

# Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert's

## Parish Council Minutes: Zoom Meeting 2.00pm Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May

Present: Fr. Nick, Sr Paschaline, Sr Uche, Ann Callan, MariaLuisa Massagli-Gallagher, Brian Rinaldi, Eugene Brady, Susan Hall, Maria Crawford, Anne Smith & Peter Fleming

Apologies: – Duncan Reed

### Opening prayer – led by Fr Nick

1. Matters arising from last meeting
  - a) Update on Roger's gift to the parish.... 3 new banners (hand-made) purchased. Total cost £600. Another one is in the process of being made. Four new altar cloths made to measure – cost £292. Agreed that remainder of Roger's gift (approx. £4200) could off-set the cost of new handrails on the altar. A plaque will be added to acknowledge Roger's gift
  - b) Live streaming of Mass & other services from inside church – agreed that this will continue & advice is to be sought from other priests as to what they use. Fr Nick visited & saw system in St Mary's Bishop Auckland. AV Clockworks was used by them – will ask them to visit & give a quote for the work. **PC members asked to take note of online streaming from other churches & let MariaLuisa know if quality appears good** – further enquiries can then be made.
  - c) Repairs to footpath leading to the school. This work has not been carried out. Initially the school planned to pay for the work – this is no longer possible due to limited funds. The footpath is church property & school was given permission to use it. Ultimately it is our responsibility to maintain the path re Health & Safety policy. Agreed by the PC to share the cost of repairs with the school, on the firm understanding that once the parish has paid the bill, we will be refunded immediately by the school. St Cuthbert's Centre has also generously offered to join in with the share of costs. Quotes from 4 firms have been received. It was noted that the preferred quote only offered a 2-year guarantee for the work. (None of the others offered any guarantee). A longer guarantee is to be negotiated. The original quote is £4200. Proposed share of costs – Parish £1500, School £1500, St Cuthbert's Centre £1200
  - d) Cemetery paths & hedges – work carried out but new paths had to be re-laid because of drainage problems. This has now been corrected by creating an open drain
  - e) Bereavement Ministry – Sr Paschaline has offered spiritual/pastoral support to the bereaved families during the last 12 months. However, there is a need for a dedicated group to look after this important ministry. Maria said a group had been started by Fr John – she will contact those who were in it to see if it can be started again. Brian asked if a special Mass could be offered for all the families who have been bereaved during the pandemic – particularly as numbers had to be limited for funerals. Fr Nick said this would go ahead
2. Parish property. Weardale Properties are once again interested in purchasing some of our land which adjoins part of their development behind the former Elite building. Andrew Gillingham, head of the Diocesan Property Dept. is dealing with the matter and we await feedback on his discussions with the developer, the architect and the Council
3. Finance Report

Ann Callan was thanked for her very comprehensive Financial Report for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. To help pay for expenditure this year it was necessary to transfer £10,000 from the deposit account. Although expenditure overall was down this year because of lockdown there were still additional repairs and renewals which had to be dealt with. We will still receive an income from the gift aid claim which will be similar to last year but the Gift aid small donations scheme (on loose cash & non gift aid envelopes) will be considerably reduced. More parishioners are making their contributions through Standing Orders now, and this is greatly appreciated.

Ann reported that an energy consultant has been in touch asking if he can look after all our utilities contracts and 'negotiate' better deals. PC agreed to take advice from the Diocese rather than become involved with different agents.

Employment of a cleaner. The post of cleaner for the church, presbytery & Father's house was advertised through the Diocese and locally. Mrs J Carroll was appointed and commenced employment at the beginning of the year.

#### 4. Building issues

- a) Letting of St Joseph's Lodge – a new tenant is now in residence
- b) Damage to church steps due to fallen pinnacle. One of the 'decorative' pinnacles half way up the main steps to the church has become 'dislodged'. It has broken the coping stones and the bottom step. The Diocese is to be asked if we can make a claim on the church insurance. Stonemasons (recommended by Diocese) are to be asked for quotes for repairs.
- c) Handrails to each side of the altar – an architect (recommended by Diocese) has been asked to design & give estimate of cost for handrails. Historic Churches must give approval; he will also make the application.
- d) Outside floodlights – request from the J&P group to consider the implications of light pollution when using the floodlights. This was discussed by the PC and all agreed that we would prefer to illuminate our church as it is a reminder of the church's presence within our community of Crook. *The existing floodlights come on when it is dusk but do not remain on throughout the night.* Fr Nick will report back to the J&P group.

#### 5. Cemetery

Second request to erect a bench. The first bench has not yet been erected but it will be under a tree and cemented down. The second request is still under discussion as more details are required from the family

#### 6. Liturgical Issues

- a) Baptism – there are 10 baptisms in preparation and more enquiries. Father would like help with the paperwork and also to assist with the sessions. Stewards are also required
- b) Confirmation – one candidate is still to be confirmed. How is the next cohort to be prepared? It was noted that the Confirmation programme appears to work well when it is organised within the Partnership. Candidates know each other from their secondary school
- c) First Holy Communion – the children from last year, who have followed the programme will make their First Holy Communion in smaller groups over the coming months. The new cohort for the current school year are to start their preparation soon. Again, Father asked for help with this. Currently Sr Paschaline is helping.
- d) Marriage – there are 2 or 3 couples due to be married this year. The live streamed Diocesan Anniversary Celebration at the Cathedral, which has been promoted in the bulletin, took place on 22nd May.
- e) Evangelisation – 'Divine Renovation' – a programme started in Canada, which is based upon the Alpha course, provides parishes with missional support focused upon building a culture of evangelisation. Father said clergy are holding meetings to look at evangelisation. Father reminded us that we need to keep welcoming people into our churches in order to keep our churches open.
- f) MariaLuisa suggested that a Liturgy Group be formed to assist Fr Nick in the Sacramental preparation for our parish – volunteers to be asked for - through the bulletin, Father's letter or directly. Sr Paschaline was in favour of a group of catechists/supporters primarily to welcome and encourage people to come forward and meet together. Father said the Diocese was encouraging a 'ministry of accompaniment' to allow people to come together & share their experiences.

- g) Sr Paschaline – Prayer meetings. Sister was keen to engage with more people and to invite them to gather as a community to share our faith. This could initially be done via zoom with Sister hosting from the Convent – to be advertised through the bulletin

#### 7. Covid-19 - update

There is a change to the Diocesan guidelines. Some rules have been relaxed. Bidding Prayers can be said so the Rota for this will resume. Offertory Processions can also resume. Sanitizing and masks remain. More information will be put into bulletins & Father's accompanying letters

8. Proposed Parish gathering – a welcome get-together once the lockdown is over. This has been discussed by the St Cuthbert's Centre committee. It will be a 'bring-your-own-picnic' but we will be able to meet face to face. More details will follow. It is hoped the chiming of the bells will be part of the afternoon (*see item 14*)

#### 9. Convent upkeep

- a) The new heating system is working & there is also a new toilet.
- b) The tree in the convent garden which caused damage to underground pipes is still to be removed & pipes replaced - £1,350. Firm to be contacted (MMG)
- c) Reg Savory was to check the gutters & repair any damage – Janette is to check up on this
- d) Agreed that Sr Paschaline would liaise with Janette to monitor problems & ongoing upkeep

#### 10. Partnership issues

Various courses have been run via the Partnership – Sycamore Course, Global Healing & it has promoted 'Laudato Si' week – encouraging care for the environment

#### 11. Justice and Peace and Churches Together Reports

Thank you to Anne Berry for latest reports. It was agreed to invite the Syrian refugee families to the parish picnic. There will be a 'welcome' event for them as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted. The garden fete gazebos have been asked to be borrowed for this purpose

#### 12. Registrar for Marriages

There are new regulations/guidelines for registrars. The new system is much easier than in the past. Fr Tindall is looking into training & Fr Nick will attend but would like a parishioner to also take on this responsibility

#### 13. Request from Jack Drum

- to erect a bird table, a bench and a compost bin. Their proposed siting is not suitable. Agreed by PC to leave to St Cuthbert's Centre committee to look into their request

#### 14. Request re church bells.

Aaron Cowen, our bell ringer has requested that the bells be rung on 26<sup>th</sup> June to coincide with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invention of the Ellacombe Chimes- Crook's bells have the Ellacombe chime system. As this date may also coincide with the proposed parish picnic, it was agreed to invite Aaron to open the celebration with 10mins of bell ringing. MMG to speak to Aaron

#### 15. AOB

- a) Sr Paschaline asked if there were plans for the new extension of the garden room in the Centre to be named, or if a photograph of Roger could be displayed. The Centre committee has this in hand
- b) Discussion over the music in church – playing of the organ. Anne Timothy & Fr Nick will discuss with Brian the organist

**Next meeting will be in July** when, hopefully, we can meet face to face in the Centre.

Father and MariaLuisa thanked everyone for attending this VERY LONG zoom meeting

**Closing prayer led by Sr Uche**