

Parishioners' Open Meeting
25 January 2024
7:30pm hybrid meeting

Present: Fr Simon Blakesley, Deacon Geoff Cook, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (minutes) and 16 in person and 8 online

Apologies: Mary-Jane O'Sullivan, Barbara Quail

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved, and the follow points were discussed:

Christmas

Thanks was given to all those who contributed to the Christmas Liturgies and social events over the last couple of months including the Epiphany party and mulled wine and mince pies evening.

There was a request that notification of the carol service goes into the newsletter for the first weekend of December. This was missed this year.

Pastoral Assistant

Fr Simon reported that the Chief Operating Office of the diocese did not think that the position was a parish priority and from the figures we submitted it appears that we cannot afford the cost. The money must be found from our annual income not our capital. There are many good reasons why we need a PA, which we included in the original proposal, including that we are planning for growth – but unless we can resubmit the proposal showing that we can afford it, the reasons are by the by.

Heating

Jim O'Sullivan reported that the electrical survey has been completed and concluded that our existing power supply was up to the task of supporting the planned new heating system. A new junction box will be installed on the pillar just inside the church. A detailed plan will be forthcoming. We are waiting on formal approval from the Diocese. Jim asked Fr Simon to arrange for the Dean (Fr Eugene at OLEM) to put his approval in writing and submit it to the diocese. Once that has happened, we will need to put down a deposit of £600 and choose the colour of the radiators. Once the deposit is paid the installation will have six-week lead time.

Foodbank Collection

There was some initial work done on restarting this, but it was not clear how things are progressing. Nora Darby volunteered to follow this up with James Dore.

2. Parish News and Events

Fr Simon updated the Meeting on the situation with his brother and the Chair offered best wishes on behalf of the Parish.

He reported that the newly established 6pm Mass on Wednesdays was well-attended as well as the half hour Exposition which immediately follows.

A Mothers' Day event is planned for the afternoon of 9 March. There will be craft activities such as candle making and Taizé music. It will be a great opportunity for mothers, daughters and grandmothers to spend time together.

3. Arrangements for Lent and Easter

Pre-Lent

A Valentine's Evening social event is being organised for couples on 9th February by Paulo and Una Mannu. Food, music and entertainment to foster friendships across the Parish community.

Lenten Activities

The Adult Education and Faith Sharing team plan to run some more Sycamore sessions on Thursday evenings on Zoom. They will start on 15th February at 8pm. The first topic will be 'What is the Creed'?

Meditation Evenings, recently started and will be ongoing through lent, organised by Teresa Campbell.

Stations of the Cross will take place on Friday evenings at 7.30pm through Lent. They will be led by Fr Simon, Ignite Team, Justice & Peace group and CAFOD group. It is planned that at least one of these events will be inclusive for those watching online. There will also be the usual Children's Stations of the Cross on Good Friday at 11am

Jeanette Milbourn reported that CAFOD have produced a set of cards – one for each Station – which include a QR code which links to prayers for that Station on CAFOD's website.

Helena Judd reported that the Stations on 22nd March will be led by the Diocesan Ignite Team and the Confirmation candidates from across the Deanery (OLEM, Sawston, St Philip Howard, Cambourne). There will be several priests available to hear Confessions during the Stations for the candidates, their families and parishioners.

Penitential Service – will take place the week before Holy Week, probably on the Thursday evening (21st March)

Easter Liturgies

Please note that the clocks will go forward on Easter Sunday!

Maundy Thursday – 7.30pm

Good Friday – 2 services – 1pm and 3pm with the Veneration of the Cross combined with Communion.

Vigil – 9pm

Easter Day – normal Sunday Mass times.

4. Parish Groups

CAFOD – we hosted the deanery gathering of CAFOD groups who planned for the coming Lent Appeal. Family Fast Day is Friday 23rd February. The appeal talks will be given on the weekend of 17th and 18th February with the collection of donations on 24th and 25th. There will be no Big Lent Walk in the Parish this year. Instead there will be a Bring & Share Lunch after 11am Mass on Palm Sunday, followed by a group walk of the Stations of the Cross walk devised by Gail Osman during the COVID lockdown, for those who would like to take part.

SVP – Ciarán Ward thanked the Parish for its support of the Giving Tree. He reported that 12 families were supported with gifts, vouchers and hampers, 20 vouchers went to the homeless and 70 gifts for local elderly. He also thanked the St Laurence's School Mini Vinnies and the Parish Youth Group for the handmade Christmas cards which were sent out with the gifts, vouchers and hampers. He is also happy to say that a new member has joined the parish group.

He then reported on the ongoing work of the SVP group, which included 2 members volunteering as cooks at the Cottenham drop-in centre every Wednesday, and 2 members who had been made Executors of wills of two parishioners who have recently passed away. A new drop-in centre in Cambridge is starting up at Brownfields in Chesterton and 2 members plan to attend this on a regular basis. The Sacrament of the Sick will be offered in Sawston parish church soon. Details will be in the newsletter.

Justice and Peace – Ron Haynes reported that a hybrid event will take place on 11th or 12th February with Caritas' Do Justice Campaign.

Tech Group – the donation card machine in the porch is now wired up to main electricity and no longer reliant on battery power. Ron is looking into samples of digital noticeboards with a view to one being mounted outside the church.

5. Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and Core Teams

Stephen Warde reminded the meeting of the objectives of setting up a PPC and Core Teams – to get more people involved in the work of the parish, to support what we already do, to get things done with clearer responsibilities, to support the Parish Priest.

Ronald Haynes introduced the first draft of the PPC constitution. This will be refined and redrafted during a test period. There is a copy of the constitution on the website. Feedback is welcomed.

Steve summarised some of the main points of the draft constitution suggestions:

Potential PPC members can volunteer or be nominated by others. If we have more nominees than spaces then appointment will be made by the Parish Priest in consultation with the steering group made up of members of the Facilitation and SPAG groups initially, but in the future in consultation with the Parish Priest and PPC.

The PPC needs a minimum of 8 members and ideally between 12 and 15 members. The membership term will be 2 years with the first year of the PPC being a probationary year.

There will be at least 4 meetings a year with at least one meeting held as a Parishioners' Open Meeting. In general meetings will be open to attend by any parishioner, but with provision for closed sessions as and when needed.

We talked about how the PPC structure will include Core Teams made up of 3–4 people per team, one of whom will act as the team coordinator. Teams are responsible for getting things done in between PPC meetings along with others interested in helping in various areas without being formal team members.

Fr Simon reminded us that Safeguarding must be to the forefront of the planning and instigation of the PPC Parish Office and Staff Support core team. And that at every annual Open Meeting Safeguarding should be on the agenda also.

He also suggested that we consider ways to include the young people in the parish in these plans particularly in the area of Communications and Outreach.

As part of the discussion, Karen Rodgers recommended reading [The Inner Ring](#) by C S Lewis, an essay on the pitfalls of being part of an inner circle or ring. Audio available on [YouTube](#).

Suggested that Confirmation candidates who are interested in this aspect of the Parish be invited to put themselves forward.

Steve reported that about 30 expressions of interest had been received following the call. He outlined a proposed timeline for moving the process forward:

Proposed timeline

Jan	Any further expressions of interest? Identify Core Team coordinators
Feb	Initial meetings of Core Teams – identify members, other volunteers, PPC rep, initial focus
Mar	'Pilot' meeting of PPC – update from Teams, agree PPC membership and process
Apr	Make progress on work of Core Teams
May	Late May (21st?) – PPC + Open Meeting. Confirm all arrangements.



He also thanked the Steering Group for the work put in in bring the proposals to the parish.

6. AOB

Karen Rodgers reported a Health and Safety risk after water from the hot water boiler in the kitchen nearly scalded someone when the kitchen was very busy. She suggested that a notice telling people to give clear space around the water boiler might be warranted.

She also asked for a vote of thanks to Reece for holding the fort while Fr Simon was away in Australia.

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children – there is a meeting on Friday 16th February at OLEM for those interested in pro-life matters.

Helena announced that Deacon Geoff is going to be on Radio Maria on Monday (29th Jan) talking about Christian Unity.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 7.30pm.