

Present:

Fr. Peter Mansfield, Gerry O'Donnell, Sue Carr, Roque Fernandes, Penne Hutton, Brenda Eydman, Pauline D'Mello-Maplesden, Bernadette Hallett, Bridget Hanlon, Peter McFall, Elsie Ofili, Erica Thurbon, Colin Wilding,

Minutes:

Bernadette Hallett

Agenda:

Welcome by Gerry **Opening Prayer** by Sue

Members 'check in' - two attendees apologised for a delayed attendance, but all present for majority of meeting.

Apologies for Absence - none

Minutes and Matters Arising

No matters arising from previous minutes, minutes accepted and passed.

Review of keeping the Parish connected

- a) **Updates;** Easing of lockdown hoped for on 19th July. Members were asked to reflect on what considerations and actions we might need to take as lockdown is lifted. Fr. Peter gave an update regarding the use of the church hall; the pharmacy needs to use the hall full time until the end of the second week of September. After that, hopefully the parish will be able to open up for use by a variety of church groups. If the vaccination centre need to continue their work we can negotiate with the pharmacy using the hall midweek and St. Aidan's using the hall from Friday - Monday over a long weekend. Any changes beyond that would need to be reviewed. Once we can start to use the hall again we will be able to commence rebuilding the parish. No instructions have been received yet from the Diocese as we don't yet know what the regulations will be from 19th July. The Diocese is expected to issue guidance after the Government has issued their regulations. The church seating arrangements were discussed but Fr. Peter explained that the seating plan has been fully explored and currently makes best use of bench spacing. This has been fully discussed in the past. We need to be very clear about our seating arrangements and reinforce this to stewards and parishioners, and not try to squeeze extra people into seats. There are clear reasons for this. Any changes should be fully discussed, written down, and agreed. However, as we are so close to regulations being eased it was felt there is little point in making changes to our seating at this point in time.

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- * Fr. Peter will write to the stewards to remind them of the importance of adhering to our agreed regulations.
- * Fr. Peter will provide an update for the parish in the newsletter to remind them of the procedures and the reasons why they are in place.
- * Group leaders need to take an active role. They will be asked to consider how they might restart their activities when the time comes.

Brenda sent out a lot of Easter cards to the elderly, sick, housebound, and isolated, which were very well received and appreciated. She would like to continue this practice which was given full support and agreement by the committee who thought this was an excellent idea. Much formal communication has eased off as people have begun to return to masses. Brenda has received a request for a gardener from a sick parishioner. She will investigate a number of suggested

possibilities. There are many friendship groups within the parish and people have not been neglected.

- b) **Digital platforms;** All digital platforms continue to be used. It was appreciated that Fr. Peter posted on Facebook that the Covid vaccination hub had reached 20,000 vaccinations. The JustGiving contributions have dried up recently. This could be promoted again in the newsletter. All ideas and suggestions are welcome for ways that the digital platforms could be given a new lease of life. The offertory collections have been in keeping with the projections but still need to be increased to match pre covid levels.

For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission

This discussion was led by Colin. We as a parish need to be aware of developments that are being planned. Pope Francis has stated that the General Synod of Bishops, which is due to meet next year, will be very different. He wants it to be 'synodal', with the focus on listening and discerning all corners of the church. The Synod should be a process and not just an event.

- i) Process of consultation; this will be organised at a diocesan level which will give everyone an opportunity to speak out for their priorities. There will be a questionnaire prior to consultation. The process will start with mass in October (9/10th) and continue until April 2022. The bishops will summarise their findings and take them forward to the next stage.
- ii) Continental phase.
- iii) Synod in Rome.

The plan is that the bishops will listen to the people of God, on the chosen theme of the Synod. This exercise of listening will be the first step in the process. It is not about changing the way decisions are made in the church. The onus is on the bishops to listen carefully and to report back accurately.

Parish Councils get mentioned in the planning as their role is important; Pope Francis believes they should continue to have a role. Fr. Peter gave a quote regarding the role of the Parish Council in supporting the Parish Priest.

The process commences on 17th October. We have no idea yet what this will mean for us as a Parish Council, or as a Parish. The PPC were open to and supportive of these new ideas and developments, and the plans were well received well overall.

When we were in between priests and did not have a parish priest for some months in 2016, we as a parish set up both the Parish Council and the Liturgy Committee in order to keep our parish focused and motivated. This all worked well and also helped Fr. Peter when he arrived. This could also be a good opportunity to engage the youth of the parish.

It was asked how we would structure ourselves when the time comes. It will primarily be for Fr. Peter to decide how this will proceed. At the moment we do not have the information to make any decisions yet. We will need to address how we approach this and how we disseminate information.

If an information pack arrives early then the PPC could call an ad-hoc meeting before the next planned official meeting.

Communication to the Parish

Information regarding the opening of the parish hall will be put in the weekly email.

Update on the refurbishment of the Presbytery garden and church grounds: - the grass and bark area is now finished, and fencing is in progress. The patio area should be finished by the end of next week. All is going according to plan, the work is of good quality, and the project has kept within the budget allocated. Parishioners are welcome to go and have a look at the work.

The Task Force have also been working hard to clear and tidy the Memorial Garden for which we are very grateful.

Priest's Notices

Fr. Peter had nothing further to add.

AOB

A group of parishioners who would normally go into the Social Club after the 11.00 mass have had a get together recently, attendance by word of mouth, and bringing their own refreshments. Gatherings outdoors are currently allowed up to 30 people. It was thought that we could address with the Social Club how to make the club more active post covid for elderly and lonely, and become more inclusive.

Gerry summarised the discussion by saying that this had been an opportunity for some people to socialise on an informal, ad-hoc basis, and had given the opportunity for some people to socialise who had not previously been able to get out to do this due to covid regulations. Hopefully, government and church guidance will only be in place for another 4 or 5 weekends. The gathering is obviously weather dependent, and the bar is not open.

It was agreed this informal gathering could continue but an invitation with an explanation will be put in the newsletter explaining that this group must be restricted to a maximum of 30 people, that there will be a list of names kept, and that social distancing rules for up to 30 people must be adhered to.

There was much appreciation expressed for Fr. Peter and the way he has handled keeping the church going over the past stressful year under very difficult conditions. The streamed masses in particular have been highly praised and appreciated. Will Fr. Peter have the opportunity to have a much needed break soon? The Bishop has written to all priests to say that they should get a break if at all possible. Fr. Peter hopes to have some mid week breaks in the near future starting in August.

Erica gave an update on Holy Communion preparations. A Gmail account has been set up for participants. Postcards have been prepared with a number on which will be sent to Erica and the children will be provided with a Google link. The group size this year will be doubled and could be around 60 children. Doing so much electronically has so far made organisation easier to handle and it is hoped to be able to continue this way of management in the future.

Volunteer to prepare Opening Prayer: Pauline D'Mello-Maplesden

Closing Prayer

Fr. Peter read part of the gospel for the forthcoming Sunday, followed by an extract from a reflection by Pope Francis on the passage.

Date of Next Meeting:

Date: Thursday 23rd September

Time: 7.30pm

Place: Zoom