

St Aidan's Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting on 31 January 2024

Present: Simon Archer, Craig Ditchfield, Penne Hutton, Fr Peter Mansfield, Gerry O'Donnell, Martin Puckett (Parish Treasurer), Erica Thurbon (Chair), Richard Thurbon, Colin Wilding (Secretary), Sarah Yusoof.

Apologies: Alexandra Collins, Lesley Leavey, Elsie Ofili.

Richard led the **opening prayer**.

1 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last PPC meeting (15 November 2023) were approved.

Matters arising:

Young families: Erica will send the draft questionnaire (to find out what families want from the parish) to Colin by 15 February so that he can check the design. Fr Peter has expressed some concerns which will be taken into account. [Action: Erica, Colin]

Altar servers' albs: Erica has spoken to Claudine Day and she will repair the albs. Erica will check whether they can be made fire-safe. [Action: Erica] Fr Peter has furnished the adult servers with suitable albs.

Mobile display boards: To be carried forward. [Action: Lesley]

200 Club: Erica will be promoting the scheme in February. [Action: Erica]

2 PPC Meet & Greet

This event is scheduled for Sunday 4 February, in the hall after 11am Mass. It will be promoted in the newsletter, on Facebook and via Mailchimp. [Action: Erica] The hope is that more people will come along than usually come to the social after Mass. It would be an opportunity to find out what people want from the PPC.

It was agreed that there would be a visible PPC presence – a table in the corner, name badges, and a short introduction by Erica. It would be advisable to clear the event with the Social Club committee as it was taking place during their regular social event. [Action: Erica]

It was suggested that another way to find out what people want from the PPC would be to have a suggestion box at the back of the church.

3 Workstream updates

Welcome (led by Colin)

Colin passed around copies of a new draft of the Welcome booklet that he had been working on; this was nearly ready for production and he was hoping to be able to have copies available at the Meet & Greet. He had put together two versions, one in colour and the other in black and white. The B/W version would be cheaper to print but Fr Peter felt that the booklet was important enough to merit printing in colour. Fr Peter will send Colin a list of corrections and changes and Colin will provide a revised (colour) version in time for printing before the Meet & Greet. **[Action: Fr Peter, Colin]**

After the Meet & Greet Colin will produce a new version incorporating further corrections and improvements. It was suggested that some information on how to donate to the parish be included, and also a contents page. **[Action: Colin]** *[Later: these additions were both made in the version prepared for the Meet & Greet.]*

To accompany the booklet there is a separate A5 sheet. This has ideas for ways in which people can get more involved in the parish straight away – events and activities that they can turn up to without having to sign up in advance. This sheet also has a contact form; people who are new to the parish can fill in their names and contact details on this form and hand it to someone (eg a Welcomer) and the information will be passed on to Fr Peter. It was suggested that the back page of the form could have a list of other groups or activities so that people could use the form to indicate their interest in any of these. **[Action: Colin]**

Elderly (led by Craig)

The list of housebound parishioners is currently up to date; clearly it needs to be updated regularly. Christmas cards had been sent to everyone on the list and Craig will send out Easter cards. **[Action: Craig]** Fr Peter will order more Easter cards for the shop. **[Action: Fr Peter]**

Some housebound people may feel isolated and we need to look at ways to enable them to get more involved if they wish to. It was agreed that we should look for volunteers to drive people to Mass and to other events such as the Afternoon Tea and the Listening Group. Drivers would need to be DBS checked. Craig will put an item in the newsletter asking for volunteers. **[Action: Craig]**

4 Synodal process

On 19 January the Diocesan Synod Contacts sent an email to all the Synod Delegates setting out the next steps for the diocese. The archbishop has invited parish synod delegates to an online Zoom call in February/March to share their insights on a set of questions. Priests have received a separate direct invitation. There are five (very broad) questions focusing on the key question ‘*How can we be a synodal Church in mission?*’

The archbishop has suggested that delegates may wish to focus on a particular facet of mission in their context or on how a synodal approach might be realised in their parish. Priests may wish to discuss the questions with delegates, members of the parish pastoral council, parish leads or the parish more broadly. Responses are not to be given in writing but by contributions to the online meetings.

The archbishop has stressed that the Holy Father has made it very clear that this is not a question of starting the process again or repeating the first stage but rather an effort to explore the ‘how’ of Synodality.

Because of the short window of time before the scheduled Zoom meetings it was decided that Fr Peter and Richard would sign up for the last meeting, on 5 March. **[Action: Richard, Fr Peter]** Richard will send out the questions to all PPC members **[Action: Richard]**; they are asked to look at and reflect on the questions and feed back thoughts to Richard and Fr Peter by Friday 23 February. **[Action: ALL]**

5 Finance update

Martin has prepared a draft finance update which will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Fr Peter noted that the Fete Committee no longer exists. We need to look for new fundraising activities.

6 Communication with the parish

The Mailchimp emails are working well in reaching people with the newsletter and Erica now adds to the email some brief thoughts, typically reflecting on the Sunday readings. It was suggested that the link to the newsletter be put after Erica’s piece to encourage people to read it; there is a risk, though, that this would mean that not everyone would read or scroll through to the link. Gerry will try both options (putting the link after or before Erica’s text) and monitor the effect on click-through. **[Action: Gerry]**

The Mailchimp email could also be used for reminders, eg about the donations machine at the back of the church.

7 Any other business

WhatsApp: Elsie had asked if the PPC WhatsApp group could be revived – the group had not been closed down but was not currently used. Not all the PPC members wish to use WhatsApp. all PPC members were asked to indicate to Gerry whether or not they wished to be on the group **[Action: ALL]** and Gerry would add to the group all the new PPC members who wish to participate. **[Action: Gerry]** It was agreed that the WhatsApp group would be used for PPC business and not for general social messaging. Erica would ensure that key messages to PPC members would be duplicated on email and WhatsApp so that no one would be left out.

Card reader for bar: Simon is working on getting a suitable card reader for payments at the Social Club bar; there was a need for someone to act as a reference point for occasions where an error is made that needs to be corrected externally (eg by writing a cheque). Martin will be that person. Paul Dibbs has recommended a small card reader; there is an initial cost of £70 and a subsequent cost of 1.6% of payments. **[Action: Simon]**

Youth ministry: The Confirmation group will be going on a retreat on 17 February.

Jubilee Year: The Pope has decided that 2025 will be a Jubilee Year with the theme ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ and has asked that this year be a ‘Year of Prayer’ to prepare for the Jubilee. Colin suggested that at the next meeting the PPC should consider what the parish might do to celebrate the Jubilee Year.

Diocesan Day: There will be a Diocesan Day in Aylesford on Saturday 8 June.

Altar servers: PJ O’Donnell now takes responsibility for the training of altar servers. Eleven servers received training on Sunday 28 January.

8 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will probably take place in the last week of April. Erica will liaise with PPC members to establish a suitable date. Colin noted that he would be away and so someone else would have to take the minutes. **[Action: Erica]**