



Diocese of Nottingham: The Good Shepherd Parish Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 2nd March 2023

In attendance: Francesca Lynch, Philip Martin, Oliver Wastell and Canon Philipp Ziomek.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Canon Philipp.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Phil Bray, John Doherty and Oliver Kuras. In Phil's absence, Canon Philipp chaired the meeting until 7.00pm when he had to leave for another meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 12th January 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will be posted on the parish noticeboard and website. **ACTION 11/23: Philip** to action accordingly.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- a) *Use of the parish community centre-*** In Phil's absence, feedback on the proposed analysis of the parish centre occupancy levels was further deferred to a future meeting of the committee. **ACTION 12/23: Phil** to report back in due course.
- b) *Parish database support-*** Recognising the increased urgency in progressing this matter, Oliver agreed to carry out some final changes to the new parish database as soon as possible and thereafter arrange a briefing session for Canon Philipp and Francesca. **ACTION 13/23: Oliver** to action as soon as possible.
- c) *Membership of the Committee-*** Philip reported that Jonathan Newman had now resigned from the committee as he no longer lives within the parish catchment area and has been unable to attend recent meetings of the committee. In the light of this, Canon Philipp agreed to seek a possible replacement committee member. **ACTION 14/23: Canon Philipp** to follow up accordingly.
- d) *Brian Huthwaite-*** It was agreed that Brian's outstanding work over the years as the parish's unpaid accountant should be appropriately recognised. To that end, Canon Philipp will investigate the possibility of Brian receiving the Benemerenti medal (Papal award). **ACTION 15/23: Canon Philipp** to pursue accordingly.

5. Parish finances- update

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

- There is a credit balance of £23,038.47 in the parish's current bank account as at 2nd March 2023.
- The parish's separate set-off account (held with the diocese to help with the cost of capital works) is currently in credit to the sum of £189,792.62.

The committee recorded its formal appreciation that the parish had achieved such a substantial credit in the set-off account, recognising that it will cover a significant proportion of the estimated cost of repairing the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the church building.

6. 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 £162,780. If correct, that will represent an improvement of £13,010 (8.7%) on 2021/22, reflecting the continuing generosity of our parishioners.
- Annual inflation is currently running at 8.8% (as per the CPI data for January 2023), so our income is now broadly in line with current inflationary trends.

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 16/23: Philip to continue to bring quarterly income reports to the committee.

A comparison with the position pre-Covid was requested. Philip agreed to provide that in a postscript to the minutes- see below.

Postscript: If correct, our current income projection of £162,780 represents an improvement on the pre-Covid position in absolute terms. In 2018/19 (the last financial year to entirely pre-date Covid) our comparable income was £152,421. The difference of £10,359 represents an overall increase of 6.8%. However, inflation from 2018/19 to date was 12.7% -so our total income over that period has fallen in real terms by 5.9%.

Philip suggested that the charges for the hire of the parish centre facilities should be reviewed at the committee's next meeting in view of the current levels of energy related inflation that impact on such things as the cost of heating and lighting the centre. It was agreed that Philip and Francesca should discuss this ahead of the meeting and develop proposals for the committee's consideration, but should be mindful of the need not to cost ourselves out of the market. **ACTION 17/23:** Philip/Francesca to discuss and develop proposals for consideration by the committee at its next meeting.

7. Church concrete repairs- funding arrangements

Consideration was given to the email update from Julie Rawding which had been circulated with the agenda.

Canon Philipp advised that he and Francesca were scheduled to meet Kelly Hart at 10.30am on 16th March to discuss what expert support she is able to provide the parish in developing and pursuing applications for external grants towards the cost of the concrete repairs. It is hoped to engage Kelly's services thereafter and it was agreed that the parish would meet any reasonable costs in that respect.

It was recognised that the current high levels of inflation mean that the repair costs are likely to be greater than originally estimated. It will be important therefore to progress the work as soon as possible this year.

It was also agreed that we should approach the diocese for a loan to cover the costs of the repairs ahead of any successful grant applications being made. The parish will be able to offer a significant contribution towards the costs through use of the funds that are available in its set-off account.

8. New parish website update

Canon Philipp advised that, following advice received from Phil Bray, he had now signed the contract for the new parish website project with Coda Education. It was agreed that Philip will now ask Phil to initiate the actions needed to progress the project further as outlined at the committee's previous meeting. **ACTION 18/23: Philip** to follow up with Phil.

[Canon Philipp had to leave the meeting at this juncture and Philip assumed the role of acting chairperson in his absence]

9. Any other business

a) Coffee machine for the parish centre- Francesca tabled a document from a company called Vending Sense, providing a quotation for a new coffee vending machine for the parish centre. The company had been approached by Francesca following a Google search and have quoted a purchase price of £7,452 for an Espresso coffee machine, as well as options to lease the machine over 3 or 5 years. Their quotation also includes options for the annual maintenance of the machine, with or without product supply.

The following points were raised in this respect:

- There needs to be a clear business case for a purchase such as this, albeit it was recognised that Canon Philipp would be the decision maker at the end of the day.
- Alternative quotations should be sought if possible to ascertain whether the quote from Vending Sense was reasonable.
- Oliver suggested it might be helpful to approach a local company (such as Cema Vending of Netherfield) for a quotation, bearing in mind the need for a responsive maintenance arrangement. It was noted that Vending Sense seem

to be a London based company and we would need to be assured of their ability to provide an appropriately responsive maintenance service if we were to purchase the machine from them.

- The location of the vending machine in the parish centre would need to be carefully considered to avoid any health and safety issues, particularly with regard to potentially vulnerable users of the parish centre, such as the toddlers attending the Little Lambs group.
- The parish would also have to identify who would maintain (restock) the machine or deal with any immediate issues that may arise regarding its maintenance.

ACTION 19/23: Francesca to follow up accordingly.

b) *Relationship with St Anthony's at Calverton*- Oliver enquired about the role of the parish finance committee in relation to St Anthony's.

In Canon Philipp's absence, it was explained that to the best of our knowledge a formal decision on St Anthony's amalgamation with Good Shepherd is still awaited from the Bishop. In the meantime Canon Philipp is providing pastoral support to both parishes. The financial administrative arrangements for the two parishes will need to be determined when a formal decision on merger has been made. This will include such things as:

- OPAS arrangements
- Finance committee oversight
- Banking arrangements
- Planned giving rationalisation- offertory envelopes, bank standing orders and Gift Aid administration etc.

Francesca will confer meanwhile with Rheann Byrne in the diocese finance team to find out how OPAS has operated in other parishes that have amalgamated, such as the three parishes covered by the Catholic Community of East Nottingham. **ACTION 20/23:** Francesca to speak with Rheann.

10. Date of the next meeting

It was confirmed that the committee's next meeting would be in the parish centre at 6.30pm on Thursday, 1st June 2023. A major focus for that meeting will be the parish's Annual Return to the diocese for 2022/23. It was recognised that the parish's move to OPAS part way through the financial year (from 1st November 2022) might be a potential complication in terms of reporting for 2022/23. **ACTION 21/23:** Francesca to confer with Rheann about this at an early date and in due course arrange for a copy of the draft report to be made available in good time for its circulation ahead of the committee's meeting on 1st June.

11. Closing Prayer

Philip closed the meeting with a prayer.