

MINUTES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at St. Theresa's Social Centre on 22nd January 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Fr. William, Ann McCarthy, Tim Moore, Matthew Petts, Amy O'Donnell, Sue McCarthy, Anne Mosquera, Helen Connor, Carol Galvin, Eileen Irwin, Sue Carr & Nuala Keegan

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

Nuala was welcomed back to the Pastoral Council and congratulations were extended to Matt and his wife on the birth of their baby boy before Christmas.

		Action
1.	Apologies. Apologies were received from Fr Desmond, Deacon Lawrence and Lynsey Weightman.	
2.	To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2023. The minutes were amended as follows: Minute 2 - to record Anne Mosquera as present Minute 7 – to note that the date of the forthcoming AGM is 4 March (not 14 March) With these amendments the minutes were approved as a correct record – proposed by Sue McC and seconded by Matt.	
3.	Matters arising from the minutes. (i) Minute 5a – Ann commented that the Safe Spaces link had now been sent to Matt for inclusion on the website. Eileen noted that all Eucharistic Ministers would need DBS checks (not only those who routinely undertake home visits) as any Eucharistic Minister might be called upon in an emergency. Anne observed that under new arrangements a single DBS was now sufficient for all parish activities. Pauline asked whether the meeting with Fr William and Fr Desmond had taken place yet. Fr William advised that this would be scheduled when Fr Desmond returned from leave.	

	<p>(ii) Minute 5b – Sue C asked whether the photos supplied by the Sinfonia of the concert held on 8 December had been uploaded to the website. Discussion followed as to whether by submitting the photos there was implied consent from the Sinfonia for their use in publicity and communications. It was resolved that this was the case and Matt confirmed that he would contact David Savage for the images.</p> <p>(iii) Minute 6 – Pauline asked whether Amy had been successful in recruiting any CHS 6th formers to help with Children’s Liturgy. Amy noted that she had not been able to pursue this but would follow up as soon as possible.</p> <p>(iv) Minute 8 – Ann confirmed that a plaque commemorating the life of Jessica Baker had been procured and was being engraved. It would be installed at St Theresa’s soon. A rose was also to be purchased for the Peace Garden in Jessica’s memory.</p>	
4.	<p>To receive and consider activity reports.</p> <p>Reports were received as previously circulated. In some cases additional information was provided to the meeting and discussion took place as follows:</p> <p>(a) <u>Safeguarding</u> Report received and noted.</p> <p>(b) <u>Social Committee</u> Report received and noted.</p> <p>(c) <u>Youth Group</u> Report received and noted.</p> <p>(d) <u>Liturgy Group</u> Report received and noted.</p> <p>Anne commented that she had been approached by a number of parishioners who expressed disappointment that an evening Mass, in addition to the Children’s Mass at 4.30pm, had not taken place on Christmas Eve.</p> <p>Sue C. noted that she had received similar representations. There was a view that the 4.30pm service was too early and that a Mass at 8.00pm was to be</p>	

	<p>preferred.</p> <p>Fr William observed that the timing of the Children's Mass was designed to attract families with young children and that a later time would prevent their attendance. He hoped that all parishioners would value the greater involvement of children and families as this was a very strong aim which had emerged from the Synod discussions. It was regrettable that some people had been dissatisfied with the arrangements but overall the meeting endorsed the arrangements and commented on the vitality and dynamism of the Children's Mass.</p> <p>Pauline asked for clarification about minute 4 in respect of readers accessing the altar and concern about the steps. As someone who had been involved in training and support of readers and prospective readers she observed that this had not been raised previously. Eileen commented that the reference should be read in relation to access at St Theresa's only.</p> <p>Further discussion took place about the steps and ease of access for Eucharistic Ministers at St Columba's but those present who fulfilled this role noted that they were aware of the matter and took care. Anne asked that this be kept under review in order to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.</p> <p><i>(e) <u>Communications</u></i></p> <p>Report received and noted.</p> <p>Matt confirmed that he had received information from Amy regarding the Youth Group and that he would be uploading this to the website shortly. Amy observed that when specific pages for different activities were created on the website she would be happy to upload content directly. Matt thanked her and agreed that creation of specific pages for each of the activity areas would be beneficial and would aid navigation of the site. Matt resolved to work on this with Mike Maloney and others involved on the web team.</p> <p><i>(f) <u>Outreach and SVP recruitment</u></i></p> <p>Sue McC provided a short verbal update. She thanked the Youth Group for their work on the parish Christmas card and reported that the card and gifts had been very warmly received by vulnerable people at home.</p> <p><i>(g) <u>Churches Together</u></i></p>	<p>Matt/Mike Maloney</p>
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	<p>No report.</p> <p>Fr William advised that since Nuala had resigned from her liaison role for health reasons he had been unable to find a replacement to take on this activity. David Savage had agreed to return to the role until a permanent replacement could be found.</p> <p>Fr William reported that St Columba's had hosted a very successful Fifth Sunday service.</p> <p><i>(h) Buildings</i></p> <p>Report received and noted.</p> <p>In addition Pauline advised that resurfacing of the car park had been completed successfully. The contractors would be returning this week to mark out the parking bays, including spaces for drivers with disabilities, and a footpath from Newhall Road to the rear church porch. It was hoped that these final works would ensure safety for drivers and pedestrians.</p> <p>In respect of the leaks in the church Pauline confirmed that Richard Crawford, Diocesan Property Manager would be on site to oversee work when the contractor visited to inspect and hopefully rectify the problems.</p> <p>Pauline will prepare a note for the newsletter on these matters.</p>	
5.	<p>Update from Fr William</p> <p><i>(a) Lent and Easter liturgy.</i></p> <p>Fr William confirmed that arrangements for Lent and Easter had been agreed.</p> <p><i>(b) Altar servers</i></p> <p>Enrolment Masses for altar servers had taken place in both churches. One server with 10 years' service had been awarded a special medal.</p> <p><i>(c) RCIA</i></p> <p>Candidates for reception into the church would be presented to the parish during the Easter Vigil.</p>	

<p><i>(d) <u>Schools liaison</u></i></p> <p>School visits and meetings with parents at schools regarding First Sacraments were continuing. The CHS Mass at St Theresa's had been very important for engaging young people in the life of the parish. The opportunity to speak to the young people after Mass had been much appreciated.</p> <p><i>(e) <u>Confirmations</u></i></p> <p>The Bishop's secretary had confirmed that the confirmation service would take place on 8 November.</p> <p><i>(f) <u>Baptisms</u></i></p> <p>Requests for baptism continued to be received at a steady number especially from parents wanting to arrange baptism for second and subsequent children. Fr William expressed his pleasure at this trend which he believed demonstrated an ongoing engagement with families and the parish.</p> <p>Matt reported that an enquiry had been received via our Facebook page regarding registration for baptism. Matt was requested to direct the enquirer to the relevant church office.</p> <p><i>(g) <u>Hospital and sick visiting</u></i></p> <p>Fr William thanked Sue McC for her regular hospital visiting. He confirmed that Mass was held in the hospital chapel on the first Thursday every month. He visits the hospital every Wednesday and Friday and Fr Desmond visits every Tuesday and Thursday.</p> <p>Fr William has received a request to say Mass/hold a service at "The Willows" residential and nursing home in Blacon. Date to be arranged.</p> <p><i>(h) <u>Bishop's Pastoral Visit</u></i></p> <p>The dates for the visits have been confirmed as weekends 25/26 May at St Columba's and 13/14 July at St Theresa's.</p> <p>Full details will be provided by the Bishop's Secretary in due course.</p> <p><i>(i) <u>St Columba's Hall</u></i></p> <p>Fr William advised that Sue C had indicated her desire to set a date for her retirement as Hall Manager. He proposed that further discussions should take place to</p>	<p>Matt</p>
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	<p>identify someone to “understudy” and eventually take over from Sue. He asked Sue if she had any person in mind. Sue commented that any potential volunteer would need to be asked directly by Fr William as Parish Priest, as she felt this approach was more likely to be successful.</p> <p><i>(j) <u>St Theresa’s church and presbytery</u></i></p> <p>Fr William commented that issues with the PA system in church remained unresolved. He was receiving frequent comments that people could not hear. Ann observed that the noise from the heating system contributed to the problem, especially at the rear of the church.</p> <p>Fr William asked that actions be considered to resolve the issue. Pauline asked whether removal of some of the rear pews, encouraging parishioners to sit closer to the altar, might assist.</p> <p>Eileen commented that she had raised the matter with Paul Wigglesworth regarding fundraising by the Social Committee to improve the PA system.</p> <p>The structural issues with the presbytery were ongoing. Eileen advised that she had been informed by the Diocese that the matter was being considered by the insurance company but there was no progress to report at this time.</p> <p>Fr William advised that Fr Desmond would be returning from leave on 15 February.</p>	
6.	<p>Recruitment of volunteers</p> <p>The report from Ann and Pauline was received and noted.</p> <p>Ann confirmed that this was phase 2 of the recruitment drive and would be followed by a further stage focussed on the spiritual aspects of parish life. This would include support for sacramental preparation programmes. Pauline observed that these roles required particular skills and knowledge and therefore recruitment was likely to be by direct invitation to individuals to become involved.</p> <p>Pauline confirmed that the first recruitment drive had been encouraging with 20 volunteers coming forward at St Columba’s and 6 at St Theresa’s. Some of these were people already involved but willing to take on additional duties.</p> <p>Ann advised that appeals during Mass would be required to activate phase 2 and it was agreed that Ann and Pauline would lead these appeals with support from other PC</p>	

	<p>members on weekend of 24/25 February. This would also be an opportunity to thank all those people who currently volunteer in some capacity.</p> <p>Pauline confirmed that inviting people to come into the hall after Mass would not be part of the appeal as this strategy had not been particularly valuable last time.</p>	
7.	<p>Report from the “Welcoming” group meeting.</p> <p>Pauline tabled a report* from the first meeting of the “Welcoming” group. She observed that the meeting had been useful and included representatives from both churches with some new faces involved.</p> <p>The work had emerged from Synod discussions and it was considered that although the parish was welcoming some more specific actions could be developed to further and deepen parishioners engagement with the parish.</p> <p>She referred to the agreed actions emerging from the meeting and requested Pastoral Council members to gather any examples of good practice which they encountered on visits to other parishes so that these could be incorporated, where appropriate.</p> <p>It was suggested that registration cards could be available in churches for new parishioners to complete and this would be considered by the group when looking at the content of a “Welcome Pack”.</p> <p>* Report attached to these minutes</p>	Pauline/welcomers group
8.	<p>Agenda and format of the Pastoral Council AGM</p> <p>Ann asked if PC members were satisfied to present short reports on their areas of responsibility, as at the AGM in 2023. This was agreed.</p> <p>Ann asked if the format of the meeting should generally follow that done last year, with formal business followed by a social gathering. It was agreed to operate the AGM in this format.</p>	All PC members
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Fr William wished to record thanks to a couple of new volunteers at St Theresa’s who were coming each week to maintain the garden and outside spaces.</p> <p>Fr William also commented on the successful Fish and Chip supper held by the Catenians. Sue McC commented</p>	

	that funds raised by the event had been donated by the Catenians to the SVP and that this was very much appreciated.	
7.	<p>Date of the next meeting.</p> <p>Dates and venues were agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday 20 March at St Columba's <input type="checkbox"/> Monday 13 May at St Theresa's. 	All

The meeting concluded a prayer led by Fr William.

Report on Welcomers' Meeting for Pastoral Council 22.01.24

Recurrent theme in response to parish synod questionnaire - be more welcoming as church and parish

Recruited some more welcomers in autumn, offered opportunity to think about specific role of welcomers and the principles of welcoming people to parish - both newcomers and those who are already parishioners

Group from both churches met last week to consider:

- How welcoming is parish? • How can it be improved?
- Meeting largely concerned with setting agenda for future meetings but overall view, from group with longstanding and relatively new parishioners was, as you might expect, that the parish is a welcoming community but that more could be done - and needed to be done.

Looked specifically at:

- Idea of producing a Welcome Pack for new parishioners
- Re-appraising information already available about the parish:
 - Notice boards - short of space for them in St T, possibly too many in St C and much doesn't grab attention
 - Website - new one much more attractive but information sparse under some links
 - Newsletter - could editing be tightened a bit to ensure that related items are grouped together for instance?

Next meeting

- Consider what might be needed in Welcome Pack
- Consider investigation of other churches' information sources - web site, newsletters, notice boards, and learn from others good practice.