

Present:

Fr. Peter Mansfield, Gerry O'Donnell, Sue Carr, Roque Fernandes (visual only), Brenda Eydman, Bernadette Hallett, Bridget Hanlon, Elsie Ofili (late joining, audio only) Colin Wilding,

Minutes:

Bernadette Hallett

Agenda:

1. **Welcome** by Gerry. **Opening Prayer** led by Fr. Peter
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Pauline D'Mello-Maplesden, Penne Hutton, Peter McFall, Erica Thurbon,
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

Minutes accepted and passed, no matters arising.

4. Review of current arrangements for Mass

a) We no longer use a track and trace system. People are still encouraged to use green dots for seating guidance but more than 3 may now sit together. Stewards have been asked to be flexible in their stewarding. There was a discussion about the role of stewards at Communion; decision made that stewards no longer need to guide the congregation at the Communion procession. Stewards will continue to meet and greet at weekend masses, and to clean after each weekend mass.

The process for the second collection was discussed. It was agreed that two stewards will hold collection baskets at the entrance doors to the church and we will disband use of the little white boxes.

Covid is not going away, numbers in this area are currently rising again, and could increase in the Autumn. Organisation of use of green spots for seating is now more lax but we need to bear in mind the most vulnerable people in the congregation. Notices are available for people to use to ask for space to be left around them if they so wish. The suggestion was made and discussed as to whether we should use the two wings of the seating at the front of the church to be allocated for use only by single individuals, but it was decided this was not desirable as there is still plenty of space in the main body of the church. The gallery can also be used. People should still be as spread out as possible. Stewards followed the clear guidelines assiduously throughout the pandemic but as regulations have been relaxed it would be extremely difficult to try to introduce new rules as people are now taking more responsibility for their own decisions and are reluctant to be told or directed as to what to do. This could change if the situation changes in the Autumn or Winter. A number of stewards have received criticism, and rude or negative responses over the past year when attempting to give directions, and negative responses would be likely to get worse if we try to tighten our rules. Generally people are being sensible. An organisation can only ask people to respond, and we do not have any government or Diocesan guidance in this matter. Masses are still streamed. Generally, people have been very supportive and appreciative of the decisions taken by Fr. Peter to keep them safe.

b) Arrangements for Christmas Masses

Discussion about possible options for how Christmas masses are managed. It is likely that the ruling for mass obligations will be reviewed in November by the Bishops. Safety overrides obligation. We will await a directive from the Bishops before making a final decision.

The main concerns are for the 6.00pm mass on Christmas eve, and the Midnight mass as attendance is usually high at those masses. A booking system, as used last year, would require someone to manage it.

Various suggestions were made and discussed;

1. Booking system like last year
2. Booking system with limited numbers (no seating plan)
3. First come first seated. Numbers admitted limited
4. No system (ie current practice)

Pre covid, mass attendance was around 425 over the weekend, currently is around 225. Christmas numbers would be more. Ideally we need to make a decision by the end of October in order to put plans in place. Numbers would be limited by using a pre-booking system. We would not need to adhere to using the green spots for spacing and would ask people to use their common sense. Elderly or vulnerable people could feel very uncomfortable if they are crowded in.

* The majority of the PPC favoured the method of using a pre-booking system but with no allocated spaces.

Fr. Peter is attending a Deanery meeting soon and will canvas opinions there.

5. Review of keeping the parish connected

Gerry invited people to contribute comments as this item was time limited due to the length of time needed for item 6.

We need to encourage people to attend the Social Club now that it is reopening.

6. The Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Southwark

Fr. Peter was invited to lead this part of the program. Fr. Peter received a large number of documents at the weekend. There is a lot to take in and to consider how this will work within the parish. Every four years in Rome there is a Synod. This covers various topics and is attended by all the Bishops. The Pope summarises their findings in a teaching document. Pope Francis wants to change the way that Synods are carried out and wants to work from the people upwards. On 18th October the Archbishop will say mass to mark the start of this new process. Each parish will then need to meet by 19th November. After online meetings with the Archbishop a document summarising the discussion has to be submitted by January 7th. In the second year there will be meetings at a national level, and in the third year the findings will be presented in Rome for discussion of their vision of the churches, and how it all works.

We have to organise the listening sessions by 19th November and then to feed back to the Diocese. The Bishop will set up on-line discussions with two representatives from each parish and their parish priest. Each Synod has a theme. This time the topic is 'Synodality'. Basically, Pope Francis is talking about the way we are as a community. Synodality translates as Walking Together. How do we do this within our parish? As a church, how are we growing? What obstacles do we meet? As a parish we have already begun to address this in many different ways, eg. through Covid times.

It is difficult to hold meetings at this time still due to restrictions. We have tough deadlines ahead and we need to nominate 2 delegates. These delegates need to have specific qualities and skill-sets, not just be organisers/volunteers/PPC members. Our delegates need to be chosen by 17th October in order to attend the online mass that day which marks the start of this process.

The delegates will need to organise a Listening Phase to be held over the following month. Our part of the process ends in January. The Listening Phase will be over in 5 weeks.

Gerry will email out the documentation to the PPC members following this meeting. Members need to read the documents carefully over the following day if possible as delegates need to be invited over this coming weekend. Delegates must be in place by Sunday 17th October, ie. Sunday week.

* Members to email Fr. Peter individually with their thoughts and suggestions.

We will need another forum to carry this forward. There will be a further meeting on Thursday 21st October to discuss progress.

7. Communication to the Parish

Will include information re the Synod.

8. Priest's Notices - nothing further

9. AOB - none

Volunteer to prepare Opening Prayer - Brenda Eydman

Closing Prayer -

Fr. Peter gave a vote of thanks to Gerry and the PPC for all that they do and the help and support he has received. He read a passage from St. John's gospel, and led a prayer remembering especially our departed loved ones.

Date of Next Meetings:

Date: Thursday 21st October

Time: 7.30pm

Place: Zoom

AND

Date: Thursday 18th November

Time: 7.30pm

Place: St. Aidan's Church Hall