

Present:

Fr. Peter Mansfield, Gerry O'Donnell, Sue Carr, Roque Fernandes, Bernadette Hallett, Peter McFall, Elsie Ofili, Colin Wilding,

Minutes:

Bernadette Hallett

Agenda:

1. **Welcome** to first meeting of 2022 by Gerry. **Opening Prayer** by Roque.
2. **Apologies for Absence** - Bridget Hanlon, Penne Hutton, Brenda Eydman, Pauline D'Mello-Maplesden, Erica Thurbon,
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

Minutes of last meeting accepted and passed.

Matters arising: Roque announced his resignation from the PPC due to his relocating to Goa for the foreseeable future. He gave thanks to the committee for all the support he has received during his time as a member of the PPC. Gerry gave a vote of thanks to Roque for all his time in office and for his input during that time. He hopes his plans go smoothly and wished him well for the future. As this resignation brings the number of PPC members back to 12 we still have a full complement and therefore do not need to take action to fill this place.

4. The Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Southwark

Peter Chamberlain attended this meeting to report on behalf of the representatives for the parish process. He gave a brief update of the timeline for the whole process; the local Listening Phase which was the parish involvement, ended on 21st January 2022. In the coming week of 7th February the delegates are due to meet on Zoom with Archbishop John and the diocesan lay team on 9th February; this will be a Discernment session and there will be a huge number of delegates attending. The Diocese want written submissions by 18th February. Peter Chamberlain, Richard Thurbon and Antonnette Cabida have completed a draft submission of the report and hope to be able to make it available in a few days time. This first draft is now with Fr. Peter and Gerry for its first reading. The main input was from feedback from the Parish Synod meetings. There were also 2 parishioners who met with delegates on line, and in addition there were a few written submissions. The delegates worked to the original deadlines given and therefore had time to reach out to unrepresented groups, namely, parents of young families and teenagers in the parish. There was no response from these groups.

There are now therefore some sections of the parish that are unrepresented, and responses are from people who are currently active in the parish. Therefore there could be some assumptions made from points raised and which remain untested.

The report is presented under Themes and Headings, and Common Threads. Peter then gave a brief summary of the report to the committee. Many things came out which will be up to the parish to decide how to address and take forward

Gerry thanked Peter for an excellent summary and report. He congratulated Peter and his team on all the work and effort that had gone in to making all that such a great success. He then posed the question asking that in going forward, how do we get more inclusivity within the parish?

When the report is finalised it will be submitted to the Diocese. We now need to address how this is reported to the parish. There was some discussion about how to use a link on the parish website to the best advantage. The front page of the website only displays the latest post. Could a permanent paragraph and link be put on the front page?

A question was asked asking how the Bishops and diocesan lay team will select what they want to discuss? Who is overseeing their decision making? The Bishops will be collating issues and will produce a 'synthetic' report which will come back to the parishes for their perusal.

Fr. Peter made the point that the Clergy were asked to attend the meetings where possible, to listen but not to generally intervene or influence the discussions. However, Fr. Peter has some concerns about how some findings are may be read. E.g. Youth; there seemed to be no knowledge amongst many contributors of the many ways in which people in this parish have reached out to the youth although little was possible during Covid. Another example; the Confirmation groups all have to submit a personal written statement before they start their course, and most say that they feel very welcome in the parish and enjoy belonging to St. Aidan's. This generally remains their view after their preparation is finished.

A further example was regarding the situation of many divorced or remarried people. Fr. Peter does not feel that this group of people feel that they are unwelcome in our parish, and many speak very positively of their experiences at St. Aidan's. He is concerned that a report will not be able to make it clear what the situation is and that it could give too negative a profile of the parish.

We will now need to consider our ways forward. Gerry and Fr. Peter have a draft copy of the report which they hope will be finalised in the coming week. Peter Ch will give a copy to Gerry who will decide how to share the report, but Gerry expects he will give copies to the PPC prior to it being shared more widely within the parish.

5. Review of Current Arrangements for Mass

Fr. Peter read out the latest guidance which has been issued by the Diocese regarding Covid regulations. The points were then discussed by the PPC in terms of what practice we intend to use in our own parish.

1. Face coverings - we will continue with current practice. Masks to be used. No change.
2. Singing - congregation to be encouraged to sing whilst wearing masks. Choir may take masks off. No change.
3. Self-distancing - people will decide for themselves where to sit but green markers to be left in place for guidance in the hope that people will still use their common sense.
4. Surfaces and cleaning - We will stop cleaning benches after masses. A return to normal cleaning to recommence.
5. Hymn books will be reintroduced.
6. Newsletters - these will be available in the porch for those who wish to take one but will not be handed out by Welcomers. People will still be able to access the newsletter on line, and this is to be encouraged for the purpose of being eco-friendly.
7. Tables - Fr. Peter is trialing a new layout. On entering the church, part of the back row benches on each side have now been removed and replaced by tables with items of interest on display. In spreading things out in this way it is hoped to ease the flow of people entering and leaving church but who would also like to look at information of interest.
8. Sanitising - Hand sanitisers will still be available for use as people enter and leave the church. A request was made for the Special Ministers to receive a reminder about sanitising hands after they have received Communion themselves but before they distribute Communion to the congregation. (*Colin will ask Leonie to send out a reminder to the Special Ministers.)
9. Sign of Peace - current practice to continue as an acknowledgement for now. Review at a later date.
10. Lectern - Fr. Peter will return to using the Lectern. He hopes this will make it easier for people to hear what is said as the acoustics in the church are not always clear or consistent.
11. Prayer for Spiritual Holy Communion - this will no longer be said. People are gaining confidence and many are returning to mass in person now. Prior to Covid, attendance was

average 390 over the three Sunday masses. In October '21 the count was 250. Last Sunday weekend was 290. Fr. Peter would like to continue to say a streamed mass on line in the future for the housebound. The Bishops have stated that if people are able to attend mass then they should do so. If they are going out and about and going everywhere else then they should be attending weekly mass. There are many important benefits to attending mass in person.

12. Stewards; they have replaced the Welcomers over the past two years. Now that the tasks they carried out are going to be redundant we would like to invite the Welcomers to return to duty. Are the Welcomers prepared to return? Brenda is willing to continue to organise the Welcomers and has made contact with them. She received 6 replies, with a further 2 who have still not returned to church. Do the Stewards need to be asked to remain as Welcomers? We need to put out an appeal for more volunteers. The transition will take some weeks.
13. Collections; we are now allowed to take collections again in the traditional way.
14. Votive Candles - these are now back in use.
15. Servers - we would like Servers to return now to serving at mass.

* Peter McFall will liaise with Millie about Servers returning to serve at masses.

* Website guidance regarding attending Sunday mass needs to be updated on the parish website.

6. Church Notice Boards

Erica has been working on these. Gerry will circulate the email to update the PPC with recent updates.

7. Keeping the Parish Connected

MailChimp is the weekly mailing that goes out to parishioners who have signed up for it. It contains a link to the weekly newsletter so serves a useful purpose despite being needed less now for updates. Registration is still slowly increasing so it is serving a useful purpose.

8. AOB

Peter McFall gave an update on Parish finances. The Finance Committee met the previous evening. The parish has gained a surplus over the past year. The use of the hall by Valley Pharmacy as a vaccination hub has generated income for the parish.

The hall has new lights which were installed last weekend by a small group of parishioners led by Denis O'Donnell. The new lights are all LED so are very economic. A huge thank you to Denis and his team for all their hard work.

The Offertory donations have increased. In 2019 £15,000 was raised through standing orders, and by the end of 2021 this amount had increased to £27,000.

The Finance Committee discussed the possibility of using contactless offertory donations. Paul Dibbs is going to contact the Diocese to investigate this possibility. There are around 45 churches in the Diocese who currently use this method. The banks are going to start charging churches for cash being paid in so this would be a way to avoid this cost. The PPC was in favour.

Volunteer to prepare Opening Prayer - Bernadette

Closing Prayer by Fr. Peter

Date of Next Meeting:

Date: Thursday 7th April 2022

Time: 7.30pm

Place: St. Aidan's Church Hall