

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DURHAM MARTYRS PARISH COUNCIL

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, 13th NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Fr. Colm, Graham Donachie, Peter Thompson, Joanna Pallister, Maria Melia, Margaret Wallace, John Reilly-O'Donnell, John Lavery, Mike McNally, Tom Hoban, Fred Haywood, Tony Power, Chris Parker, Katie Flood

Apologies: Erica Smith, Kathleen Murray

Minutes: Marjorie Towers

Graham welcomed everyone and Fr. Colm opened the meeting with a reading from St. Luke's Gospel.

Dave Edwards, Chair of Governors of St Josephs and St Thomas More joined the meeting. He had been invited by Graham to give an update on the present position regarding St. Joseph's and St. Thomas More Schools. He gave some background information on the merger of the two separate governing bodies which had taken place four years ago. He stressed that although the schools retained their separate identities, they shared many resources, and an Executive Head and Deputy Head had been appointed to work across both schools, each being run separately.

Although both schools were performing well academically, both are suffering budget cuts and St. Thomas More had a significant budget deficit in 2017/2018. This cannot be sustained indefinitely. Mr. Edwards said that meetings with DCC were ongoing and future discussions would look at the future demographics and the running of both schools. He stressed that no decisions had yet been made, and that he would keep the PC updated.

1. Actions from previous meeting

Outstanding action points were (a) the Parish Nurse proposal; and information was awaited from Anna and (b) the Wellbeing initiative, which had been raised by Peter, would be discussed at a future meeting. **Action item**

2. Parish Council Appointments

- * Peter is automatically on Parish Council as Chairperson of the Liturgy Group
- * Mike filled the vacancy for a Foundation Member
- * Two new elected members are Tony Power and John Thompson

It was noted that no elections had been necessary.

3. Partnership Development Group - Update

Graham gave a summary on the meeting held recently at Ushaw for Parish Council members across the partnership. He asked for opinions from those present who had attended the day. Section 1 covered what things were going well. Comments included:

- * some parishes extremely well organised
- * some parishes had no Parish Council
- * some prioritised buildings and maintenance
- * it was felt that Durham Martyrs' PC was working well and covering a wide variety of topics

Section 2 covered in what areas could PC's and the PDG work together

- * formation and sacramental preparation
- * communication with parishes
- * there would be an audit of buildings and community review

Fr. Colm said he felt that Durham Martyrs Parish Council was working satisfactorily but that He suggested that we could offer some guidance to the West Durham Parishes from our own experiences.

It was hoped that the PDG would come up with some common goals as a guide to help those parishes which were struggling.

4. Proposal for a Monthly Mass at St. Godric's School

Fr. Colm had received an email from a parishioner from St. Bede's stating that since the Vigil Mass at St. Godric's School had been terminated 12 months ago, there were a number of good Christians who had not attended Mass since the closure together with some who found it physically difficult to attend. A request had been made for a Vigil Mass on the last Saturday of the month.

Lengthy discussion followed and it was decided that it was not practical for many reasons to hold a monthly Mass and Graham said he would draft a reply on behalf of the PC.

5. Accompaniment

Margaret said that St. Godric's was working really well and no changes were necessary at present.

St. Joseph's was still a work in progress, and Margaret was working on tidying the notice boards. A small group of people welcomed and handed out Mass Books at the Vigil Mass but Margaret aimed to expand this to provide cover. Richard Harrison was happy to continue handing out Mass Books at the 11.00am Mass, and some members of the Hospitality team were also helping. Katie would send Margaret some names of volunteers from the Youth Section. The page number of the Mass readings had been put up on the boards above the hymn numbers.

The Bereavement Group had put out on display some leaflets, prayer cards and bookmarks at each church, for parishioners to take home if they wished.

6. Youth update

Katie reported that she is getting good feedback, and her list of volunteers is growing. She tabled her update, which included the following points:

Parish - between 30 and 40 young people attending the three groups each week. For the oldest group "Youth Alpha" has started and feedback received is very encouraging.

Partnership - Katie has met with the Youth Sub group again. Involvement in planning a Partnership-wide event for all young people and she attended the PPC/Partnership day at Ushaw.

Primary Schools - Her presence in schools continues to be productive, and work continues on a variety of topics at each school. Faith in Action has been successful and a retreat day is planned for 4th December.

St. Leonard's - In school every Thursday lunchtime, which is proving an effective way to remain visible amongst the pupils. Meeting arranged with the RE Department to explore interaction with year 7 in class.

Social Media - Great response. There are 134 Instagram followers and plenty of "likes" and comments across Facebook and Twitter. Katie runs this with Leanne Heseltine.

7. Building Committee Feedback

John RO'D provided the minutes of the H&S and Building committee meeting held on 7th November. Quotes had been received for essential roofline work at St. Godric's in the sum of £36,000. This could rise to £37,000 if all roofing work is required. The Parish Finance Committee will be asked to consider the quotation at their next meeting.

Food Hygiene/Food Safety - following a review of hot food preparation and serving arrangements, we will need to take action to meet current standards. Meetings have been arranged for those currently actively involved in food preparation and serving in order to brief them on the changes which will need to be made.

Following an accident in St. Leonard's Sports Hall at Easter, steps and a railing will be fixed in time for the Christmas Masses, for easier and safer access to and from the raised platform.

Security, St. Joseph's - a quote has been received and accepted for the installation of a Video/Intercom unit at the presbytery door. This will enhance the visibility of callers.

8. Liturgy Committee Feedback

Peter provided a summary of the Liturgy Group meeting from the previous week, and said that more volunteers were needed to clear up the hall after the Christmas morning Mass.

Arrangements for training/helping readers are ongoing, and it is proposed to follow this with the commissioning all readers during Mass, which may help to raise their status.

Time change - Christmas Eve Mass will be at 7.00p.m, preceded by Carols at 6.30pm.

Bidding prayers will be standardised across the Parish in the New Year and additional bidding prayers will be added for baptisms and weddings to involve the community in the celebrations. More discussion to follow at the next meeting of the Liturgy group on 4th December.

9. Parish Council Communications

It was agreed that the Briefing Note would be read out at all Masses over the weekend of 24th/25th November as follows:

St. Joseph's Vigil Mass - Joanna
St. Godric's 9.00am Mass - Maria
St. Joseph's 11.00am Mass – Graham

10. GDPR

Chris Parker circulated a spreadsheet giving information on what sort of personal information on parishioners is kept (i.e. email, mobile phone, landline etc) and who has access to it. He will forward a link to PC members for them to input any information required.

11. Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday, 22nd January at 7.30pm