MINUTES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at St. Columba’s on 2nd March 2023 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Fr. William, Fr Desmond, Ann McCarthy, Tim Moore, Matthew Petts, Amy O’Donnell, Sue McCarthy, Carol Galvin, Eileen Irwin, Lynsey Weightman, Sue Carr, Pauline Rourke, Anne Mosquera and Nuala Keegan.

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Fr. William.

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|  | **Action** |
| 1. | **Apologies.** Apologies were received from: Deacon Lawrence and Helen Connor.  |  |
| 2. | **To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022.**The minutes were amended to record Anne Mosquera as present. Following which the minutes were proposed by Matt and seconded by Tim and agreed by the meeting. |  |
| 3. | **Matters arising from the minutes.**1. Minute 3 (ii) Pauline reported that the Finance Committee had approved an increase in hire charges for the Hall, Iona Chapel and Newman Room to £20 per hour from 1 April. Fees for the hire of the church and the car park remain at current levels.
2. Minute 4 (iii) Pauline asked if any arrangement had been made with Chester Sinfonia for a fundraising concert. Sue advised that the Sinfonia has reiterated their offer to give a concert. It was agreed to accept this offer and seek to agree a date with the Sinfonia in May/June. Sue to follow up with them.
3. Minute 5 (viii) Pauline advised that the Finance Committee were progressing discussions relating to repairs/resurfacing of the car park at St Columba’s. It is hoped that options could be put before the Diocesan Trustees meeting in May. Pauline invited PC members to submit any questions on this matter to her.
4. Minute 3 (ii) Anne reported that the plan to hold a craft session with children over the half term had not gone ahead. It had been decided to involve the Youth Group in craft activities at their March meeting.
 | Sue C.PC members |
| 4. | **To report on and progress actions in the Parish Development Plan 2002.**1. Children’s Liturgy

Lynsey had been away so was unable to update on activities although it was generally agreed that the numbers were increasing each month and Gill and the team were thanked for their efforts. Families from St Theresa’s had been encouraged to attend as there was insufficient demand to hold separate sessions at St Theresa’s at this time.Sue C. reported that she hoped to reinstate a children’s Stations of the Cross service at St Columba’s on Good Friday. Sue is meeting with Gill on 5 March to discuss this.  *(*ii) Social Committee Ann advised that the Social Committee are meeting next week and she sounded out views on a proposal to hold a Coronation Day event/afternoon tea on 6 May in St Columba’s Hall. It was proposed to screen the coronation live and invite parishioners to meet for a celebratory “street party”.Members supported the proposal. Ann would report back to the Social Committee to progress. 1. Youth Group

 Amy reported that nine young people had attended the last meeting on 27 February. There were 5 adult helpers. The group opened their meeting with Stations of the Cross and enjoyed making pancakes and working on further promotion of the Food Bank. Amy confirmed that she was promoting the group at CHS but noted that promotion through the primary schools had not begun yet. Nuala asked whether this could be featured by Fr William and Fr Desmond when they celebrated school masses. It was agreed that this was a good opportunity to encourage the younger children to attend. Lynsey observed that St Werburgh’s & St Columba’s primary school issued a newsletter to parents every Friday. She suggested that this could be a vehicle for promoting the Youth Group.  There was a general discussion about photographs to promote the group on the website and the need to secure parental permission in advance. Amy confirmed that this was in hand. Denise has been asked to write a piece for the newsletter and school bulletins.1. Liturgy Group

 Fr William reported that the Liturgy Group had met recently at St Columba’s to discuss plans for Holy Week. There is to be a further “walk through’ meeting at St Columba’s on 25 March to brief all those involved.A meeting had not yet taken place at St Theresa’s.Ann reported that she had received a note from Deacon Lawrence with suggestions about marking special “Days of Prayer”, the Holy Father’s Intention of the month and particular aspects of our faith. Lawrence had referred to these as they are presented in the Ordo and was hoping that newsletter editors could incorporate/ feature these . He also observed that these are recognised in preparing the Prayer of the Faithful each week. Anne commented that she prepared the Thought for the Week and Pauline commented that this was very impressive and thanked Anne for her work.It was agreed to ask Lawrence to forward his suggestions to Anne for consideration as to how these matters may best be shared with parishioners through the newsletter. 1. Communications

Matt reported that some progress was being made with the website, although this was not progressing as swiftly as he hoped. He had encountered difficulties moving some content from the old to the new website and there remains an issue about publishing some contact details. Matt and Anne are working on this.Matt hoped to be able to devise or amend the current “contact us” page. It is also unclear where the current contact form drops. Matt is intending to track this. He is working to find some technical solutions and he noted that although Anthony was uploading the newsletter to the old site and operating a subscription list, so far it had not been possible to move this content/system across. A similar issue exists with regard to the hall booking page on the old website. All the stand alone media has been moved across but he is assembling a package of work for Mike Maloney as some matters require professional input. Sue McCarthy reported that two new SVP volunteers (Amanda Brefo and Emike Nasamu ) with some web design and content management expertise had offered to help Matt. Matt reported that a WhatsApp group had been set up to facilitate work on the website. Matt and the team were thanked for their efforts. The meeting agreed that bringing the website up to date and using this as a dynamic and attractive resource was a high priority.It was reiterated that all PC members should aim to provide content for the website from their respective areas of activity.1. Outreach and SVP

Sue McC reported that the Easter parcels and cards for housebound parishioners were being prepared. She invited all PC members to let her know of anyone who should be added to the list of recipients.Sue reported that the SVP holiday home at Talacre was to be opened on 7 March and that a family from the parish were booked to take a break there in August.Sue reminded the meeting of the SVP fundraising event – theatre trip – on 8 March.Sue commented that she hoped a mass for housebound parishioners could be held in the summer. Dates in May and June are to be considered. She hoped that this could be a Sunday mass which involved the Children’s Liturgy as this offered the opportunity for multi-generational worship and that housebound parishioners would appreciate this.It was noted that the date would need to avoid clashing with other events, for example the BBQ for St Columba’s feast day on 11 June. It was agreed that Sue would meet with Fr William to discuss and progress this.In respect of additional outreach Anne commented that work was continuing to update the parish directory and that Sue C had made her aware of some additional activities/contacts to be included. Ann thanked all the PC leads for their reports on the high priority development issues but observed that our focus now must be on the recruitment of volunteers to support existing projects but also to enable the parish to undertake new activities.Pauline proposed that PC members give this some thought in advance of the next meeting.Pauline further suggested that a brief resume of the Pastoral Council minutes could be written by the Chair for the newsletter. Ann noted that, following the last meeting, Nuala had offered to be the CTU representative from St Columba’s. She observed that greater engagement with our faith community neighbours had emerged from our Synod discussions. It was noted that the World Day of Prayer was taking place at the United Reformed Church in Upton on 3 March. | Sue/ GillAnnFr William & Fr Desmond Denise (Lynsey & Amy)Lawrence & Anne Matt/Anne/web team.All PC membersSue McC/allFr William/Sue McCAnne/Sue C. All PC members |
| 5. | **Update from Fr William** 1. Lent

Fr William noted that masses at both churches on Ash Wednesday had been well attended. He was pleased to note that evening mass at St Columba’s was also well attended. Fr William had visited housebound parishioners with ashes.1. RCIA

Fr William reflected on the Rite of Sending which had taken place at St Columba’s for the first time. As part of the RCIA programme it was important for the parish community to support those who are to be baptised, confirmed and received into full communion with the church. Fr William offered thanks to Zoe, Steve and Deacon Lawrence for fulfilling this liturgical role. (iii) First Holy CommunionFr William reported that 25 families (St. Theresa’s) and 28 families (St Columba’s) were engaged in the First Sacraments programme. School masses were being held at St Theresa’s and he was using this opportunity to encourage children/families to come to the Children’s Liturgy at St Columba’s. (iv) Hospital ministryFr William noted that he had celebrated mass at the hospital today and that mass was now celebrated each week on Thursday at 12.15pm with different celebrants. Fr William requested that PC members let the parish offices know if they became aware of any hospital inpatients or house bound parishioners that would like a visit.It was suggested that Frank and Maureen Brady and Mary Iremonger may be added to Fr William’s visit list. Fr William and Sue McC will progress this.  (v) Clergy meetingsFr William reported on the recent clergy meeting at St Werburgh’s. The Bishop had asked every Deanery to take a view on the re-introduction of reception of the Holy Eucharist under both kinds. When he had received information from each Deanery the Bishop would issue guidance for all parishes in the Diocese. Fr William reiterated that individual churches are not empowered to reinstate the chalice without the Bishop’s approval.Fr William noted that plans were to be developed for Chester parishes to offer mutual support eg in offering marriage preparation course. It was expected that St Columba’s would be invited to host these programmes as had been the case with the recent Catechists day. He noted that the Diocesan team based at St Clare’s were available to assist us by facilitating workshops on specific topics.1. Church buildings and environment

Fr William reported that work had started today (2 March) to repair potholes in the car park at St Theresa’s. Fr William asked Nuala to update on the inspection and remedial works to the lightning conductor on St Columba’s. Nuala reported that it was a statutory requirement that this work was undertaken every five years but there was no evidence of such works in recent years. The contractor had attended and the works were now complete.Fr William observed that he was still waiting for decision from the Diocese about repairs to the presbytery at St Theresa’s. He also noted, with appreciation, the work undertaken to complete the Peace Garden. Anne suggested that it was the right time in the planting season for any parishioners who had plants to donate to make these available. Fr William concluded by welcoming Fr Desmond to the parish. This welcome was reiterated by all Pastoral Council members. | PC membersFr William/Sue McC |
| 6. | **Any Other Business**1. Bereavement support

Carol reported that she had asked the parishioner most closely involved to invite the person to contact Fr William to discuss further. No contact had been made so far.1. Mass booklets

Sue McC reported that when stewarding she had been asked if the printed mass booklets could be reinstated. Fr William confirmed that the withdrawal of the booklets due to Covid was no longer necessary and these could be made available by stewards.1. Church heating at St Columba’s

Pauline briefed the meeting on the very high increases in heating bills at St Columba’s and she requested that a small team be set up to undertake training on the regulation of the heating system. Currently Sue C is the only person undertaking the setting and adjusting of the system. A small team, working on a rota, could alleviate some of this burden and ensure that the heating is used with maximum efficiency. Pauline noted that this could be one element of the volunteer recruitment strategy to be discussed at the next PC meeting.1. Church security at St Columba’s

Nuala briefed on a keyholder review being undertaken at St Columba’s. Ann referred to a matter raised by Deacon Lawrence and fully supported by her regarding seeking accreditation under the CAFOD “Live Simply” initiative. It was noted that the process of securing accreditation involved undertaking and providing evidence of a range of sustainable actions introduced by the parish. A number of the suggested “actions” are already in place and the “Live Simply” initiative would build on from those. Pauline suggested that more details were needed. Ann thought that a small group might undertake this work and agreed to research the matter further.1. CAFOD – “Live Simply” accreditation

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| 7. | **Date of the next meeting.**The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 4 May at 7.00pm in St Theresa’s Social Centre.**  | All |

The meeting concluded a prayer led by Fr Desmond.