

St John the Baptist, Trowbridge and St Bernadette, Westbury

Parish Annual General Meeting Tuesday 4th March 2014

Chair: Fred Gilroy

Canon Liam O'Driscoll opened the meeting with a reading and prayers

1. Parish Pastoral Council – Dee Perkins

The **Pastoral Council** consists of 12 members of the parish, with Fred Gilroy as Chairman and, until recently, Richard Barrows as secretary. Unfortunately Richard had to step down due to work commitments.

We meet every 6 – 8 weeks.

Our **AIM** is:

- To support with the Parish Priest and work him to in deliver the vision of the parish;
- To build a welcoming, Christian community;
- To enable the community to discern its mission; to encourage and deepen the faith of all;
- To enable all the baptised to be aware of their active responsibility for the mission of the church;
- And to be a group that prays together, constantly listening to the scriptures to help understand its ongoing mission.

The **Year of Faith** talks have been excellent. Initially they were very well attended but interest waned as the year progressed.

In June we had the first **Corpus Christi** procession the parish has had for a long time. With this we were hoping to bring together the Parish, the first Holy Communicants, the recently confirmed and their families to re-ignite and feed their faith.

The **Youth Ministry** has been an ongoing topic for the PCC as the young people of the parish are the future church. With the support of the PCC, Vivien Barrow and her colleagues from Bristol University, organised a Youth Mass at St John's church in June, which was uplifting, and we hope to do this again in the future. We are at present looking into finding a volunteer Youth Worker for the Parish.

The **Parish Census** has been undertaken during the year but, unfortunately, there are a number of families still unaccounted for. The house-to-house visiting, which contributed to this outcome, has now been scaled down due to the lack of Parish volunteers.

The **website** is up and running, but it relies on volunteers to keep it updated and therefore it is not always as reliable as we would like.

The **Parish Weekly Newsletter** has been scrutinised with a view to include more information on parish organisations and events. This is an ongoing project.

Members have attended **Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Council** meetings throughout the year and supported Canon Liam wherever possible.

Discussion on weekly bulletin/newsletter/website.

- Canon to regularly remind people to retain the bulletin
- Ensure that the Mass readings are retained in any re-modelling of the bulletin
- Possibly add 'Yours to keep' in red at the top of the notices
- Volunteers needed to produce a newsletter – Alison and Lucy have looked at this. Pastoral Council have discussed and will do so again next week. Possible need for additional information once a month or quarterly. PPC will look at what other parishes do, including in the deanery.
- Some parishioners have difficulty with opening the website, and latest news is out of date. Latest News is to be removed. More help has been offered
- Need to include links to documents such as *Evangelii Gaudium*, and what's on in other parishes in deanery

2. CAFOD – Annie Haywood

CAFOD has been in the parish since 1985. Monthly collections average around £400, and for larger appeals up to £3000. Both parishes are very generous. Need to keep in the forefront of peoples minds. Current project that the parishes are supporting is to provide water to a village in Ethiopia. The monthly returns are on the board. Returns could be put into the newsletter

3. Legion of Mary – Margaret Moore

There are 4 regular members and there have been 2 more during part of the last year. They have visited 1000 homes as part of the door to door campaign. If no answer is obtained from the first call, they visit again, if still no answer they leave a leaflet with Mass times.

There are 8 auxillary members who support with prayer.

Canon sets the work that is required. Over the very wet winter they have not been visiting.

They would like new members. There is a possibility that 3 care workers from the Philippino community may join.

4. Society of St Vincent de Paul – Canon

Another group looking for new members, who meet for prayer and readings, before setting the visiting that they need to do for the next week. They provide money to those in need.

5. St Bernadette's – Frank Garbutt

The parish is flourishing, with many young families. The children's Liturgy has up to 15 youngsters fortnightly, and may get involved with welcoming, offertory, serving on the altar. Coffee is available after each Mass, and a bring and buy once a month. There have been successful social events over the last year including the barbecue, quiz nights and the skittles a few weeks back, reviving the shield that was played for of old. The events have made a contribution to the upkeep of the church of £1800.

6. Accounts – Rosemary Winchester

Finances are very healthy. Some income has gone up as has expenditure, but some down.

- Car park rent has ended – wait to see who buys the old surgery building. Car park used by residents and probably care home visitors. Canon was able to explain the history of how the land was originally used as allotments but the tenants paid no rent. It became the car park in about 1990, and the surgery rented the space. It is only the land to the rear of the church. It was suggested that the parish re-states it's ownership with notices.
- Profit for the year of £53,731. Levy is paid in arrears based on income to the parish.

Canon suggested that the parish should consider giving donations to local charities, of around £5000 from the excess income that the parish has. This is as a result of what the Bishop would like parishes to do.

- Food banks – would be better to provide food. Discussed at length. Suggested Soup Run volunteers could handle it: no, they are busy enough, but what about the youngsters. Could be a project for confirmation candidates, and could lead to them being more involved in the parish and beyond. Other parishes bring items up at offertory, but this would probably be too heavy. Mary Turner will speak to the food bank people and get advise, but we definitely would like to get involved. A named individual would be link to the food bank, not Canon.
- Stepping Stones and Wiltshire Air Ambulance were mentioned as possible recipients of money
- Felt to be a good idea – we would not seek publicity. Left to the Finance Committee to decide

7. Social Group – Frank Geraghty

Frank handed over £12,200, including the same sum as last year from the 300 Club of £3,200. The Christmas quiz prizes and some of 300 Club were donated back. Unfortunately the concert was poorly attended, and it was suggested that if tickets were sold in advance then there would still have been an income. Parish Auction is in May. The group keeps the social health of the parish alive.

8. Gift Aid – Mike Heather

Standing order income is down by £500 but envelopes is up by the same amount. Tax refund as compared with 2009 is down by over £2000 but this reflects the change in tax rates. Overall there has been a 2% drop in income over the time. The parish will be eligible to claim £1,250 for each church under the Small Gift Aid Donations scheme, because it can show that it received over £100 each week in the plate, including envelopes at each church. This will make up for the loss of rent at Westbury.

9. Any Other Business

Should Canon have a day off each week, as Corsham parish are looking to achieve for their Fr John, and have a Service of the Word with Communion? Canon advised that the Bishops frown upon these services, as the Eucharist is the centre of our worship and should not be diluted. Thank you for the offer, but Canon would be saying Mass daily anyway.

Youth Worker

- Why can't we pay for Youth Worker?
- This would provide continuity and a high standard of leadership, which would be difficult to sustain with volunteers.
- Share across the deanery
- Start with younger children, say year 6 or 7, rather than confirmation group who sadly drop away quickly after they are confirmed
- Look at other churches and what they offer
- Pay a worker rather than give to charity
- Times have changed, they have more on offer at school.
- Do we worry too much about what we offer them. If asked they will get involved – at Sunday Evening Mass they are happy to help when asked. If we are more welcoming of them they get involved.
- Give them responsibility – the food bank project would be good
- Younger Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion? Canon has tried this, but they tend to say they are too busy with exams as soon as prepared! We put too much pressure on young people to be involved sometimes.

Frank Geraghy asked for prayers for those who are embarking on hearing the school admissions appeals across the diocese, and making their deliberations. A difficult task to do what is right for the families and the schools.

Shed in the car park – who does it belong to? Belongs to the guides. Matter for Parish Centre Management.

Fairtrade Parish and Deanery – Canon showed the certificate that was given to him last week. Discussion about selling Fairtrade produce etc – yes, this is likely to happen as there is a good source in Dilton Marsh. Disquiet expressed over not always having Fairtrade tea and coffee in the kitchen – this may be because it is donated, but as far as possible the parish will use Fairtrade goods. The Parish Centre may use other tea and coffee for certain users.

Canon closed the meeting by thanking the Parish Pastoral Council for their work, those involved in sacramental preparation, the vibrant liturgy that makes celebrating Mass on Sundays enjoyable, the social group and in particular Frank for all his hard work, the church cleaners, those reaching out to the community, the finance group, CAFOD for their work week in and week out, the Repository, Rosemary for the books, and all the groups that give us hope. Thanks to every one for their work.