



## **Diocese of Nottingham: The Good Shepherd Parish Finance Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**In attendance:** Phil Bray (Chairperson), Francesca Lynch, Philip Martin, David Staiano and Canon Philipp Ziomek.

Julie Rawding, from the parish pastoral team, also attended specifically for items 10 and 11 on the agenda which were brought forward to the early part of the meeting.

#### **1. Opening Prayer**

The meeting opened with a prayer, led by Philip.

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from John Doherty and Oliver Kuras.

#### **3. Welcome to new member, Francesca Lynch**

A warm welcome was extended to Francesca Lynch, the part-time parish office manager, who was attending her first meeting of the committee. It was explained that, amongst other duties, Francesca was now responsible for providing accountancy related support for the parish, following Brian Huthwaite's retirement.

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will be posted on the parish noticeboard and website. **ACTION 1/23: Philip** to action accordingly.

#### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

**a) Use of the parish community centre-** Phil asked that his analysis of the parish centre occupancy levels be deferred to a future meeting of the committee. **ACTION 2/23: Phil** to report back in due course.

**b) Parish database support-** Canon Philipp advised that although the upgraded parish database had been installed on the parish office computer a briefing session for him and other prospective users of the database is still awaited from Oliver Wastell. **ACTION 3/23: Philip** to ask Oliver to contact Canon Philipp and Francesca at the earliest opportunity to arrange the briefing and access arrangements for the new system.

If there is any further delay in providing the briefing Phil volunteered to see whether he could provide advice on accessing the new database.

c) **Parish GPDR policy-** Phil confirmed that he had checked the parish's current GPDR policy, available on the parish website, and felt it could be improved. It is proposed that this will be considered as part of the new parish website project. Meanwhile, it was agreed that the diocese should be consulted about any rewording of the policy and Phil will follow this up accordingly at an appropriate time. **ACTION 4/23: Philip** to provide Phil with the contact details for David Lawes, the diocese's chief operating officer; **Phil** to follow up in due course.

d) **Membership of the Committee-** It was agreed that Philip should contact Jonathan Newman to see whether he still wants to be a member of the parish finance committee given he no longer lives within the parish catchment area and has been unable to attend recent meetings of the committee. **ACTION 5/23: Philip** to confer with Jonathan and report back.

## 6. Parish finances- update

Francesca provided an update on the parish's current finances. Key points identified were:

- There is a credit balance of £20,070.52 in the parish's current bank account as at today's date.
- The parish's separate set-off account (held with the diocese to help with the cost of repairing the deteriorating concrete affecting the church building) is currently in credit to the sum of £185,843. This includes a recent transfer of £25,000 from the parish current account.
- As previously reported, although the parish's former debt has been fully cleared we have continued to make monthly payments of £3,950 into the set-off account bearing in mind the need to fund in due course the repairs to the mullions.
- Expenditure of £5,860 was incurred in November 2022 on the purchase of an upgraded office photocopier.

## 7. Analysis of income 2022/23

Philip took the Committee through his report projecting income during 2022/23 from the parish's "measurable" income sources (weekly offertory donations, bank standing orders, parish debt collections and Gift Aid). The key points identified were:

- The latest projection of the parish's total income from these sources is £160,812. If correct, that will represent an improvement of £11,042 (7.4%) on 2021/22, reflecting the continuing generosity of our parishioners.
- However, as annual inflation is currently running at 9.3% (as per the CPI data at November 2022) there is still likely to be a real terms decrease in the parish's disposable income.
- We are currently heavily reliant on the generosity of a comparatively small number of our parishioners who make very significant offerings to the church each month

and there would be a disproportionate, adverse impact on the parish's income if and when they cease to maintain their donations to the parish.

It was agreed that the position should continue to be carefully monitored and that to that end comparable reports should be brought to each meeting of the committee.

**ACTION 6/23:** Philip to continue to bring quarterly income reports to the committee.

## **8. Christmas Fair 2022**

Philip confirmed that the parish Christmas Fair for 2022 had generated a net profit of £8,785. This was only marginally less than the sum achieved in 2021, which was itself a record amount. The committee recorded its appreciation for the excellent work undertaken by Sarah Benedek in organising the Fair.

The committee also acknowledged the great success of the different strands of the "Secret Santa" arrangements which have typically made over £5,000 income for the parish each year. The committee recorded its particular appreciation in that respect for the generosity and hard work of an anonymous parish benefactor in preparing and providing the contents of the Secret Santa boxes each year. It was confirmed however that the boxes will not be available in 2023.

## **9. On-line Parish Accountance System (OPAS)**

Philip and Francesca advised that the new OPAS arrangements are being progressively rolled out across the diocese and that our parish had come on line from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022. The new arrangements provide a web based platform for recording and reporting on the parish accounts and for generating our quarterly Gift Aid claims. Philip and Francesca have received training on the new system from Rheann Byrne from the diocese finance department.

The committee at this juncture recorded its gratitude to Brian Huthwaite for his outstanding work over many years in his role as parish accountant. It was agreed that the committee should give some thought ahead of its next meeting as to how it might appropriately recognise Brian's service for the parish. **ACTION 7/23:** This to be considered further at the committee's next meeting.

## **10. New parish website update**

Phil advised that the parish website project management team had met on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 when it had been agreed in principle that we should commission the new website from Coda Education which is a locally based company and which has designed high quality websites for the schools covered by Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academies Trust. Phil has subsequently been in contact with Coda Education to firm up our requirements and they will now draw up a contract for Canon Philipp's approval/signature. The contract price is £2,499 plus VAT (a total of £3,123.75) and is within the limit which does not require diocesan approval. The company will require an initial 20% deposit, with the balance of 80% payable on the completion of the project. **ACTION 8/23:** Phil to contact Coda Education to arrange for the draft contract to be sent to him in the first instance, prior to him forwarding it to Canon Philipp with his advice about approving the contract terms.

Phil advised that the overall design process typically takes about 2-3 months. All being well, therefore, the new website may be available to launch around Easter Sunday (9<sup>th</sup> April 2023).

The next steps are as follows:

- An initial (“kick-off”) Zoom enabled meeting of about 30 minutes, arranged by Coda Education, to scope the project. It was suggested that the participants from the parish’s perspective should be Canon Philipp, Phil, Philip Martin, Fraser Sanders, Reg Carter and Julie Rawding.
- A subsequent Zoom fact finding meeting with Coda Education of approximately one hour’s duration to help inform the design of the website.
- Coda Education will thereafter design the website and subsequently report back at a third Zoom meeting with a presentation of its work.
- Coda Education will then develop the website using the WordPress content management system.
- Phil will write the copy and arrange for it to be proofread, but will need help from the parish’s project management team in certain areas, such as liturgical related content.
- Francesca and Julie to arrange for the relevant parish photographs which are potentially to be used on the website to be made available in one place on-line for Phil and Coda Education to access in due course. **ACTION 9/23:** Francesca/Julie to action accordingly.
- It will in due course be necessary to access the current website domain owned by Pat Bradley. Phil will follow this up at the appropriate time.
- Training and management/user protocols for the new website will need to be arranged.
- Phil confirmed that his agency will host and provide back up support for the new website, free of charge.
- The parish’s current separate social media channels (Facebook, Twitter etc) will need to be looked at in due course after the development of the website, to ensure there is an integrated and appropriate parish-led approach.

## 11. Parish fundraising team

Julie explained that she had agreed to develop and lead a small team of parish volunteers to research and pursue external funding sources for the parish, particularly with regard to sourcing the significant funds needed to enable the parish to address the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the church building. Julie advised that Francesca and Reg Carter had thus far expressed an interest in being involved in this work.

Christine Thomas from the parish think tank had also suggested that if external help was needed in terms of identifying grant sources and writing bids we might wish to consider the services of Kelly Hart who Christine knows from her work as a trustee of a charity. It is understood that Kelly had been of great assistance to the charity concerned in terms of pursuing sources and applications for funding. Kelly has been involved with National Lottery funding and Children in Need as an assessor of bids etc and may have expertise the parish would find helpful.

Julie advised that she had met with Kelly on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to explore whether she might be able to assist us and in the light of that meeting thought it might be helpful to

engage her services at a cost of £20 per hour, subject to satisfactory references etc being obtained.

Canon Philipp emphasised that repairs to the church (Grade II\* listed) building was the focus of our immediate funding needs and that ideally he would prefer it if the parish was able to progress this ourselves without the need for external, paid support. He mentioned that the parish had been able to do this successfully in the past and that we should be looking to secure grant/National Lottery funding through the Historic England organisation (the successor body to English Heritage).

After further discussion it was agreed that Julie and her team would pursue the Historic England grant application process and would discuss this in the first instance with James Philipps (of APEC Architects, appointed by the diocese ) and Rachael Oxspring at the diocesan property department.

Members of the committee (Philip and David) offered to act as “critical friends” in terms of providing a critique for any application for funding.

**ACTION 10/23: Julie** to progress this accordingly.

## **12. Any other business**

Nothing was raised under this item on the agenda.

## **13. Date of the 2023 calendar year meetings**

It was confirmed that the committee’s further meetings in the 2023 will be as follows:

- Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023
- Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023
- Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023
- Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Each meeting will commence at 6.30pm in the parish centre.

## **14. Closing Prayer**

Canon Philipp closed the meeting with a prayer.