

St John the Baptist, Trowbridge and St Bernadette, Westbury Parish Annual General Meeting

Sunday 8th September

Present: Fr. Tom Finnegan; 24 parishioners and 7 the Pastoral Council members

Topic	Discussion
	The assembled parishioners enjoyed tea or coffee with jam & cream scones and/or cake, with much conversation
<u>Welcome</u>	<p>Father Tom opened the formal business of the afternoon with a prayer, and thanks to those who had provided the refreshments. This is Father Tom's first AGM in any parish.</p> <p>Father Tom handed over to Fred to present the updates from the various groups of the parish</p>
<u>Parish Pastoral Council</u>	<p>The past 2 years has been very eventful for the Parish and for the Pastoral Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In September 2017 we welcomed Fr. Tom as our new Parish priest.2. October 2017 Bishop Declan launches "A Future full of Hope" Document setting out a Road Map for Parishes for 3 years from Advent 2017 to Advent 2020.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Advent 2017 to Advent 2018 "Year of Mission" Gospel of Mark.b. : 2018 to : 2019 "Year of Prayer" Gospel of Luke.c. : 2019 to : 2020 "Year Of Communion" Mathew. <p>15 October. Members of pastoral council together with Fr. Tom attended a day of reflection @ St. Brendans College</p> <p>November 2017 @ Clifton Cathedral, Bishop Declan presented Parishes with resource documents to introduce the Year of Mission.</p> <p>2018. In February, we had a Parish Gathering. Tremendous turnout. Many topics were raised whilst considering our Parish Strengths, Weaknesses, threats, Opportunities, Hopes and Fears.</p> <p>Fr. Tom has given Parishioners a focussed report on matters which are and will be taken forward.</p> <p>March. Romero-Heartbeat of El Salvador. Performed by Rise Theatre. Excellent and a great turnout.</p> <p>September, Fr. Tom introduced sending 1st Anniversary Cards for Baptism and Bereavement.</p> <p>June 2019. Redeployment of Clergy.</p>

	<p>Open forum for the Deanery. David Wells led us through our discussions on the impact of the fewer number of Priests in the Diocese. Consider that Solutions should come from the parishes and not imposed from above. Empowering the laity and firing up the Laity to lead. Near Future Events. 25 September. Deanery Day follow up meeting in the Parish Centre @ 7pm.</p> <p>Spiritual Weekend 27 to 29 September. Programme has been handed out to parishioners. If you have one bring your bible. 15 October. An evening with Missio. (see last weeks Newsletter) Ongoing: Bidding prayers for Weekend Masses St. Bernadette's Drop-in. Keeping Parish Website up to date – more later from Nick Crangle Description for all Ministries.</p> <p>Initiatives Discussed for future delivery:- Scripture Study Group. Spiritual Reading Group. Faith Discussion Group. Lectio Divina. House Groups.</p> <p>Final thought. If you can spare some time to use your talents, skills and knowledge to improve PPC activities, please speak to Fr. Tom.</p>
<p><u>Legion of Mary</u></p>	<p>The Legion currently has 5 visiting members and 7 auxiliaries. They meet each Tuesday between 8 & 9pm. Their mission is spiritual, and each meeting consists of saying the Rosary, a reading from the Bible, and a report from each on their works in the week. They primarily visit the families of those children who have made their First Holy Communion in that year, encouraging them in prayer and to go to Mass. The visit consists of saying a prayer with the family and offering a medal to the child. They don't stay long. The auxiliaries support with prayer, saying the Rosary daily, and reciting the Catena. The group is happy to continue to assist with refreshments for parish functions, and meets up with other Legions in the diocese. The group would welcome more members: it builds the members in their individual prayer lives.</p>
<p><u>SVP</u></p>	<p>Bernie Barrett John is currently away, so Vivien Bath spoke for the group. SVP thanks the parish for its financial support in the Christmas collections, as without the donations they would be unable to offer the help that they do. Last year the group made 247 visits to homes and care homes, including visiting ex-parishioners in Melksham and Chippenham. There are 15 members, and they too would welcome more. Father Tom lets them know who requires help. They visit in pairs, and this year have helped with the Seniors afternoons on Thursday, and have support Syrian Refugees (with how to shop, and read English). They also support 2 Indian Conferences, through the National Conference.</p>

	<p>SVP is able to provide money, advice and practical support. They give gifts at Christmas, and take people to the dentist or doctor, and have even helped a visiting family with accommodation. Last Christmas they held a very successful party for the housebound and elderly, which they hope to repeat this year.</p> <p>Viv was asked if when visiting a care home they will visit anyone or only those that they expect to see. If a staff member asks them to, they will visit others. Concern was expressed over a parishioner who is now in a care home, and is believed not to have been brought Communion – Father Tom will arrange and get them on to the rota.</p>
<p><u>Catechetical Programmes</u></p>	
<p>Childrens Liturgy</p>	<p>Children's Liturgy at St John's started about 7yrs ago, with one session a month, now they have 2 on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, with the 3rd Sunday being a Children's Mass. They started with 12 children, and today had 52. Jo and Sinead are the main leaders, soon to be joined by Clare Morris. Other parents help, primarily marshalling the children. They sit on the carpet in the hall, and are reminded that they are still at Mass, and they listen to the Gospel either read to them or told using wooden figures dressed to match the people in the reading (Godly play). They use imagery to engage the children and ask 'wondering' questions. The message is in simple language. They follow this with a craft activity related to the message. They end with a prayer or a song, if time permits. Jo and Sinead feel privileged to run the sessions. Children have a right to get the Gospel at their level. As with all groups they would love more helpers.</p>
<p>First Holy Communion</p>	<p>Last year was Sinead's first year involved with the course, which runs for 6 - 7 months. They had 73 families, many of them Polish. Some catechists take the children in the Church, whilst others work with the parents in the hall. The children have a work book which they complete at home, hopefully with their parents.</p>
<p>Confirmation</p>	<p>Sue Hanrahan leads the group of catechists who take the young people for 6 weeks. Father Tom has lowered the age that the young people are invited from Year 9 to Year 8. Many that come are from the Polish community (possibly because we offer a shorter programme than the Polish Church, which has a year long programme). The young people are asked to volunteer in the Church, and they do for the Masses as part of the programme. Some continue as Readers afterwards too, though fewer seem to have continued to attend this year. Thank you to the Legion for their support. It is thought that there may be scope for the Legion to visit families post-Confirmation. The programme works well.</p>
<p>RCIA - ABC</p>	<p>Father Tom has been running this for 2years now, in place of Sharing our Faith. A new course starts in October, and is for those who want to know more about the faith with a few to becoming Catholics, or who have missed out on say Confirmation and now wish to be confirmed. The sessions are part catechetical, part prayer, part instruction. Father Tom runs these on his own, but if anyone would like to help they can do. They meet on Wednesday evenings 7 – 9.00pm.</p>
<p><u>Westbury</u></p>	<p>St. Bernadette's has an increasing congregation and Sunday Mass is usually well attended by 100 plus.</p> <p>CAR PARK The car park behind the church was finally sorted out 18 months ago, it gives facility for 12 cars to park, which we are asked to leave for those who cannot walk too far.</p> <p>GARDEN We have had the garden at the side and back of the church gravelled so that the battle of the weeds has lessened and the small group of gardeners no longer need to meet so regularly</p>

COFFEE AFTER MASS

Coffee is served in the Annex after every Sunday Mass which gives Parishioners the opportunity to get to know each other. On the Sunday before Christmas we usually serve mince pies.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

We have a small team who organise the children's once a month, the numbers vary.

NEW ALTAR SERVERS

At last we have some recently trained Altar servers who are still learning and making progress

FIRST COMMUNION BREAKFAST

At St. Bernadette's we had 4 children making their First Communion last year and 7 this year, after the service the social group provided a breakfast for the children and refreshments for their families.

CHURCHES TOGETHER

Over the last 2 years we have built stronger links with Westbury Churches together. We have held regular Town prayers, World day of prayer at St. Bernadette's and we contribute an article in the quarterly Christian magazine.

We have a small Social Group who meet every couple of months. They organise everything from church cleaning, flowers, social events and whose turn it is to wash the tea towels

DROP IN

Started in February this year its aim is to have a facility for members of the community to get together to know each other .We have had members of the Baptist and, Methodist churches joining us, as well as people of no religion. We are slowly growing in numbers and our cakes are always delicious for which we do not charge.

QUIZ NIGHT

Our autumn quiz nights which bring the community together have proved to be popular, these include a ploughman's supper, and, of course, the raffle!

PRE-CHRISTMAS SALE

After the Christmas Bazaar, and again last Christmas, we had a Pre-Christmas sale selling goods that we didn't sell at the bazaar together with cards, calendars etc.

SUMMER PARTY

Last year we held a summer tea party which was a lot of hard work for a few members of our social group who, I'm sure they won't mind me saying, are not as young as they were. This year sadly we had to cancel our plans to hold a party at Grassacres due to lack of numbers.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL DOVES ANGELS in December every year Westbury town have a Christmas tree Festival in All Saints church in which we have taken part. We purchase a tree and encourage the children to make decorations to go on it. Last year it was angels and this year they made doves.

SKITTLES

An annual skittles match between St. Johns and St. Bernadette's takes place with much enjoyment. I believe St Bernadette's won this year.

CHURCH MAINTENANCE

	<p>Maintenance of the church is ongoing, the latest problem is a large crack in the wall behind the altar and another which has appeared behind Our Lady's statue. The appropriate people have been notified and we are expecting a large bill once the problem is sorted.</p>
<p><u>Soup Run</u></p>	<p>45 parishioners participate in the Soup Run, and it works well most of the time. Our parish operates it in the bottom of the multi storey carpark on Fridays, other churches do the other nights. Those who use the facility take what ever food is on offer, and are neither forthcoming about their circumstances nor are they asked. Some come as much for social reasons as for being homeless.</p> <p>There are concerns about how the homeless cope in the winter – Wiltshire Council have appointed an outreach worker but they are based in Chippenham. Breakthrough, based in the Salvation Army Hall, operate an advice service on Mondays and Tuesdays, and would like to build a night shelter for year round use, and have the funds to do so. They feel they are being blocked from doing so by Wiltshire Council.</p>
<p><u>Finances & St John's Social Group</u></p>	<p>The figures show that there has been a fall in the size of plate collections and expenses have risen. There have been a number of improvements and modernisations that were overdue. The parish levy has also risen again.</p> <p>There has been no income from the social group and the 300 club, instigated by Father Tom, for this last year, as a gap year. The social group is being re-invigorated by Clare Morris and others who are starting afresh.</p> <p>As you know the sponsored walk this year is for HCPT, the Christmas Singalong is to take place, a New Year Concert, the St Patrick's Dance is returning, and on 1st November there is a celebration of All Saints – the food, music and culture of our countries of origin.</p>

Frank thanked Father Tom for his support this last year, in letting him step back.

St John's and St. Bernadette's Church Accounts 2018

Income			Expenditure		
	2017	2018		2017	2018
Collection plate	47,199.67	45,231.04	Admin/Miscellaneous/Insurance	7,209.44	8,432.16
Collection Standing Order	26,196.50	28,722.00	Heat/Light/Rates	3,773.04	4,402.30
Gift Aid Tax Refund	17,673.30	15,067.22	Solar Panel System		225.00
Donations	4,403.28	4,264.01	Bulletins	1,059.20	816.00
Repository	3,360.61	2,604.41	Repository	2,514.01	1,348.02
Candles/Papers/Books	5,152.12	6,279.36	Papers/Candles/Books	4,036.43	5,077.19
Special Collections	9,777.81	5,800.42	Special Collections	10,521.37	6,435.68
Coffee	598.17	517.99	Levy	48,386.00	49,955.54
Other income	2,839.68	1,811.94	Donations to Charities	2,250.00	2,840.00
Interest		5,410.96	Car Expenses and Food	3,703.11	4,804.98
Electricity Refund	504.47	1,742.52	Pension and Clergy Expenses	360.00	2,160.00
	117,705.61	117,451.87	Stipends and Church Expenses	5,136.43	2,535.00
Social Club	8,000.00	2,300.00	Church & Presbytery Expenses & Repairs	24,370.85	73,036.05
Social 300 club	3,000.00		Excess Payment over income	15,385.73	31,667.05
SJPC Levy Proportion		10,649.00		128,705.61	130,400.87
SJPC Loan Repayment			Bank 31 December Statement 2018	118,753.85	90,729.43
Westbury Social Club					
	128,705.61	130,400.87			

Cafod

Richard gave a summary of the projects that the parish is contributing towards.

Until recently we had been supporting a project in Ethiopia to put in wells and irrigation channels to allow the growing of more crops, notably fruit, and to water pasture land. As a parish we contributed £26,000.

The new project is in Columbia, an area called Magdalena Medio, which is about the size of the English Midlands. The country has come out of a 50yr civil war, and the peace is very fragile. The 3 year project is about building peace and resolving differences amicably, however Cafod is actually working with people who are still being displaced by violence. Cafod is running a radio station which is broadcasting messages of peace.

Richard and his helpers collect from the parishes on a monthly basis.

On October 4th there is a talk about the creation of solar pumps in African villages.

For the future, Richard would like to organise perhaps an extra soup lunch like the Lent one, that could be a further money raiser, but would like help with this.

<u>Parish Website</u>	<p>Nick Crangle, who runs the website, said he was happy to add anything that is required to the website, and to make corrections where necessary, if people contacted him. The weekly newsletter gets added each week. Father Tom added that he had had visitors today and they had commented on the ease of finding information on the website.</p> <p>The minutes of this meeting will be added to the website and, after comments, it was agreed that pastoral council meeting notes would be added too.</p>
<u>Comments and Conclusions</u>	<p>Father Tom was asked about the Rugby World Cup – due to the times of the matches, it was not feasible to show them in the Parish Centre.</p> <p>A comment was made about the quarterly newsletter that we used to publish. Father Tom and the pastoral council will consider if it is needed, perhaps as a quarterly summary of what is up and coming. The weekly newsletter does hold significantly more on forthcoming activities than we used to get.</p> <p>Father Tom thanked everyone for coming, and for all that everyone does in the parish. Next time we hold an annual meeting we would perhaps try a different time. Thank you to Fred for his leadership of the pastoral council, and Alison for taking the notes. If anyone would like to join the pastoral council, or any other group, please let Father Tom know.</p>