

**ST GEORGE'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
17<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 8.00pm.**

**Apologies:** received from Adrienne Davison and Ann Chalk

The meeting was attended by 37 parishioners and 12 members of the Parish Council.

**Father Graham opened the meeting with a prayer remembering those who have died recently, particularly Les Dowie.**

**Welcome by Chair of Pastoral Council and Report**

Frank McEvoy welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Council members. His report had been circulated to the meeting which listed activities since the last AGM including:

- A very memorable celebration for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Bishops visit
- Parish trip to Ingatestone Hall with a tour by Lord Petre. Father Graham thanked Sharon for organising this trip for the parish.
- Parish Mission – Frank thanked the parishioners who took on various responsibilities for the week. The team visited every house on the parish register and left calling cards where not at home. Frank suggested that any parishioner who did not receive a visit should contact the parish office to ensure that their details are correct on the parish register.

Frank reported that the front external light at St. George's had now been adjusted, a new noticeboard with amended Mass times will be installed in next few weeks and the lighting has been upgraded in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

A short discussion took place. Some parishioners felt that the Mission was not well supported. It was noted that some services were better attended than others for various reasons. Father Graham said that it is difficult to measure the spiritual success. Sharon said that the Sion Community felt that events were very well supported.

Annabelle reported that the school held a parallel Mission which was a real success and far exceeded expectations in engaging the children. Parents also embraced the event.

**Report by Father Graham**

Mass attendance – average 465 weekly from October figures.

Baptisms – 21. Marriages 0. Deaths 20.

- A new sound system has been installed at St. George's which has much improved the sound quality but Jacqui said that she still has trouble hearing what is read from the ambo. Tony Castle suggested that the loop system be checked. Graham Alcock reported that the system used was fully compliant and tested regularly. Dave Townsend pointed out that the ambo microphone does not need to be adjusted for each reader and should be left in position. Some felt that some read too fast and Fr Graham said he would follow up on providing a short readers training course to help alleviate all these problems. Dave Townsend and Graham will check the loop system and microphones.
- Mick McGurk has started work on the mural depicting The Baptism of Our Lord and he recently completed the image of St. George on the left-hand window.
- A memorial service was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November to remember friends and family and the blessing of graves followed at St. Andrews, St. Nicholas Church and Southend Cemetery. This was appreciated by many parishioners and Father Graham said that this will probably be spread over 3 Sundays in future.
- Vast majority of parishioners had supported the change to Mass times.
- Green and red light system installed outside confessional at St. George's so parishioners know when the confessional is in use.
- Hopefully some adults will be confirmed next May when the Bishop carries out his official Visitation to the parish.
- Fr Graham thanked Neil and Jill Bryan for taking on the RCIA course.

- Confessions will be heard from 5.15 on a Saturday and for half an hour before each Sunday Mass during Advent.
- A number of social events had taken place during the year and Father Graham particularly thanked Suzanne and Brian and Jim and Denise for all their hard work with the Christmas and summer fayres.
- Recent Ofsted inspection at the school reported that the school were 'good' and Mrs Smith confirmed that they had just fallen short of being classed as an 'outstanding' school. Annabelle said that the inspection had been a very positive experience and although neither of the Inspectors was of Catholic faith, they commented on the spiritual life of the school and the pupils.
- School newsletters thoroughly enjoyed by parishioners.

### **Financial Report**

Graham briefly explained his Finance report and balance sheet which had been circulated to the meeting. He reported that the Offertory figure had not increased at all in year to date and the Finance Committee will consider ways to try to increase both Offertory and Gift Aid donations and this will be presented to all Masses asking parishioners to reconsider their donations. Questions relating to the finance report included:

- Why so much has to be paid to the Diocese? Fr Graham explained that it includes our parish contribution towards various employees in Youth, Finance, Justice & Peace, Promotion of Marriage and Family Life and property at Cathedral House. Father Graham reported that Bishop Alan is aware of how much money is being spent at Cathedral House and it is on his agenda to try to minimise this.
- Jacqui Patterson thanked Fr Graham and the committee as she noted that several things have been done in the parish during the past year including the side fencing and thanked Fr Graham and the committee.
- Graham said that property expenditure is being classified as 'needs to' rather than 'nice to' as total cost of £320,000 highlighted in quinquennial report.
- Maureen Woodcock commented that sometimes it seems that tickets are being sold for social events and draw tickets at the same time. Fr Graham said it is difficult to space these events in the Parish diary. Frank said the problem sometimes occurs when social events have been planned in the diary then other worthy charity causes fill the gaps.
- Olwen said that as Group 192 HCPT leader, she values the support given by parishioners.
- St. Edmunds – Poppets gives income of £5,200 a year less insurance costs and this will continue to be reviewed.
- Frank thanked Graham for his extensive report.

### **Open Forum**

- Jacqui Patterson asked Fr Graham to confirm the areas he would be visiting. Frank suggested that the mapped areas used by the Mission team would be useful and Jacqui asked if this could be displayed in the porch.
- Caroline Braybrook thanked Frank for the new parish website and Frank said he encouraged everyone to have a look as it includes 74 pages of information about all aspects of the parish including charities, groups, Mass times, minutes of meetings, links to school and much more.
- Caroline Statham asked about possibility of a Parish book but Fr Graham said that Fr Stuart Foster, the Diocesan Archivist, has been very ill and the possibility of this may be considered again when he recovers. Frank said that the cost of producing such a book would be quite considerable and it would be more cost-effective to produce an electronic version of the book. Caroline Statham said she had given Tony Shead details of a company in Eastbourne.

Frank extended thanks to everyone for attending, to the representatives on the PPC for their ideas and hard work over the past year, particularly to Father Graham for his guidance and support and to all who help make the parish a thriving community that it is.

Fr Graham thanked Frank as chair of the PPC, for all his work in setting up the parish website and also for all that he does as chair of Governors at the school.

Following a prayer and blessing by Fr Graham, the meeting closed at 9.25pm.