

DISCLAIMER: Approved by Co-Chairs, provisional until adopted by full Council.

MINUTES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at the Newman Room, St Columba's on 21 March 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Fr William, Fr Desmond, Deacon Lawrence, Pauline Rourke, Ann McCarthy, Amy O'Donnell, Sue McCarthy, Eileen Irwin, Carol Galvin and Nuala Keegan

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Fr William. Sick and recently deceased parishioners were remembered in our prayers.

1.	<p>Apologies and resignations.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Helen Connor and Sue Carr.</p> <p>Carol advised that she had decided to resign from her post as Parish Secretary at St Columba's, at a date to be agreed.</p> <p>Pauline reported that Sue Carr had also expressed her wish to resign from her hall management duties.</p> <p>Work was underway with Fr William to recruit to these roles, jointly or separately, and the Pastoral Council would be kept advised.</p> <p>Carol and Sue would be formally thanked, and their contributions celebrated fully, in due course.</p>
2.	<p>To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024.</p> <p>The meeting received the minutes, and these were agreed as a correct record. Proposed: Eileen and seconded: Sue McC.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising from the minutes.</p> <p>There were no matters arising which were not included on the agenda.</p>
4.	<p>Reports from the AGM 4 March 2024.</p> <p>Pauline commented that the minutes would not be formally approved until the next AGM, however it was timely to review the action items agreed at the meeting and update Pastoral Council members.</p> <p>Accordingly, the following were noted:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) <u>Children's Liturgy</u></p> <p>Gill Blatch has confirmed that she will be offering Children's Liturgy twice a month after Easter. Information will be prepared for the newsletter.</p>

(b) Youth Group and SVP

Amy reported that Fair Trade had been the theme of the latest meeting.

Sue McC noted that the SVP youth mass had taken place at CHS and Amy confirmed that there had been very positive feedback from the young people. Photographs had been taken for the website.

Easter cards for housebound parishioners had been prepared and signed and were ready for distribution.

(c) Liturgy group

Fr William advised that the focus for the group had been arrangements for Holy Week and Easter services. He stated that there would be no Mass at St Theresa's on Holy Thursday or Holy Saturday. Instead, the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Easter Vigil Mass would be held at St Columba's and arrangements were being put in place to offer lifts to anyone who required transport. Masses would be offered in both churches on Easter Sunday.

Three people would be received/confirmed into the church at the Easter Vigil service.

Fr William confirmed that leaflets with full details of services, times and locations were available at both churches. Fr William and Fr Desmond will be assisted during Holy Week and Easter by Fr Hugh and Fr Phil from the Spiritans Order.

Fr William further reported that Mass would be offered at 2pm at St Theresa's on Divine Mercy Sunday (6 April 2024).

(d) Communications

Ann reported that she had convened a meeting of the website team, comprising Michael, Amanda and Matt. Significant progress had been made in recent days including the de-activation of both old websites. These were now archived only. Text and images on the "new" website had been updated and the team were working on outstanding issues.

Pauline commented that discussions in the Welcome to Our Parish group had identified the importance of ensuring consistency between hard copy and website versions of materials prepared for new parishioners.

Fr William expressed his interest in the work of the website team and wished for invitations to the next meeting to be extended to Fr Desmond and himself.

ACTION: Ann agreed to convene a further meeting of the group.

(e) Safeguarding

No further update.

(f) Social Committee

Ann reported that an afternoon tea would be held at St Columba's hall on Sunday 14 April to raise money towards the cost of a new sound system for St Theresa's.

Amy had not yet been able to make progress with the idea for a film afternoon. She hoped to be able to action this during the Easter holiday. Pauline commented that there was a full-size screen for such screenings at St Columba's.

(g) Buildings and maintenance

Pauline referred members to the update in the newsletter on rain ingress/structural investigations at St Columba's. Currently a "watching brief" applies.

Eileen noted that a further team from the Diocese had visited to inspect the problems with the presbytery at St Theresa's. A copy of their report had been requested but this was only available via Richard Crawford, and this had not yet been received.

(h) Finance

Nothing further to report.

(i) Bishop's visit

Pauline asked Fr William to outline the procedure for requesting a meeting of Pastoral Council delegates with the Bishop on his forthcoming visit.

Fr William advised that he would need to consult the Bishop's Secretary to ascertain whether the programme would be capable of incorporating such a meeting.

ACTION: Fr William to contact Theresa Stones.

(j) Walsingham pilgrimage

Pauline asked Fr William whether he had been able to raise the possibility of a joint Deanery pilgrimage.

Fr William advised that once a small team of organisers had been assembled in our parish, he would be able to extend the invitation to other parishes in the Deanery to participate in the pilgrimage. He stressed the importance of establishing such a team to undertake arrangements.

(k) Membership of the Pastoral Council

Eileen reported that a parishioner at St Theresa's (Carole Ingram) had been invited by Fr William to join the Pastoral Council. Eileen would provide Carole's contact details and a formal invitation would be extended to Carole.

ACTION: Eileen and Nuala

	<p>Pauline encouraged Pastoral Council members to contact Ann or herself if there were any further suggestions.</p> <p>Lawrence noted that the volunteer recruitment appeals had not so far included volunteering for the Pastoral Council. It was agreed that this role should be included in further volunteering appeals and details of the role added to documentation.</p> <p>A piece for the newsletter could be drafted thanking retiring PC members and expressing a desire to welcome new people, especially individuals from the diverse communities present in the parish.</p> <p>ACTION: Pauline & Ann</p>
5.	<p>Report on recruitment of volunteers.</p> <p>The report prepared by Pauline and Ann was accepted.</p> <p>Pauline highlighted the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The recruitment of new Readers at St Columba's had offered the opportunity to rewrite training and guidance materials. This was currently with Fr William awaiting his approval. It is proposed to meet all existing and new Readers soon to discuss best practice and to ensure consistency. <p>One young person had volunteered to become a Reader at St Theresa's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruiting volunteers to assist with First Sacrament preparation and RCIA required a different approach as such responsibilities were considerable and time consuming and required knowledge and expertise. There was no conclusion yet as to how to approach such a recruitment appeal, but early thoughts suggested that a personal approach to possible volunteers would be required. ○ Fr William noted that training programmes were available from the Diocese to assist people undertaking these roles. <p>Fr William introduced the need to recruit a team to lead on infant baptism preparation. He envisaged such a team meeting with parents three times before a group baptism service and coordinating an annual celebration mass for families of baptised children. He observed that he had tried to introduce this but without success to date. He believed that such arrangements would encourage greater bonding between family groups and could also be a route into RCIA programmes for any non-Catholic parents.</p> <p>Lawrence requested that attention be given to recruiting more members to the team authoring the Prayers of the Faithful. Due to illness the team undertaking this ministry was currently under strength and he observed that it would be helpful to expand the team.</p>

6.	<p>Report on the “Welcome to Our Parish” group meeting.</p> <p>Pauline referred members to the report taken at the AGM on this matter.</p> <p>She highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recent reviews of other parish websites had convinced the team that much work remained to be done to ensure that our parish website was at least as good as the best examples. ○ The welcome pack for new parishioners was under active discussion. Once completed this also needed to be included on the website. ○ Name badges had been introduced for welcomers at both churches. ○ A Parish Registration form was being prepared. A meeting of the group was scheduled, and it was hoped to finalise this form shortly. The need to include the Diocese’s data protection notice needed to be included. A secure place needed to be identified in both churches for completed forms to be deposited. <p>Eileen asked if the name of next of kin should be included on the form. Pauline commented that this could be discussed at the next WtOP group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A programme of activities for new parishioners was also under consideration for the future.
7.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><i>(a) Safeguarding audit</i></p> <p>Lawrence reported that the Diocese was currently undergoing an independent Safeguarding audit, the purpose of which is to ascertain how well safeguarding is understood and actioned. A report would be made to the Bishop and Diocesan Trustees in due course with recommendations and a schedule for action. It is possible that such audits may also operate at parish level in future.</p> <p><i>(b) Establishment of a Peace Commission</i></p> <p>Lawrence asked how the parish could come together to speak out against the conflict in Gaza. He suggested that a prayer meeting could be held outside the office of our MP.</p> <p>There was a wide-ranging discussion about the position taken by CAFOD and the extensive information available on their website.</p> <p>It was agreed that prayers for peace could feature prominently in our Holy Week Prayers of the Faithful and information included in the newsletter. Fr Desmond observed that the writing of the Holy Father on this subject should direct our efforts.</p> <p>ACTION: Fr Desmond and Deacon Lawrence to prepare prayers and newsletter text.</p>

	<p><i>(c) <u>St Columba's 60th anniversary</u></i></p> <p>Carol reported that Dutton and Hallmark had offered to donate flowers to decorate the church for the 60th anniversary in October. More information to follow on this nearer the time.</p> <p><i>(d) <u>Eucharistic Ministers</u></i></p> <p>Sue McCarthy asked that in any recruitment and commissioning of EMs the importance of taking Holy Communion to people at home be included. It was noted that not all current EMs undertook this aspect of the ministry.</p> <p>The requirement for DBS clearance in such cases was noted.</p>
8.	<p>Date and time of next meeting.</p> <p>Dates of forthcoming meetings were confirmed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 7.00pm Monday 13 May (St Theresa's) ○ 7.00pm Wednesday 3 July (St Columba's)

The meeting concluded with a prayer led by Fr Desmond.