11<sup>th</sup> July.

The Council warmly congratulated Father Chris on his new appointment, and confirmed that he will be sorely missed after all the hard work he has done to bring the two Churches together in the new Parish. No changes in the membership of PPC were expected, but under the Constitution the appointments would need to be reviewed within 6 months of the arrival of the new Parish Priest. Technically, the Council would cease to exist until this was done, but it was assumed that PPC would continue to meet as usual in the interim.

(b) The arrangements for the “Welcome Back” weekend were further discussed and it was confirmed that this should now be on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July, in view of the delay in lifting Covid restrictions. In particular, a social gathering would be arranged to follow 11am Mass at St. Michael’s on the 25<sup>th</sup> July. A “save the date” card had been produced to encourage as many as possible to return to Church over the weekend, and it was hoped these would be widely distributed. Approximate numbers for the event would be ascertained by Stewards over the next two weekends. Lifts would be offered where possible and car parking would be in the School. A detailed briefing was given on what was to be available after Mass, including food, a drink, music and other entertainment, under cover in case of adverse weather. A Parish Prayer Card was also being produced and a Candle would move to each Mass over the weekend. The younger people of the Parish would be closely involved in these arrangements. The Working Party had agreed to meet on 14<sup>th</sup> July to finalise everything.

### **3. 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 imminent national relaxation of the rules could impact on Church practices. The Bishops’ Council were to discuss the position on 6<sup>th</sup> July. We are awaiting a meeting of the Government Task Force for Places of Worship and further Guidance would be issued thereafter. It was intended that some elements of social distancing would be kept in Church, including wearing of masks, but the need for post Mass cleansing might be reduced. Congregational singing could be resumed.

It was recognised that the role of Stewards had become very important, and should be continued after any relaxations. New recruits especially from previous Welcomers would be appreciated, and the role might be expanded to include Fire Marshall responsibilities. A meeting of all Stewards to review the role, develop a new rota and to consider other possible responsibilities after the new Guidance was issued would be needed. PPC would be kept up to date via email [**Action: Father Chris, Paul Davenport and Steve Goulding**].

### **4. Health and Safety Issues**

With regard to Health and Safety, the Diocese had resumed Fire Risk Assessment inspection of all Churches from 17<sup>th</sup> May, which had now been completed for both Churches in the Parish. The reports had been received and an action plan was being developed, subject to further advice from Steve Goulding. Fire procedures, signage and alarms were the main issues, and might raise some problems as both Churches were listed buildings. At St. Michael’s an

existing door will need converting to a fire exit. **[Action: Steve Goulding and Parish Priest]**.

## **5. Safeguarding**

No issues had arisen and no further actions were needed at this time.

## **6. Strategic Vision and Objectives**

The Parish Website had been very well developed and now contained a large amount of valuable information about Parish activities and events which were happening. In particular, YouTube and Social Media had become progressively well utilised and helped greatly with the forward planning in the Parish. It would be important to replace Father Chris's skills in these areas when he leaves. Other people including the Parish Secretary and Clare Williams for Children's Liturgy and other Social Media were now able to update the Website directly.

It was recognised that St. Joseph's should develop a Church history leaflet including a Church tour similar to St. Michael's under the St. Philip Neri Parish banner. **[Action: Lynn Ireland]**.

Following more detailed discussion, it was agreed that a priority for Father Niall would be to ensure that the community at Saint Joseph's continue to be encouraged to be engaged with Parish life, their lack of involvement is a weakness for the whole Parish. This was particularly so as reductions in clergy would mean that the number of Masses in Birkenhead would be less available over the weekends in the future.

## **7. Further Development of Parish Structures**

It remained difficult to take forward the leadership and membership of the Outreach and Evangelisation Teams in the current circumstances, but both were very important. Outreach currently included Mairie, Sarah and Tony and a message had been received from Mairie after the last PPC meeting, basically confirming that none of them would be able to convene and Chair the Outreach Team. It was suggested that it might be more appropriate for a Deacon to do so, but none were available.

The Outreach Groups concerned included Justice and Peace, Cafod, Traidcraft, SVP, MerseyAid and others. It was understood that Lynn and Andrew were planning to invite the leaders of these Groups to a meeting to discuss the issues and a way forward, which would be based on more co-ordination and making them more clearly a part of Parish life. This approach was supported

and it was agreed that such a meeting should be convened. **[Action: Lynn Ireland and Andrew Collins].**

It was agreed that consideration of the Evangelisation Team should be deferred until the next meeting and after Father Niall's arrival.

Further meetings of the Liturgy and Clergy Teams had taken place, and it was intended that the Social Committee would be reactivated to cover both Churches once the current restrictions were relaxed. The update of the Parish database was proceeding well.

Volunteers were needed to support a Church Wood project at St. Michael's, where much maintenance and clearing up of the grounds around the Church was needed. This could include the Scouts and the School to ensure that younger people were involved. It was even felt that a "star presenter" such as Charlie Dimmock might be interested and Stella offered to write to her and others in the media to see if this could be of interest. **[Action: Stella McGann, Steve Goulding plus Others].**

#### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7.30pm immediately following Mass that evening, subject to Canon Niall Mullaley being available. **[Action: Mike Flynn]**

Mike Flynn, Secretary

