

Parish Open Meeting 27 April 2021

Present: Fr Simon, Geoff Cook, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes)

Total present at start of meeting 16 rising to 21.

Apologies: Catharine Warren, Chris Avery

The Minutes of the March meeting were accepted as a true record.

The Chair offered Fr Simon the opportunity to say a few words about when we might expect the appointment of a new bishop for our Diocese. Fr Simon confirmed that the official consultation process has now taken place. Our Diocese has joined the queue of those requiring a replacement bishop. However, he does not know what effect the pandemic and various lockdowns will have had on the speed of this process. It had been hoped that there would be a handover of the position in July, but this now seems unlikely and he suspected that it won't happen until the autumn at the earliest. When the time comes Bishop Alan will retire to the Rectory at OLEM.

#### 1. Mass arrangements

#### REVIEW OF EASTER SERVICES

The Chair asked for comments on ticketing and arrangements in general.

Nora Darby thanked everyone who volunteered as stewards, readers and Eucharistic ministers and the Chair echoed this with thanks to all who were involved in the organisation of the Masses and particularly to Nora for organising the rotas.

It was felt that Fr Simon's ideas for Good Friday worked tremendously well. The candles in front of the Cross on the altar steps were lovely, services were a complete joy and we were grateful for what there was rather than worrying about what was missing. Jeanette Milbourn suggested that if we have to do this again that battery powered tealights would be nice to have at the Vigil. Jim Infield reported that the children's liturgy on Good Friday had been really special and very well attended.

Stephen Warde said that the ticketed Triduum Masses were all fully booked and most who booked had attended. The few extra people who arrived without tickets were able to be accommodated in the Parish Room and he thanked the Tech Group for the set up in there.

#### CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Since the Easter weekend, we have returned to a first come, first served seating arrangement and there is plenty of space at most Masses with the exception of the 11am Mass.

Altar servers: Fr Simon said that he had tried to get in contact with Stephen Chapman to organise the return of altar servers and possibly do some extra training for COVID awareness and what they can/can't do on the altar in the current circumstances.

Music and participation: Charles Nisbet, who normally attends the Vigil Mass, said that he feels more excluded in participation in the Mass when present in the church rather than watching the livestream from home because we are not able to sing the Gloria and other Mass parts. He would like to have 4 hymns and the rest of the Mass spoken. Fr Simon said that on asking for a show of hands at 11am Sunday Mass that people also preferred this and he would ask for a show of hands to gauge feeling at the Vigil Mass also.

Mary-Jane O'Sullivan suggested that the clapping Gloria could be used for the occasional Sunday

Sandy Hobson suggested that speaking words over background music would be an effective way of participating and retaining the music of the Mass

Serga Collett suggested that signing some hymns could also be away of participating.

We were also reminded that humming is permitted and maybe the message played at the start of Mass could be amended to mention this.

Readers: Miriam Santos asked whether readings done by people attending Mass from home could be regularly included.

#### **ACTIONS:**

Reduce music to 4 hymns in Masses which would prefer the rest of the Mass to be spoken

Include the Clapping Gloria to the musical repertoire on the music CDs and explore providing music over which prayers can be spoken – Martin A

Amend the intro message on the music CD to remind the congregation that humming is permitted – Martin A

Arrange for some readings to be recorded and used in future Sunday Masses – Martin A

## 2. Seating in the church

The Meeting was asked how they would feel if the spacing of seating was reduced from 2m to 1m? The question was posed to gather a feel for the general opinion of the parish and not because it is something that we are currently planning to do.

It was felt that if we move too quickly to reduce distancing that those who might be thinking of returning might be put off coming back. Any changes that we decide to implement in the future should be done bearing in mind the feelings of those who are clinically vulnerable, particularly as people sometimes do not wear masks correctly, and with clear communication.

We could consider having 2m spacing on one side of the church and 1m spacing on the other side, or having 1m spacing at one Mass and 2m spacing at other Masses.

Jim O'Sullivan reminded us that free lateral flow tests are available in the community which can be done half an hour before attending Mass.

Although there are many reasons why there will be coughs and snuffles in a congregation from asthma, to hayfever, to the dryness of wearing a mask, it was felt that it would be useful to remind parishioners not to attend Mass in person with any cold symptoms through a note in the newsletter and some signage.

**ACTION:**

Insert a reminder in the newsletter to not attend Mass if you have any cold symptoms and consider doing a free lateral flow test before attending – Fr Simon

**3. PARISH SOCIAL LIFE**

How can we rekindle this side of Parish life?

Fr Simon indicated that he is more than happy to facilitate group events within the government guidelines which are currently meetings outside of up to 6 people.

Coffee after 11am Mass from 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Fr Simon wondered if it would be possible to do this in the Parish garden with a maximum of 30 people able to attend and include those who are doing a Zoom coffee & chat at home by having a laptop running the Zoom meeting up in the garden. There would need to be someone policing numbers and some volunteers for the coffee rota.

Garden tidy up days would be an ideal outside Parish activity and could be easily social distanced.

Parish picnic in the school grounds after 21 June was suggested by Jeanette Milbourn.

**4. PARISH GROUPS**

CAFOD – Serga thanked all who took part in and donated to the Lent Walk for Water campaign which raised over £10,000. She said that she hoped to be able to share pictures of the final build of the solar pumps which will provide water for many.

Next month the CAFOD group will be making plans on how we can look after our common home and will be holding a Zoom meeting to gather ideas for this and for renewing the Parish livesimply award this year on Friday 7 May at 7,30pm.

CONFIRMATION – The Bishop is coming to the Parish on 17<sup>th</sup> May to administer the sacrament of Confirmation to the candidates. The Mass will be held at 6pm, and the church will be full with the candidates' families. Fr Simon encouraged the Parish to support the candidates in prayer by joining the Mass from home via the livestream.

## READERS' TRAINING SESSIONS

Nora Darby proposed that the Parish organise some reader training sessions. She suggested 2 x 4hour sessions which could take place sometime after 21 June to which both those currently reading and those interested in joining this ministry could attend. Both spiritual preparation and practical considerations – such as the use of the microphone and moving around the church – will be covered.

### **ACTION:**

Book diary dates for this and invite new and current readers, including younger parishioners.

Plan how the session will be run – online/in church and what will be covered in each session.

### NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July