



Diocese of Nottingham: The Good Shepherd Parish Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5th March 2020

Attendees: Sarah Bray, Brian Huthwaite, Philip Martin, Jonathan Newman (Acting Chair) and Oliver Wastell.

1. Prayer

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Philip.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from John Doherty, Michael Dwan, Oliver Kuras and Canon Philipp Ziomek (on Lenten retreat) were noted.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 5th December 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

a) Parish Community Centre- Philip reported that he had met with Nanette Beaven on 31st January 2020 regarding the suggested review of the marketing arrangements for the parish community centre. Nanette has agreed to produce a flyer to advertise the centre's facilities within the local community (eg in supermarkets, GP surgeries etc). She will also update the centre's entry on the parish website.

a) Parish property management- Philip advised that the parish architect, Bob Reynolds, had unfortunately passed away since the Committee last met. Tribute was paid by the Committee to Bob's outstanding work on behalf of the parish over many years. It was agreed that in Canon Philipp's absence the Committee would need to check at the next meeting what alternative arrangements, if any, are now in place to provide architectural support for the parish. **ACTION 1/20: Canon Philipp** to be asked to advise at the next meeting..

c) Church mullions- in Canon Philipp's absence, it was not possible to identify what progress, if any, has been made since the Committee's last meeting to determine a programme of action and timescale to address the ongoing issues concerning the condition of the church mullions. **ACTION 2/20: Canon Philipp** to be asked to advise on the current position at the Committee's next meeting.

- d) Parish finances update-** Brian reported that the three outstanding cheques mentioned at the Committee's last meeting had subsequently been presented for payment.
- e) Analysis of income-** Philip confirmed that the Mass attendance data had been reported to the parish think tank at its most recent meeting in January 2020 and was under active consideration in the context of the think tank's work stream on evangelisation.
- f) Second collections 2020/21-** Philip confirmed that the review of parish finances required at about this time by the diocese was being covered by an article in the parish newsletter this coming week- end. It was agreed that a pulpit-led parish finance appeal could perhaps be considered for next year and that Sarah would be able to support this in terms of producing a poster etc. Meanwhile, it was suggested that the bank standing order form and Gift Aid declaration should, if possible, be given a higher profile on the parish website and that reference to how these documents may be accessed should also be made in the parish newsletter. **ACTION 3/20: Philip** to follow up as appropriate.

g) Collections on behalf of visiting priests from abroad or other causes-

Philip advised that a further £230.50 was being forwarded to Fr Joseph Prusaczyk's Religious Order in Belgium, via an international bank transfer arranged through the diocese, to support his work in Kibeho, Rwanda. This would be the last such transfer and reflected the sale of the remaining artefacts from Rwanda and an anonymous donation from a parishioner. It was explained that the parish incurs bank charges for such transactions. Oliver queried whether the diocese were aware of the "TransferWise" on-line facility which may help minimise such charges. **ACTION 4/20: Philip** to advise the diocesan accountant accordingly.

- h) Database support-** Oliver reiterated that he was prepared to assist the parish in assessing whether the existing parish databases could be managed and supported more effectively. Although he had not had time to progress this until now, Oliver advised that he should now have some time in his diary to look at this in the current month. It was agreed that priority should be given to the main parish database which is currently supported by Lotus software and which Oliver is prepared to examine to see whether the data could be transferred to an Access platform and improved in any way. Thereafter, Oliver will look at the separate Excel based Gift Aid database. Philip advised that Carmel, from the parish administration team, had expressed a wish to be involved in any discussions about the main parish database to see whether it was possible to expand its functionality to accommodate some separate administration processes she undertakes. **ACTION 5/20: Philip** to ask Canon Philipp to make contact with Oliver with a view to arranging for him to visit the parish office to assess the situation; thereafter **Philip** to contact Oliver to arrange a separate session at a later date to look at the Gift Aid database.

5. Parish finances-update

Brian provided the usual update on the parish finances.

Key points were:

- There is a credit balance of £24,937 on the parish's current bank account. This includes a donation of £2,500.
- The parish debt currently stands at £34,108 (excluding interest), reflecting the normal monthly repayments we have made and a one-off payment of £20,000 from the parish current account.
- The parish continues to reduce the debt by monthly payments of £3,950 and on that basis the debt will be cleared in about 9 months' time.

6. Analysis of income

Philip introduced his analysis which had been circulated with the agenda.

Income from weekly collections, bank standing orders, the monthly building fund collections and Gift Aid claims for the 2019/20 financial year is currently projected to be in the order of £152,575. This represents an estimated increase of £154 (0.1%) compared with 2018/19 and is an improvement on the estimate presented at the Committee's last meeting. It was noted that our projected income is not however keeping pace with inflation which is currently running at 1.8%. Consequently, our projected income for 2019/20 is at present showing a real terms reduction of 1.7%. That is however mitigated by the fact that there are only 51 Saturday/Sunday Mass collection dates in 2019/20 compared to 52 in 2018/19. When that is factored in the overall projected real terms reduction is in the order of 0.6% (not 1.1% as erroneously stated in the analysis).

It was noted that our total income from the weekly offertory collection at Mass is currently predicted to be down by £1,047 (1.3%) but this reduction can be linked to the fewer number of collections in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19. On the other hand, income from bank standing orders is currently projected to increase by £2,287 (6.1%). Income from the monthly building fund collections is currently predicted to decrease by £741 (a 7.9% reduction) owing to the collection not having been taken at all Masses in November and December 2019. Income from Gift Aid is currently predicted to be slightly lower than in 2018/19 - a projected reduction of £344 (1.5%).

The average Saturday/Sunday Mass attendance thus far in 2019/20 is now down by an average of 59 people per week (an 8.1% decrease) compared with last year. As previously reported, the data had been referred to the parish think tank so that consideration can be given to ways of addressing the decline.

In summary, the current income projections are not at present suggestive of a major financial problem for the parish, particularly as income from other sources (such as the annual Christmas bazaar) has increased. The Committee agreed however that the position should continue to be closely monitored at its future meetings as relatively minor changes can have a significant impact on the income projections.

Some concern was also expressed about the failure to publicise and to take some second collections which impacts upon the parish's finances. Philip agreed to report the concerns to Canon Philipp.

It was suggested that when the parish database is updated it could perhaps be used to mail out the parish newsletter electronically to parishioners and encourage them to donate to the building fund collections etc.

ACTION 6/20: Philip to continue to bring quarterly income reports to the Committee so progress can be monitored, and meanwhile to advise Canon Philipp about the Committee's concerns about the way that some second collections are communicated.

7. Parish Community Centre- review of charges for 2020/21

Consideration was given to Philip's report contrasting the charges we currently make for the hire of the parish community centre with the charges for 2020/21 determined by Gedling Borough Council for the hire of their community centres.

Although it is difficult to make like for like comparisons, the report indicated that our charges are not under-priced compared with the charges Gedling Borough Council make for their comparable facilities and that demand for the hire of our centre continues to be at a reasonable level. It was agreed therefore that, subject to Canon Philipp's agreement, our charges for 2020/21 should not be increased but that the position should continue to be reviewed on an annual basis. **ACTION 7/20: Philip** to bring a further report to the Committee in a year's time and in the meantime to obtain Canon Philipp's agreement to the hire charges remaining at current levels for the 2020/21 financial year.

8. Any other business

Nothing was identified for discussion under this item on the agenda.

9. Date of the next meeting

It was confirmed that the Committee's next meeting will be at 6.30pm on Thursday, 14th May 2020 in the Gilbert Room in the parish centre. It was agreed that the major focus of that meeting would be the Annual Return the parish is required to make to the diocese.

10. Closing prayer

The meeting concluded with a prayer, led by Jonathan.