MINUTES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at St. Columba’s on 26th September 2022 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Fr. William, Fr James, Deacon Lawrence, Ann McCarthy, Tim Moore, Matthew Petts, Amy O’Donnell, Sue McCarthy, Carol Galvin, Eileen Irwin, Sue Carr & Nuala Keegan

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Deacon Lawrence.

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|  | | **Action** |
| 1. | **Apologies.**  Apologies were received from: Pauline Rourke, Helen Connor, Anne Mosquera and Lynsey Weightman. |  |
| 2. | **To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2022.**  The minutes were approved. |  |
| 3. | **Matters arising from the minutes.**   1. Ann reported that the proposed Deanery meeting to discuss the Bishop’s Synod report did not go ahead. 2. Ann requested Sue C. to update the meeting on proposals for a hall refurbishment. Sue suggested that this be discussed under AOB. |  |
| 4. | **To report on and progress actions in the Parish Development Plan 2002.**  The following High Priority issues were discussed and it was noted that the Pastoral Council had given an undertaking to make progress on these matters before the end of 2022.   1. *Children’s Liturgy*   Ann noted that the Children’s Liturgy group (held on the first Sunday each month at 11.00 mass at St Columba’s) was proving very successful. (*On 2 October 22 children attended).* The team remain keen to encourage additional volunteers. It was also agreed to assemble a box of toys in the Hall for use by children in the hall after mass. Ann and Lynsey were making progress on this.  Sue McC reported that the SVP intended to ask the Children’s Liturgy Group to design a Christmas card which the SVP would print and distribute with Christmas gifts to parishioners whom they visit. The meeting commended this idea.   1. *Social Committee report*   Ann advised that Lynsey had undertaken some consultation with families regarding activities which they would like to see offered by the Social Committee. In line with this the committee had organised a Family Quiz but the response had been disappointing with only 11 people attending. Members of the committee felt discouraged and a message had been out in the newsletter to ask people to offer further suggestions and to support events when these were organised.  In principle it had been agreed by the committee to run a children’s games/crafts afternoon in the school holidays. This is likely to be in February 2023 half term.  Ann further advised that the Christmas Carol concert would take place at St Theresa’s on 23 December. More details to follow. She reported that Jacqui Worrall had agreed to make a knitted Holy Family scene which it was hoped would circulate among parish families with small children during Advent, and then be received into church at the carol concert.  Nuala noted that the Sinfonia had agreed to offer a Christmas concert for the parish and consideration had been given as to whether they would play at the carol concert or on another occasion.  Sue C. reported that it was possibly more appropriate for a separate concert of classical music to be offered. Sue will speak to Paul W. (Chair of Social Committee) and consult with the Sinfonia about arrangements for this.   1. *Youth Group*   In Helen’s absence Ann was able to report that a couple of helpers had been recruited to work on re-establishing the group. Denise L. is intending to make contact with young people in the confirmation class and others and it is hoped that the group can begin on 17 October, and thereafter on the 3rd Monday of each month. This would initially be for a 3 month trial to ascertain levels of interest.  Nuala noted that the new helpers would need to go through DBS procedures. Nuala will follow up with Helen, Denise and Sue Hutcheson.   1. *Liturgy Group*   Lawrence noted that he was no longer actively involved in this. Sue McC believed that Mark T. was not able to progress this himself.*(121022.* *Mark has advised that this is not an accurate reflection of his position. He confirmed that he is willing to coordinate the Liturgy Group and assist in planning activities.*) She observed that a Group would be helpful to plan ahead for specific liturgical celebrations such as a Harvest Festival mass. Sue C. noted that this should have taken place last week so the opportunity had been lost. Having a group to develop proposals could support such activities.  Fr William commented that it was the duty of the clergy to oversee the liturgy and establish the necessary guidelines. He believed that it was possible for him to respond to proposals from others before he determined a liturgical programme. He invited suggestions and proposals for his consideration.   1. *Communications*   Matt reported that an initial meeting had been held with Fr William and Fr James. A further meeting with others responsible for the original websites is planned to progress integration and content management in the new website. It it hoped to create a team of co-editors. Fr William observed that there is a great deal of confusion from parishioners as the information from these different sources is often contradictory or inaccurate. Making progress on integration and content management is a high priority.  Matt hopes that all the Pastoral Council members with lead responsibilities will provide updates on their respective activities and the communications group/co-editors can coordinate and upload information.   1. *Recruiting Eucharistic Ministers & Readers*   Fr William explained that there was no Diocesan training programme operating at present but he hoped that informal training could be made available within the current Parish EM team. Helen Connor has agreed to become a Reader at St Columba’s. Carol has volunteered to offer the training for Helen.  Fr William noted that he hoped others might be encouraged to come forward. Dialogue was taking place with members of the Indian community in the parish and he hoped that volunteers would be recruited before long.  In respect of Medium Priority issues Pastoral Council members were updated:   1. *Outreach and SVP recruitment*   Sue McCarthy shared the news that following the SVP recruitment event four new members had joined the team. These new recruits would now undergo training and DBS processes, as required. Sue noted that a coffee morning was planned for 9 October and for new volunteers from St Theresa’s to be identified.  Ann observed that Anne Mosquera had offered to prepare a chart of all the existing parish groups, their specific duties and the likely time commitment of each of the volunteer roles. It was hoped that this might support recruitment. Members of the Pastoral Council thanked Anne and requested that she proceed. | Sue McC/Gill Blatch.  Ann McC.  Sue C.  Nuala/Helen/Denise/ Sue H.  Fr William.  Matt/ Fr William &  Fr James  Carol/Helen  Fr William  Sue McCarthy  Anne Mosquera |
| 5. | **Update from Fr William**   1. Liturgy and community   Fr William noted that there was a greater coming together for worship across both of our churches. He was gratified that there were always people willing to read, that both choirs were working well and that in St Columba’s more young people had joined the choir, bringing extra vitality to the liturgy.  He was pleased to note the increase in younger members of the parish coming forward as altar servers at both churches and he thanked their parents for the support and encouragement. He applauded Richard Curtis who works hard to train and support the altar servers, for whom an outing was planned. He commended Richard on undertaking the London Marathon, in aid of The Countess of Chester Neonatal Unit. He hoped parishioners would support Richard’s efforts.  Fr William observed that an increasing number of families were coming in to the hall after Sunday mass at St Columba’s and into the Newman Room after weekday mass. He stressed the importance of making connections, supporting people and helping them feel part of our community.  Fr William reported on the number of requests for baptism and he commended the increasing number of families which were undertaking this for their children.  Sadly there were also a number of funerals and we mourn the loss of long serving parishioners.  Fr William and Fr James continue to visit sick parishioners at home and to provide ministry at the hospital each week. EM’s who undertake home visits also keep him advised of any specific requests for a visit from himself or Fr James.  Fr William reported on the class masses and leavers masses undertaken at our schools and that St Columba’s had hosted the annual Diocesan Schools Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark in July.  Fr William updated the meeting on work in the Peace Garden at St Theresa’s and he encouraged people to visit and see the progress being made. Chester Zoo staff were assisting with an application for further funding.   1. *Health & Safety*   Fr William commented that the health and safety of parishioners when attending our churches, was paramount. In this respect he thanked Sue C, Jim McHugh and Nuala for undertaking an initial audit of the church and hall at St Columba’s. He observed that a couple of accidents had been reported relating to pew kneelers and he asked for everyone’s support in ensuring that these were kept in the down position. He requested that stewards remind people of this when helping/directing people to their seats.  He also requested that during weekday masses in the Iona Chapel at St Columba’s that the rear doors are closed to maintain security.   1. *The Pastoral Council*   Fr William expressed his thanks to members of the Pastoral Council and reflected that spirituality must underpin all that we do.  He encouraged everyone to think about the values and Christian life of the parish and how we work together. To support this he proposed that a a day of reflection could be held during which PC members could help each other to remain focussed on our journey as disciples of Jesus. Fr William will make arrangements for someone to facilitate the day. More details to be available shortly.  Ann thanked Fr William for his comprehensive update and agreed that a day of reflection for the Pastoral Council would be very welcome. |  |
| 6. | **Pastoral Council AGM**  After discussion it was agreed that this would take place on **Thursday 10 November at 7.00pm in St Columba’s Hall**. To be followed by a social gathering and refreshments.  In accordance with our Constitution three weeks prior notice *(20 October*) would be given to the Parish, an Agenda published and members of the Parish would be encouraged to attend, ask questions, raise issues and receive reports on our progress since the adoption of the Parish Development Plan.  In principle it was agreed that individual members of the Parish Council would introduce themselves and give a very brief, scripted update on their areas of responsibility.  Ann and Nuala would meet shortly to draft the Agenda/programme for the meeting. | Ann/ Nuala |
| 7. | **Any Other Business**   1. *St Columba’s Hall*   Sue C. presented an overview of activities in the Hall, the operational and administrative demands and the vital revenue income - over £1000 per month on average.  The hall is now in almost constant use and Sue believes that the Pastoral Council ( in the absence of a functioning Building Committee) should consider   * Investing in extra cleaning hours * Recruiting an on-call caretaker to relieve some of the unsocial hours/demands she currently has to manage * Splitting the role into hall administration - (bookings and invoicing) and hall operations – (cleaning, on-call), with volunteers or paid staff taking on some of these responsibilities. * Recruiting volunteers to help with a clear out of unwanted/broken furniture and other accumulated and unwanted items. * Increasing the fees for hire after a comparison with similar venues. * A significant refurbishment programme   Sue was thanked for her commitment and diligence and Fr William authorised Sue and Nuala meet to progress these matters as soon as possible and, in respect of those matters with significant cost implications, to present him with proposals.   1. *Supply of newsletters at St Theresa’s*   Amy reported that in recent weeks the supply of newsletters at St Theresa’s had been inadequate. It was agreed to increase the allocation for St Theresa’s to 100 each week.  Nuala would advise Anne Mosquera, as newsletter coordinator/distributor.   1. *Forthcoming social events - dates from the Social Committee*   Ann updated as follows:   * 27 November – Autumn Fayre at St Columba’s * 17 December – Christmas Party lunch for “seniors” (*over 55s!)* * 23 December - Carol service at St Theresa’s   *The Synod – ongoing information*  Lawrence commented that earlier in the year Deacon Tom had agreed to provide regular items for the newsletter about the progress of the Synod. Unfortunately it had not been possible for Deacon Tom to manage this. Lawrence offered to write a piece with a summary of the Parish efforts following our Synod consultation. He would also encourage people to pray for the ongoing work of the Synod. Lawrence was thanked for his offer.   1. *Walsingham pilgrimage*   Ann reported that a parishioner had enquired whether a pilgrimage to Walsingham would be planned. This was expected to take place in 2020 but was cancelled due to Covid.  It was agreed that in the absence of a volunteer coordinator and in light of cost of living crisis there were no plans to reinstate this pilgrimage. Ann would respond to the person making the enquiry. | Sue/Nuala  Nuala/Anne  Lawrence  Ann |
| 8. | **Date of the next meeting.**  This will be the AGM **on Thursday 10 November at 7.00pm in St Columba’s Hall**. | All |

The meeting concluded a prayer led by Fr William.