

PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART, ST IVES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Steering Group held on Monday, 28th September 2009 at 19.30 in the Presbytery

Present: Father Paul, Elizabeth Barker, Terry Cahill, Linda Elsom, Patrick Landucci, Michael Sanderson, Dot Wade (Chairman), Bridget Wells, Veronica Boland (Secretary)

Fr Paul led the opening prayers.

1. Apologies – Ciara Baker

2. Minutes of Meeting of 22nd June 2009

These were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising

1. The Chairman welcomed two new members of the Committee - Linda Elsom and Terry Cahill have joined as 5 pm and 11 am Mass representatives respectively. Ciara Baker and Victoria Redwood are the new youth representatives and will receive copies of these minutes.

Action: Veronica

Fr Paul thanked Dot for making the appeal for new members of the committee.

2. Elizabeth has obtained the "Mothers' Prayers" books from Walsingham. She will make some enquires and see if this prayer group can be started.

4. Parish Open Meeting

Fr Paul reminded the Committee that open meetings are held twice a year, in May and October/November. At the autumn meeting there is usually a topic for discussion of particular interest together with elections for members of the Steering Group. The financial accounts are presented at the May meeting.

It was agreed that the autumn open meeting this year will be on Tuesday, 10th November at 19.30 in the Hall and the usual notices will be put in the newsletter.

Action: Veronica

Northstowe, Papworth and adult religious education are topics that have been discussed at previous open meetings.

In view of the decreasing number of priests, Fr Paul suggested a possible topic for discussion could be the future of the parish if there is no priest to succeed him. He

alluded to this in the sermon last weekend following the merger of the parishes of Buckden and St Neots. A discussion followed of the various issues.

- Bridget said people may have concerns and would welcome being able to discuss them at a meeting.
- Patrick suggested that the position could be summarised by stating the actual number of parishes at present without a parish priest, so that people would understand the reality of the situation.
- Stating the number of priests who will retire in the next ten years and the number of students studying at the seminary (six) would also illustrate the seriousness of the position. (The drop-out rate for students is one-third.)
- Although there would be Mass provision in St Ives, the Masses may have to be reduced from three to one.
- There could be a discussion as to which Masses we lose and how a larger congregation could be accommodated.
- Collaborative ministry could be discussed. There are many documents on collaborative ministry, which we can look at to see what they suggest and we can also explore how this parish can prepare for the possibility of having no priest or sharing with Huntingdon.
- Fr Paul explained the situation with regard to the number of priests in other parts of the world - the various ratios of Catholics to priests and also the cultural differences.
- We need to plan ahead - where do we want to be in twenty years' time?
- We may eventually be in a position to tell the Bishop that we have had discussions and could help in the planning for the future.

It was decided that the main topic of discussion for the open meeting would be "No Priest in St Ives?" Father Paul will prepare notes to begin the discussion with committee members making pertinent contributions.

5. Length of Service of members of the PSG

Veronica had updated the document showing the number of years' service of each member.

According to the Constitution, members can be appointed for a two-year term and can be re-appointed for a further two-year term. Members may not be appointed for a third consecutive term.

Dot and Bridget will have completed four years' service in November and cannot be reappointed for a third term. There will therefore be vacancies for 8 am and 5 pm Mass representatives.

As a co-opted member of the Finance and Building, Patrick is not bound by the Constitution, and can stand down at any time and be replaced by another member of the Finance and Building Committee.

6. Building and Finance

Patrick outlined the three main topics that the Finance and Building Committee are at present involved with:

- (1) The practicability of refurbishment of the church bells, the cost involved and whether there are alternatives to refurbishment.
- (2) The installation of photo-voltaic cells on the hall roof as a means of generating our own electricity and selling any surplus back to the National Grid.
- (3) What needs to be done to the internal courtyard and whether it could be put to better use.

With regard to the doors, the revised design for the top panel was sent to the Historic Churches Committee on 7th September for approval, but no reply has been received. Veronica will contact them this week.

Action: Veronica

The inspection of the bells by a bell engineer also revealed that the stonework is in need of repair. One of the bells is dated 1631. Replacement would be very expensive and the matter has not yet been discussed by the Finance and Building Committee.

In reply to a query from Terry, Fr Paul explained that the inspection was carried out following the matter being raised at a parish open meeting. It came to the top of a list of projects after more essential matters had been dealt with.

In reply to a query from Dot, it was explained that the small courtyard had evolved from the building of the extension.

The financial position is sound following an extensive programme of maintenance and repair work since 2001.

7. Any Other Business

Patrick enquired as to the situation in the parish with regard to swine flu. At a service he had attended in the Westminster diocese communion was not allowed in two kinds. The shaking of hands was also not allowed. Fr Paul said that the diocese has issued guidelines to parishes. Should there be several cases of swine flu either reported or brought to the attention of the parish priest then suspension of communion from the

chalice would take place immediately. There would also be suspension of the sign of peace and communion would only be given in the hand. The guidelines are available on the diocesan website.

In view of there being no organist some Sundays, Terry requested that the hymns should be traditional with tunes that people know. Fr Paul said that we have an organist for some Sundays of the month and the less well known hymns will be on those Sundays when there is an organist. The hymns are chosen by a music group made up of parishioners and anyone is welcome to join the group. It should also be remembered that the hymns with which the older generation are familiar are not necessarily those which the younger generation know, and it is sometimes difficult to balance the two.

8. Date of next meeting

Monday, 23rd November at 19.30 in the Presbytery.

The meeting closed at 20.35.