

Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert's

Parish Council Minutes: Zoom Meeting 2.00pm Thursday 21st October

Present: Fr. Nick, Sr Paschaline, Duncan Reed, Ann Callan, MariaLuisa Massagli-Gallagher, Eugene Brady, Maria Crawford, Anne Smith, Anne Berry & Peter Fleming

Apologies: –Brian Rinaldi, Susan Hall

Opening prayer – led by Fr Nick

1. Matters arising from last meeting
 - a) Footpath to school. This was laid in August and costs were split between school, church & St Cuthbert's Centre. **Noted** that in future, decisions like this should be undertaken by a sub committee
 - b) Handrails to the altar. Architect has been in touch to apologise for delay in starting the process. **MMG** to confirm that we wish him to proceed. **This has been done.** Design to be displayed in church
 - c) Authorised person /Registrar for marriages. Anne Timothy has been appointed
 - d) Formation of Soul Friend Gathering Group. Sr Paschaline reported that the group has met a number of times. They have initiated the return of the Fatima Statue rota. Presently 6 – 8 people attend but it was stressed by **Anne S** that this group is open to **all parishioners**. Anyone can join in at any time and raise questions about church liturgy or any other topics. As yet, Tow Law & Wolsingham haven't joined although they are invited.
 - e) Meeting with Andrew Gillingham (Diocesan Property Dept.) re sale of church field. Latest update: Weardale Properties have offered £200,000 to purchase the land. However, due to a Council Clawback clause which was imposed for 20 years in 2008 (there is still 7 yrs to run), the Local Authority would be due to 80% of the uplift in value, resulting in a gross receipt to the parish of £56,000. The **PC agreed this was not acceptable.** Fr Nick proposed the field to be turned into a woodland area and used for woodland burials and Burial of Ashes. Although it was agreed that this was a commendable idea, the possibility of a sale was preferred, particularly as Parish funds are not being replenished. It was agreed that a sub-committee be established to further negotiate a better deal- with the aim of asking for £100,000 including legal fees & costs
 - f) Parish Picnic. Held when lockdown rules were eased. Although a good idea, in future such social events should be better planned
 - g) Church music. Although the organist Brian, is appreciated for all the time he gives to our church free of charge, it was suggested that there is no need for the organ at Tuesday masses – this could return to being a more reflective quiet mass. Fr Nick to speak to Brian & Anne Timothy who works with Brian in planning the music. Also a request for another microphone for the choir & a new CD deck to replace the current one in church as this does not work & is unreliable– **M Gallagher** to look into this. **New CD deck now installed.**

2. Finance Report

Ann Callan was thanked for her comprehensive Financial Report for the quarter ended 30th Sept 2021. She apologised for her pessimistic outlook on the parish finances however, the cold facts are that in 2018 our total funds amounted to £78,441 and now stand at £49,363 with a debt of £192,990 – a reflection of our ageing parish and diminishing numbers. We still have approx. £3000 income from gift aid and this will help offset our Diocesan levy. The tenant in St Joseph's lodge has requested a 1-month lease rather than a 6-mth lease. It was agreed to accept this.

3. Streaming from church

Streaming is to be maintained especially for the sick & the housebound. The quote we received from an IT firm to install equipment (camera, TV screen, laptop, amplifier etc) was considered too expensive. Agreed to make enquiries for a better camera, microphone and upgrade the Wi-Fi.

4. Theft of lawn mowers.
Insurance company has agreed to the purchase of a new ride-on mower & a petrol push mower. However, at present we are unable to order the ride on mower due to a national shortage. Insurance company will review the amount they are willing to pay if costs significantly increase by the time we can place an order.
5. Building issues
 - a) Stables – security. Following on from previous item (4)– security of the stables is to be improved – new stronger doors to be fitted and ‘ground anchors’ to be installed to provide more security once new mowers have been purchased. Reg Savory to be contacted- **MMG**
 - b) Damage to church steps due to fallen pinnacle. Claim is to be made once MMG returns to the office.
 - c) Repairs to Presbytery. Some water damage noted in the living room. This to be monitored but it is hoped that recent clearing of the gutters may have rectified the problem
6. Liturgical Issues
 - a) Year of the Eucharist. Fr Nick to continue to keep us informed with information from the Diocese
 - b) Feedback on the Days of Reflection. Anne B reported that the day for Eucharistic Ministers was ‘excellent’. Very well planned and delivered. Same response for the day for Readers – very impressive
 - c) Eucharistic Ministers in church – is a Minister needed to assist with the distribution of the Host? Felt that with our current numbers and the fact social distancing is still required, there is no need for additional minister. Visits to the sick & housebound by Euch Ministers is to resume. The Care Homes will be contacted to check their protocols. **Mary Jones** has been asked to contact Ministers to see if they are willing to resume visits & to check who is to be visited.
 - d) Sacrament of Reconciliation. **Fr Nick** to consider setting up a regular time for individual confessions in each of our churches. He will also ask at the next Deanery meeting if any provision has been made for a Penitential Service for Advent for the Deanery
7. Covid-19 – update
Masks still required in church. Social distancing remains – ribbons are to be replaced on alternate benches (**Sr Paschaline** to organise). **Completed**. Doors to be left open during services to maintain air flow. Noted this will be difficult as weather becomes cooler. Coffee after Mass –people are to make their own choices but encouraged to be responsible
8. Convent upkeep
There is once again a problem with the roof – more leaks and water damage. The Diocese has been asked for advice. After their examination the advice is for the roof to be replaced. One quotation has been received – approx. £38,000. A second quotation is awaited. It was agreed parish finances cannot cover this cost. The Diocese is to be asked for help on how this expenditure can be funded, financial assistance is needed to meet our needs. Proposed that a sub-committee be set up to review the situation with the Convent, Janette Kelly to be invited to join. **MMG** to contact Diocese regarding financial help
9. Partnership issues
There have not been any meetings but **Fr Nick** to enquire at the next meeting about Confirmations within the Partnership

10. Justice and Peace and Churches Together Reports

Anne Berry presented a very positive report. Initiatives are starting up again – the Lunch Club is now once a month & it is hoped numbers will increase. Anne reminded us of the importance of promoting the Lunch Club. Regular information to go in the bulletin

11. Graveyard/Funeral Ministry

Discussion regarding arrangements for funerals – the practical issues e.g. marking of graves, parking bollards on day of the funeral, burial of ashes, updating graveyard plans. It was acknowledged that Brian Jones has done a wonderful job looking after so many unseen things in the churchyard for many many years. His help will be required when drawing up a Checklist of Arrangements for Funerals. Duncan asked if a Verger could be employed – with pay, to be responsible for all the practical arrangements, fee to be included in funeral costs. *This was discussed but no conclusion reached.* Fr Nick said that the Deanery is to have a discussion regarding funeral fees – it was agreed that a set list of fixed fees would be a good idea if it was across the Deanery then all the local Undertakers would know exactly what to charge. There was also a discussion of a designated area of the churchyard for the Burial of Ashes – proposed for the area beside the ‘old’ side steps up to the church door at the side nearest the Presbytery front door. This was previously considered in Fr Ryan’s time here. Further enquiries to be made

12. Cleaner for church and presbytery.

This job is to be advertised once more with the Diocese. Previous cleaner resigned. Agreed that the hours of work would be increased to 6hrs per week. This to be divided between church and house. In the meantime, the parish volunteers for the Cleaning Rota will resume until someone is appointed

13. AOB

- a) November Memorial Mass. Date – Sunday 7th November Crook 10.30am. Families of the deceased over the last 12 months to be invited. **Anne B & Ann C** to collate list and invitations with help from **Sr Paschaline**. **List collated & invitations have been sent out**
- b) Parish Council to send letter to Fr Tindall requesting clarity on the position of our Parish Priest. All agreed that Fr Nick’s position as Parish Administrator is unfair – he has not been officially installed as PP and in the current situation is unable to move into the Presbytery as Fr Clohosey’s belongings and furniture are still here. **MMG - This has been done**

Father and MariaLuisa thanked everyone for attending the zoom meeting with many interruptions

Closing prayer led by Fr Nick