



Good Shepherd Parish Think Tank Meeting- 18th November 2023

Attendees: Isaac Amieghemen, Pat Barton, Julian Caesar, Reg Carter (Chair), Nicky Gudgeon, Theresa Joseph, Philip Martin, Janet Myers, Adriano Staiano, Michelle Swann, Christine Thomas and Helen White.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Reg.

1a. Draft letter to the Bishop

This was an addition to the agenda for the meeting.

Reg tabled a draft letter, addressed to the Bishop, concerning the future reconfiguration of the parish of Our Lady of Victories, Southwell with St Anthony's, Calverton. The letter had been drafted by Canon Michael O'Donoghue and had been annotated with comments by Fr Simon Gillespie. Fr Philipp had requested a view from the think tank and the parish finance committee on the draft letter.

There was full discussion on the draft, details of which are summarised in the note **attached** to these minutes. **ACTION- Philip** to forward the note to Fr Philipp as the think tank's response.

2. Notes of the previous meeting held on 16th September 2023

The notes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record. **ACTION- Philip** to post the notes on the think tank's page on the parish website and on the notice board in the church narthex.

a) Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes- Reg agreed to check with Ron Lynch whether the possibility of the Knights of St Columba making a donation towards the St John Paul II Young People's Foundation had yet been explored. **ACTION- Reg** to follow this up with Ron.

b) Good Shepherd Church Diamond Jubilee- In Ron Lynch's absence, Reg reported back on several items viz:

- Sufficient stewards have been recruited to support the production of Handel's "Messiah" on 16th December 2023.
- Reg will check with Rebecca O'Connor to see whether progress has been made regarding the possibility of publicising the event through the "Nottingham Post". **ACTION- Reg** to follow this up with Rebecca.

- It was confirmed that the Christmas Tree festival is going ahead, with eleven trees to be displayed in church. **ACTION- Reg** to publicise this by way of a note in the parish newsletter.
- A meeting with Anne Verdon regarding the flower festival is to be organised. **ACTION- Reg** to pursue this.

It was also mentioned that the Calverton flower festival, which involves St Anthony's, is to be held at St Wilfrid's Church in Calverton on 2nd December 2023.

3. Parish Liturgical Calendar: two monthly review

Consideration was given to the parish liturgical calendar for the next two months.

It was noted that Christ the King Academy pupils are to lead on the liturgy on the feast of Christ the King on 26th November 2023. This will include leading the singing in church, undertaking the readings and assisting with the offertory and collections.

Reg advised that Cath Verhoeven had requested that several items be included in future versions of the calendar, viz:

- Stations of the Cross- to be held every Friday during Lent
- Novena to Our Lady of Knock- to be held in August
- Holy Hour for the sick- to be held on the Sunday before Christmas unless it coincides with Christmas Eve.

The calendar for 2024 will need to be developed, reflecting the Ordo for that year. **ACTION- Reg** to follow up in the first instance.

Reg will also link with Maggie Tempest regarding an event to be held on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on 8th January 2024 to celebrate baptisms that have taken place in church over the past year. **ACTION- Reg** to link with Maggie.

4. Good Shepherd Church Diamond Jubilee

Consideration was given to the issues raised by Fr Philipp in his email dated 9th November 2023:

- It was agreed that the Bishop should be invited to celebrate Mass on Sunday, 7th July 2024. If that date is not possible for him, any other Sunday in July would be acceptable but avoiding 28th July 2024 as the schools will be on holiday by then. **ACTION- Fr Philipp** to be advised so that he can confer with the Bishop about his availability.
- The suggested involvement of the African Choir in one of the celebrations was supported but a contact person would need to be identified for Ron Lynch to pursue. **ACTION- Fr Philipp** to advise Ron accordingly.

- The suggested mounting of a display showing the development of the parish and the church will be pursued in due course. **ACTION- Ron/Reg** to consider.
- Difficulties are being experienced currently in getting parishioners to volunteer to support the proposal of an “open weekend” but this will continue to be pursued. It is also hoped that it might be possible to offer an open day as a regular (weekly, if possible) event between, say, 12 noon and 2.00pm on a day of the week to be determined.
- Helen and Michelle agreed to produce a poster publicising the Christmas tree festival and also to arrange for the event to be publicised on Twitter and Facebook. **ACTION- Helen/Michelle** to action. This should be linked to an open day on Tuesday, 12th December 2023 which Reg and Ron will look to organise; Reg will also draft a letter publicising the event for the local community. **ACTION- Reg/Ron** to action accordingly.
- A list of guests is being developed but invites cannot be issued until the Bishop’s availability for the Diamond Jubilee celebration Mass is known.
- Reg will confer with our schools about their involvement in the programme. **ACTION- Reg** to follow up.
- A meeting to finalise planning for the flower festival is to be arranged. **ACTION- Reg** to link with Ron on this.

Finally, it was again mentioned that we don’t currently have a full Jubilee organising committee- meetings to date have only involved Ron and Reg, along with Michelle and/or Helen White from the perspective of the flower festival. Members of the think tank are again encouraged to join the committee. **ACTION- All** to consider and let Philip know (for onward transmission to Reg/Ron) if they wish to be involved

5. Parish Choir Leader

Consideration was given to the email to Fr Philipp from Mike Hoy, on behalf of the parish choir, seeking agreement in principle to the parish paying an honorarium of up to £2,000 pa to a replacement choir leader, following the resignation of Robert O’Farrell, should that be necessary to recruit someone suitable. Fr Philipp had asked the think tank and the parish finance committee for their respective comments on this request.

The role of the choir in enhancing the liturgy at church was acknowledged, but the think tank was unanimous in its view that this request should not be supported. In reaching that view the think tank was mindful that there were many equally worthy ministries in the parish where parishioners’ time is freely given and it was felt that it would establish an unwelcome precedent if the parish were to agree to pay an honorarium in these circumstances. **ACTION- Philip** to feedback the think tank’s view to Fr Philipp.

More generally, it was agreed that succession planning was an important issue that needed to be addressed for all parish ministries.

There was also a discussion about the need to encourage our parish ministries to be actively engaged with the think tank and that we should consider how best to achieve this, identifying any barriers that might exist to prevent this happening. It was agreed that this should be the focus of a specific agenda item at the think tank's next meeting and that to facilitate the discussion Philip would provide data regarding the extent to which our ministries are represented on the think tank and regularly attend its meetings. **ACTION- Philip** to include this on the agenda for the think tank's next meeting and produce the relevant data to facilitate the discussion.

6. Safeguarding

Julian advised that there had been an increase in the number of volunteers in the parish following the push for additional volunteers initiated by Fr Philipp. This has implications in terms of registering the volunteers under the diocese's safeguarding procedures and seeking DBS clearance where that is necessary according to the role undertaken. It was emphasised that DBS clearance should, where required, always be obtained before a volunteer undertakes their particular role.

Christine advised that DBS clearance is being sought for three new Eucharistic ministers who have been recruited at St Anthony's, as well as one new altar server.

Julian and Christine advised they had met with Fr Philipp last week to discuss last year's safeguarding audit. The audit for 2023 was subsequently received and will be completed in due course

7. Any Other Business

Nothing was raised under this item.

8. Date of the meetings in 2024

It was confirmed that the group's meetings in the 2024 calendar year will be as follows:

20th January 2024

23rd March 2024

25th May 2024

27th July 2024

28th September 2024

23rd November 2024 (subject to the annual parish Christmas Fair not being held on that date)

It was agreed that the meetings will in future be from 11.15am-12.45pm.

ACTION- Philip to book the parish centre accordingly.

Annex:

Parish Think Tank comments on the draft letter regarding the proposed amalgamation of the Parish of the Good Shepherd and the Church of St Anthony's at Calverton

1. It was felt that the letter would benefit from a brief introductory paragraph, explaining the background to the proposal, including reference to previous discussions with the Bishop, including the Deanery Roadshows, and the overriding need for change owing to the shortage of priests.
2. Beyond that, the initial paragraph was felt to be OK, including the amendments in red ink which we understand have been suggested by Fr Simon Gillespie.
3. Fr Gillespie's suggestion in the third paragraph that the spiritual benefits of the proposal should be profiled in the letter was supported by the think tank.
4. With regard to Fr Gillespie's comments in the fourth paragraph, it was noted that the Good Shepherd parish finance committee has not been formally consulted as a body, nor has it assessed the income position of the new parish assuming the amalgamation takes place. The committee was sent the notes of the deanery roadshow meeting in March 2022 when the proposals were articulated. Beyond that, the possible amalgamation with St Anthony's has occasionally been touched upon in passing at the committee's meetings but relevant financial data has never been presented, nor has the committee been asked to give a formal opinion on the proposed amalgamation. This begs the question as to the correct sequencing of such considerations. It could be argued that a decision in principle about the amalgamation should precede consideration of the financial arrangements that would underpin it.
5. Similarly, it is understood that Good Shepherd parish pastoral team clearly knows about the proposed amalgamation but has not, we understand, been formally consulted. The parish think tank was copied into the March 2022 deanery meeting notes but again has not been consulted as a body. That said, the think tank was consulted about the pattern of Sunday Mass times consequent upon the parish priest having to cover St Anthony's as well as Good Shepherd, without the benefit of support from the diocesan hermit priests.
6. Turning to the paragraph at the top of page 2 of the draft, presumably you will have details of the consultation responses you received and which you can use if need be to evidence the general level of support for the amalgamation? There is no appetite from the think tank membership for further consultation on this issue as suggested by Fr Gillespie. As parish priest you consulted widely with parishioners (from both churches?) and there seems little point in the think tank's view in doing so again, even though some time has elapsed. The representatives from St Anthony's on the think tank felt the consultation process was very inclusive and supportive and are anxious that we move forward as soon as possible. They feel that they have been treated as a full partner in the informal arrangements that have been made to date. It was recognised in that respect that our current informal arrangements represent a de facto amalgamation, albeit things like finance remain to be formally rationalised across the two churches.
7. Still on the same paragraph, the think tank feels that the second sentence, where reference is made to "the inevitability of the proposal was accepted" could helpfully be reworded to say, for example, "the necessity of the proposal was accepted".
8. The representatives from St Anthony's on the think tank advised that Fr Gillespie's comment that "there hasn't been a resident priest in the parish of Southwell and Calverton for most of the last ten years" is incorrect in that there hasn't been a dedicated parish priest since August 2021. Indeed, prior to that, we were advised that

Fr Gillespie himself served as parish priest and during that time lived in the church presbytery!

The bottom line is that the think tank is not generally in favour of any further consultation on this matter and would like to see the arrangements formalised as soon as possible.