

Minutes of the Parish Council of St.Mary's Woolhampton

Monday, 7th November 2011

1) The meeting opened with a prayer

2) **Present:** Father Dermot, Deacon John, Paul Barras, Sue Edwards, Alison Harlen, Sheila Heulin, Sarah Meeson (taking Peter Collins' place), Sean Murphy, Midge Robinson, and Marc Servais.

Apologies: Peter Collins and Maureen Howard

* Paul Barras explained that Alison Harlen had replaced Lisa Bewick for St.Oswald's. He then thanked Marc and Sean for the many years of support they had offered to the PPC and their hard work, as this is their last meeting as representatives of their respective churches.

3) Minutes of 14th September 2011

Paul thanked PC for the minutes.

A discussion ensued re Living our Faith which revisited many of the discussions had at previous meetings. The group listened to the views shared then Fr.Dermot outlined what will be happening from January onwards.

Phase 1: A quiet phase from January until Easter during which Fr.Dermot will approach individual families in the parish and ask them to pledge for 5 years. He will identify 6-8 pairs of people to assist him.

Phase 2: This will take the form of an appeal from the pulpit asking people to consider if they can make a pledge or donation.

Phase 3: Everyone will come together and affirm their pledge. Fr.D explained how in the past there had been concerns that fund raisers were taking over. We as a parish are now taking ownership and the money will be of benefit to our community. This is an improvement on the original diocesan plan which would have resulted in less money being available to our parish.

- 25% of fund to training of monks
- 25% of fund to the elderly in the monastery
- 25% of fund to St.Finian's School
- 25% of fund to diocese which we can draw on.
- 80% of funding over £60,000 returned to parish

DJF stated that at a survey of St.Oswald's parishioners asking if they would give more money, 60% might be prepared to do so, 20% who made up the largest givers at the moment said they could give no more, and 20% made no comment.

AH asked if pledging was obligatory and were you tied in? PB and Fr.D stated that you could pledge out at any time.

SH stated that she was still opposed to individuals being selected to pledge.

PB stated that we are in charge of our own destiny and it was possible to donate a lump sum. He reiterated FD's statement that 'NO' was an acceptable answer.

FD explained that the folders were all ready but that they needed to put in more information about the four objectives, details about the mechanisms of money e.g 12 months X £10 X 5 years, £600+ gift aided = £750 etc.

MS suggested people would question why they were being visited by a priest when no other pastoral visits had been made.

SE proposed reversing phases 1 and 2.

FD reiterated that there is a tried and practised method which works and that is what he would be following and asked people to see previous minutes about the subject.

AH asked if there were any examples of how much it would cost to fund supporting an elderly priest. Fr D said he would take advice from Fr. Oliver but that it would be difficult to state a figure as each person could need differing support. For example, support from the NHS helps but someone might have to move into a care home.

Action: Fr. Dermot to launch in January

- First Holy Communion – the programme would not be running this year.
- There had been a comprehensive report on the SVP
- Youth - to be subject to later discussion
- New Missal: FD stated that people no longer look up or actively show they are listening to the Word of God. He acknowledged that looking at text can make you more focused but that he had told people they could take the text home. SE and SH expressed the view that people were under confident with the new missal. FrD stated that he would use the new prayers in Advent
- Christmas – dates have gone to parishes
- AH asked about the parish pilgrimage. FD thinks 30 or so people will be interested. It will be run through Palestine Pilgrimages and all bookings would go through them; he has asked for 50 more brochures.

4. The Rite of Baptism

FD started the discussion by stating that he had been the parish priest now for a year and he had done a number of baptisms and so too had Deacon John. He is concerned that they are focused more on a social occasion and people often do not attend Mass after the baptisms. FD is recommending that the Rite of Baptism be available in the afternoon of the first Sunday of the month or during any Mass. Having Baptism during Mass does lengthen the service so it is difficult to get to the next parish on time on a Sunday. FD raised the possibility of splitting the service over two Sundays thus ensuring the family attended Mass at least twice.

PB stated that having the Rite within the Mass retained the individuality of each community and welcomed the family within it.

SE requested a policy for those within and those outside of the parish.

DJF stated that there is preparation for baptism, should there be a post baptismal follow up? FD agreed this was a good idea. DJF suggested that each baptism could have a sponsor from within the community. FD agreed this was a good idea and also agreed with DJF that there should be catechesis for parents. PB asked if there were people to do this. It was noted that some people do this i.e. Mary Gush and Poppy Dixon. DJF suggested keeping an electronic record of baptism and sending a card each year on the anniversary. FD agreed this could be a good idea.

FD brought the groups attention to adult baptism which should take place at Easter as part of the RCIA but aired the difficulty of teenagers wanting to make their First Holy Communion. He illustrated this point by naming one individual.

5) Further points for brief discussion.

a) Confirmation – this programme will begin in November and run for 9 sessions. The group will follow a new programme 'Truth' by Danny Curtin. The programme is to be based in Thatcham and involves a number of catechists and candidates from this parish. MR attended a diocesan day of reflection on the new programme and reaching out to the youth.

Action: MR and others to work as catechists on programme

b) Youth – MR informed the group that the planned weekend in December was going ahead. She also raised the group awareness to the fact that parish youth work is often made up of unseen time as she spends a considerable amount of time just keeping in touch with the youngsters. However, because there are very few young people in comparison to the large number of retired people events cannot be compared. Because MR has developed links across the wider pastoral area she has been able to enlist another female helper for the weekend.

MR has purchased a number of resources for the wider parish for children and young people.

Action: MR to facilitate youth weekend

c) Parish Report FD stated that there are only 3 items on it so far and asked all parishes to send him a report electronically.

Action: Each Committee to submit a report

d) Due to time constraints it was agreed to discuss music throughout the parish at another time.

6. It was agreed to leave this to the next meeting

7. AOB – PB declared there was no other business

The meeting closed with a prayer