

Notes of St Joseph & the English Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council
Monday, 15th January 2024 at 7.30pm at WCC

Present: Fr Peter, Fr Marco, Rebecca Faulkner, Alison Jones, Tim Mills, Bertie Napier, Marie Rhodes,

Apologies: Martin Dillon, John Tomkinson

Rebecca Faulkner welcomed as a new member of the PPC.

Church & Finance Update

Fr P advised that the annual assessment of funds payable to the Diocese was £84,233. In future, 1/3 of any property sales will go to the diocese, in line with the current policy on rental property, to create funds to support poorer parishes. The capital projects for heating (£180k) and lighting (£120k) of St JEM had resulted in more efficient usage and lower bills.

The envisaged planned giving appeal will be delayed until the summer term. Some standing orders are being reduced/cancelled understandably given rising living costs.

Mike Carroll and Martin Curran completing the annual parish return for the Diocese.

At present HC MH and MHR SBW pay no contribution towards central costs ie admin etc as not viable on current income levels.

WCC Update

Majority of the considerable running costs for WCC are borne by Parish with some offset from hirings and parish organisations able to contribute.

Insurance issues regarding the fractured windows ongoing. Anticipated cost £30k to replace 2 windows and apply safety film to remainder. Cheaper than overall replacement and viable option.

Fr Peter noted that the plane trees near WCC to be checked/lopped next month.

Fr Peter advised some evidence of movement in the Monastery building with insurers notified and inspecting.

Communion under both kinds

This was beginning to be offered again in some other deanery parishes and was likely to be welcomed in our parish churches by a small but appreciable number. Aim for introduction of the Chalice from Easter. Suggested catechesis required from pulpit to explain that full communion was valid under either species with choice to receive both. Some EMs may be reluctant to offer chalice if vulnerable etc.

Reader/EM recruitment/GDPR/Rotas Update

In Lent more volunteers to sought to become EMs and/or Ministers of the Word. Relevant training to be organised and the guidance notes, previously finalised, circulated to all Readers.

Bidding prayers

Discussion took place on the lengthy list of names of the sick and deceased currently included in the bidding prayers and the difficulty arising for visiting priests. Various alternatives were considered but any options to reduce numbers was recognised as both difficult and sensitive. Some parishes listed the names in the parish newsletter but there was not enough space in 'The Carpenter'. Agreed to try a transition: the list as currently drawn up, would be placed next to that for Mass intentions, at the central entrance to the church.

GDPR: Following discussion agreed appropriate wording to permit contact details to be shared would be drawn up and cleared with the Diocese. The intention would then be to ask EMs and Readers to

sign (voluntarily) at training sessions so that contact details for swaps can be shared more efficiently.

Future Planning/projects – the work of the poem!

Fr Peter's Advent sermons had referred to a poem by Howard Thurman about the work of Christmas beginning once it was over – to find the lost, to heal the broken etc. Discussion took place on various options but given the increase in mass attendance, numbers for FHC, confirmation and RCIA, we are a most blessed parish. However, the challenge was to identify the need in the parish and a step beyond RCIA to support neophytes on their journey would be useful. BN mentioned the Vatican example of a pool of individuals willing to offer support, as a mechanism for giving and getting help.

Buntingford Parish

Fr Peter noted the demands of acting as Parish Administrator and the difficulty in obtaining cover but was most grateful for the support of Deacon Paul and Fr Marco.