

Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert's Parish Council

Tuesday 6th October 2020 - Zoom Meeting 2.30pm

Minutes

Present: Fr. Nick, Sr Paschaline, Ann Callan, MariaLuisa Massagli-Gallagher, Brian Rinaldi, Eugene Brady, Anne Berry, Susan Hall, Maria Crawford. *Noted that Peter Fleming tried valiantly (for 2 hours!) to join the meeting.*

Apologies: – Duncan Reed, Sr. Uche, Anne Smith

Opening prayer – led by Fr Nick

1. Matters arising from the April summary of parish issues.
 - a) Handrails on the altar & Redecoration of the – still awaiting advice from the Diocese
 - b) Update on Roger's gift to the parish.... Anne Smith sent a message to the meeting that the three banners will be ready by mid-November. Cost of each banner - £200

2. Finance Report

Ann Callan gave the 6-monthly Financial Report. Obviously, due to the current situation, our income has dropped. Although many parishioners have moved to pay through Standing Orders, the weekly contributions are still lower than in the past. Father optimistically pointed out that the usual expenses have similarly been reduced. However, we do have a number of substantial bills to pay in the coming months – **see building issues**. Some of these repairs may be eligible for a grant under the Listed Places of Worship scheme, allowing us to claim back the VAT. Also although the Diocese has not yet requested the levy fee to be paid (est. £1,800) we must still budget for this. With all the impending expenses, Ann suggested that we ask the Diocese to transfer £10,000 from our Deposit Account to cover the repairs and maintenance bills and help towards general running costs until a more regular income from the offertory is restored and we are able to fund raise once more. This suggestion was **agreed by the PC**. Financial Reports are available in all our churches. Ann was thanked for her dedicated and professional commitment to keeping our finances in order

3. Building issues

- a) Cemetery Paths – Reg Savory has started the work
- b) Letting of St Joseph's Lodge – this is once again vacant. Robinsons will continue to oversee and advertise the property. Until a new tenant is found we will have to pay council tax & utility bills
- c) Presbytery & Church
 - i. Underfloor leak in the Sacristy & church boiler have been repaired.}
 - ii. Hive heating system to the presbytery has been installed.} £1,052.
 - iii. Roof repair – slates & flashing - £2,340
 - iv. Heating servicing for Church, Presbytery & Convent – est. £500
 - v. Sacristy displaying signs of damp – ventilation bricks to be installed
 - vi. Water damage observed on ceiling of St Cuthbert's aisle. Roofer to investigate
 - vii. Driveway to Father's garage – tree growing 'out of' the wall causing wall to crack. When presbytery hedge is trimmed, the gardener will also take out the tree. Reg Savory to be asked to repair wall (**MMG**)

4. Groundwork

- a) Hedges around the presbytery garden are to be cut back, est.£400. Gardener will also be asked to look at the trees in the churchyard
- b) Father has been asked if a bench can be put into the churchyard. **Fr Nick** to check on who made the request.

5. Liturgical Issues

- a) Nine candidates were in the process of preparing for First Holy Communion before lockdown. Sr Paschaline & Fr Nick are in contact with the families and the intention is to continue with the preparation via Zoom meetings and online support from the Diocese. New guidelines have been given to Father for children receiving First Holy Communion – his preferred option is for small groups over a few weeks. Maria asked about Communion preparation for the new Y4 children in school – Fr Nick said the priority is to complete the programme for last year's group before planning for the current year group.
- b) Baptism – a number of enquiries have been made – before and during lockdown. Fr Nick is in favour of holding meetings with parents via Zoom
- c) Confirmation – 4 or 5 candidates had started the process of preparing for Confirmation before lockdown. This was taking place in Tudhoe. They will be invited to continue and priests have been given the faculty to give the Sacrament of Confirmation. Fr Nick will follow this up
- d) MariaLuisa suggested that a Liturgy Group could be formed to assist Fr Nick in the Sacramental preparation for our parish – volunteers to be asked for
- e) Also suggested that the parish/Fr Nick has its own Zoom Account which will allow Fr Nick more freedom to arrange meetings. **Agreed by PC. Maria** to help to set this up
- f) Bereavement Ministry – Fr Nick asked if there was anything in place other than the Blessing of the Graves (*this usually happens on the Garden Fete weekend but it did not take place this year due to the Pandemic*). Father said he had conducted a number of Graveside ceremonies over the last 6 months. It was felt that this year, more than ever, it is important to keep contact with those families recently bereaved. Sr Paschaline agreed to make contact with the families. Invitations to a memorial Mass in November will be sent to those families who have been bereaved during the last 12 months and a Christmas Card will also be sent in December (**MMG & AC**)
- g) Church open for private prayer - this was available as we re-opened after lockdown. Is it possible to offer this once everything returns to normal? This suggestion has been discussed at previous PC meetings – agreed to leave the matter until normal times resume. There are Insurance, Health & Safety issues etc. to be considered.
- h) Streaming of the Rosary in October. Fr Nick said it could be possible for parishioners to use the parish Facebook page to stream the Rosary online. However, there is a link to a group based in Walsingham who are streaming the Rosary which will be in the next church bulletin.

6. Covid-19

- a) Update on St Cuthbert's Church open for Mass – there are now more people attending Mass on a Tuesday morning than the average number on a weekday before the Pandemic - 20 /25. On a Sunday – about 40. Father said that the paperwork is being prepared for the re-opening of Wolsingham & Tow Law churches
- b) Cleaning –Janette to be asked about the number of people on the Cleaning rota. (**AC**) Are there enough? Prior to lockdown there was difficulty in getting sufficient volunteers to clean the church each week so for a short time it went to cleaning once a fortnight, then lockdown came. However as most of the original volunteers were in the senior age range these great people are now not advised to volunteer in church during the pandemic.

There is also the issue that there is no longer a cleaner for the Presbytery or Father's house. It was agreed that we should ask the Diocese to advertise the position – Fr Nick is to look through the forms from HR. The Diocese pays the current Living Wage - £9.30 per hr. Church cleaning may be included in the job description. Any applicants would be interviewed in Crook by the Diocese and the successful applicant would have to go through Safeguarding & Health & Safety training.

7. Convent upkeep

- a) The Japanese Knotweed has finally been eliminated – everyone is safe once more!
- b) Problems with plumbing once more – a tree in the convent garden has caused damage to underground pipes. This is to be removed & pipes replaced - £1,350
- c) Boiler in the convent – due to safety issues with the heat exchanger this must either be replaced est. £1,300; or replace the boiler (recommended by the engineer) est. £2,000

8. Partnership issues

Susan & Fr Nick have attended Zoom meetings which have taken place during last few months. Most discussions were about the reopening of our churches and the various efforts of streaming services. Fr Nick is still trying to organise streaming Mass from inside our church on Sundays.

9. Justice and Peace and Churches Together Reports

Anne Berry sent out both reports. The efforts of all involved in all the initiatives was congratulated. Even in such difficult times a lot has been accomplished- from hot meals for vulnerable people and family groups to Back to School kits. Anne acknowledged the support of Councillor Anne Reid who has been instrumental in finding extra funding. Anne pointed out that although lunches/hot meals were delivered it was noted that so many vulnerable people really missed the social contact provided by the lunch club. Hopefully normal service will resume next summer!

10. Youth Ministry

Fr Nick has been contacted by the Diocesan Youth Ministry team – they are promoting the Pope John Paul II and the Faith in Action Awards. It was felt that these should be seen as the opportunity to affirm our young people. Father is keen to identify those younger parishioners who have strong links with our parish community. He said he had support from Anne Smith and Anne Timothy. Sr Paschaline is to resume her contact with St Cuthbert's school now that they have returned

11. Any other Business

- a) Fr Nick is pursuing possibility of streaming Mass from church
- b) The departure of Sr Uche was discussed. As yet there is no definite date. Sister will be a great miss as she has fitted in beautifully with our parish life. We wish her well as she leaves for Germany.
- c) Request by St Cuthbert's School for permission to repair a footpath leading to school, which is situated between the site of the old school wall and parish property on the other side. The footpath is parish property but as it is now used specifically by school children & parents the school is prepared to pay for the repairs. Diocesan Property Dept has been contacted and permission given
- d) Most of the children's 'LOOK' leaflets are left unused in church each week. Sr Paschaline is to take them to school. Average cost per month is £5.80

Father thanked everyone for attending this first Parish Council Zoom meeting.

Closing prayer led by Sr Paschaline