

Parish of Our Lady & St Thomas and The English Martyrs

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting

January 29th, 2019

**Present:** xxxx, xxxx xxxx, xxxx, xxxx (Secretary) xxxx, xxxx (Chair), xxxx, xxxx, xxxx.

**In attendance:** xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx.

**Apologies:** xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx.

The meeting opened with prayer.

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on November 14th were approved.

**2. Matters Arising**

- a. In relation to the item referring to the bereavement group, xxxx asked whether the note had been put into the newsletter and he went on to remind the meeting that the St Vincent De Paul (SVP) Society had been visiting bereaved members of the parish since it was first formed in 1929. In response the Chair said that it had been decided to defer the matter until the spring and that it would be a full item on the agenda for the next meeting of the parish council.
- b. xxxx asked for more detail about the direct contribution from parish funds to the Outreach group and whether it was still the practice that the outreach group would only make grants to organisations where there was a link with a member of the parish.

In response to the second point, xxxx said that new members had joined the group recently and an opportunity was taken to review the priorities and criteria for making grants. This was a normal thing to do periodically. The principle that there needed to be a link to someone in the parish for a grant to be made was retained.

In relation to the first point, Fr Gus said that he regarded the work that Outreach was doing as important for the parish. It is a great work. But, he was surprised when he came to find that as well as holding fun-raising activities there was a contribution from parish funds. It seemed to him that this was asking people in the parish to pay twice. The 5% level had been gradually reduced to 2.5% but as a result of his experience in his previous parish and since coming here he perceived that there was a need to provide a counselling service, especially for young people. He had approached the head of the Diocesan Caring Service who agreed that there was a need but there were no funds to support it. He had also tried to secure funding through the schools but that proved fruitless. He had suggested to Diocesan Caring Service that the 2.5% from parish funds be transferred to the Diocesan Caring Service to fund some counselling. This was accepted and a counsellor was hired on a session-by-session basis. Fr Gus then approached other parishes in the deanery where it was agreed that the service was needed but so far, no cash has been forthcoming. He will be raising the matter at the

next deanery meeting. The service has been established at the Mother of God parish and in the first year 101 people have been helped at a cost of about £2,000 but our parish has not funded all of that.

### **3. Council Membership**

The Chair welcomed the head of our school to the meeting. He will represent the school here in order to strengthen the links between parish and school. The Chair also reported that xxx has stepped down as the representative of the property committee. The Chair thanked him for his work at the council and asked that Fr Gus to request that the property committee nominate a replacement member.

### **4. Use of Missalettes in the Parish**

The continued use of missalettes had been questioned at a previous meeting and the views of the parish had been canvassed in the newsletter. The responses had been collated and copies printed for members to read. In addition, three further comments were reported to the meeting. The Chair asked members to talk briefly with the person next to them and the asked each to give their comments. As many of the comments were endorsed by others, the following are a selection of the comments that cover the spectrum of opinions expressed;

- ❖ Using the missalette helps to focus the mind on the readings.
- ❖ They are useful to take to the housebound.
- ❖ We used to use missals, but the new translation deterred people.
- ❖ They give people to chance to be actively involved, otherwise they get distracted.
- ❖ Anything that promotes ongoing attention of young people is vital.
- ❖ People with a hearing problem need them as some readers are not very clear.
- ❖ I use missalettes simply because it is there, I could use a missal.
- ❖ People who have arthritis find in difficult to turn the pages of a missal.
- ❖ They are needed when the church is noisy when there are many children.
- ❖ They are useful for people whose first language is not English.
- ❖ They are helpful for visitors or non-Catholics.
- ❖ The rustle of everyone turning the pages at the same time is distracting.
- ❖ Several people expressed the view that it was better to listen to the readings so that we hear the Word of God.
- ❖ I don't like them they are useful for some, but they are fussy.

Addressing the issue of cost, the following comments were made;

- ❖ The cost per unit is minimal [Secretary's note; actually, about 13p per copy].
- ❖ People could be asked to pay for the missalette or make a contribution.
- ❖ Laminate the proper of the Mass and print the readings separately on a smaller sheet.
- ❖ Use an OHP and project the words onto a screen.
- ❖ Find out how many actually wanted the missalette and only order that number.
- ❖ xxx offered that the school could reproduce copies of the missalette, but it was pointed out that this would infringe copyright.

Fr Gus responded. He said that cost was not a major factor; he wanted to make eye contact with as many people in the congregation as possible so that they could be drawn more deeply into the celebration around the altar. Missal and missalettes are barriers to the focus on the celebration. People should experience the liturgy through greater spiritual engagement. This is a development towards a conversion of the heart. When the new translation was introduced there was an opportunity for an extended catechesis in the lead-in period.

The Chair suggested there was a need to further catechesis. He went on to say that the ideas expressed would be investigated but no immediate decisions would be taken.

## **5. Buildings Update**

Fr Gus said that he had noticed water dripping from the ceiling, right onto the place where a coffin would be placed during a funeral. This happened after heavy rain when the wind was from a certain direction. He had contacted the diocesan property manager. As a result, the company that installed the new roof in 2002, came to carry out a survey of the roof. It was discovered that the cladding covering the cross at the pinnacle of the roof had split on the north side. This was repaired at a cost of about £2,500 + VAT. When he asked how he lead cladding had come to split, he did not receive a satisfactory answer.

Other repairs that are needed include; some of the outside lights at the church at Meadowhead were not working and this was not because of failed bulbs; some repairs to the sacristy and a handrail at Totley.

## **6. Deanery Matters**

The Chair said that he had attended the recent deanery meeting at the pastoral centre as a substitute for Fr Gus, xxxx was also present. The main concern was about managing mass times across the deanery. Some young families had been lost as a result of changes in various parishes. There was a focus on sharing resources to support various ministries such as children's liturgy. In an effort to try to get the whole deanery to work together, a number of working groups were ;

- ❖ Mission and evangelisation
- ❖ Parish administration
- ❖ Parish buildings and property
- ❖ Catechesis (Baptism)
- ❖ Catechesis (Communion and Confirmation)
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Liturgy

It was proposed that two people from each parish should be appointed to each group, but no plans were put in place.

Fr Gus commented that a big weakness is that no deanery forum has been established. He Chair added that at present it was rather like re-arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. xxxx asked if there had been any discussion of giving these bodies real authority to make decisions. Looking forward a few years when there would be only a handful of priests for the

whole City, Lay People would have to have that authority and the transfer of responsibility should be under way now. The Chair responded that this had never been discussed and suggested sending an email to the bishop.

#### **7. Liturgy Group**

Following the discussion at the last parish council meeting a group of interested people met on November 28th and decided that each of the groups involved in a ministry associated with the liturgy should be invited to meet. These meetings were in progress, 3 groups had already met. There are two more scheduled and the bigger group will come together on February 11th.

#### **8. Ecumenical Ideas**

Fr Gus said that he had been working with the local pastors and was looking for ideas about how events where people from the different churches could meet and get to know one another as well as pray and worship together. He gave an example. There was a gathering before Christmas at Woodseats Methodist Church organised by Lunts, the funeral directors, for all those bereaved whose funeral Lunts had organised. This was a well-attended event. There were a number of independent evangelical churches in the area whose focus was setting up pastoral support for primary schools. Fr Gus encouraged people to put forward ideas either directly to him or via the Chair.

#### **9. Parish Twin**

The Chair enquired whether the parish was twinned with any others. xxxx said that the SVP conference was twinned with two other parish conferences overseas. Fr Gus said that he was in contact with parishes in Bethlehem where there was a great need for support.

#### **10. Future Meetings**

It was agreed that the parish council would meet on the second Tuesday of every other month. The next three meetings will be; March 12th, May 14th and July 9th.