

THE SACRED HEART & ST MARGARET MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH, DEREHAM

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish held on Wednesday, 6th September 2023

22 parishioners were present.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm with an opening prayer by Fr. Jay.
Rex Baker (Chair of the Parish Finance Committee) in the Chair.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Rose & Michael Fenton and Tony Whitehouse.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 12th April 2023 were received.

3. Parish Priest's Reflections

Parish Pastoral Committee – Congratulations were extended to the newly installed Parish Pastoral Committee (PPC), who were now taking the lead on parish activities under the chairmanship of Donal Hannon. This was important to the well-being and functioning of the parish, as a Parish Priest could not reasonably be expected to manage everything alone and it was a mark of the generous heart of our community in readily taking ownership and responsibility for its growth, both in practical terms and spiritually.

What makes a great Catholic Parish? This was a theme introduced by Fr. Jay with reference to a book by William E. Simon Jr. entitled 'Great Catholic Parishes: How Four Essential Practices make them Thrive.' In posing the question to those present at the meeting, the following priorities were cited: Warmth – welcoming strangers and making them feel part of the community; Participation in parish life; Learning about church and faith.

So what were the four recommended essential practices that promote a thriving parish?

1. *Showing leadership*: hence the PPC helps to share the load of the Parish Priest, utilizing members' various skills. 2. *Fostering spiritual maturity and planning for discipleship*. 3. *Excelling on Sundays*: through our music, the homily, the solemnity of the Mass. All these elements enhance our encounter with the Lord. 4. *Evangelizing*: How do we evangelise? This was something that Fr. Jay wanted people to think about, i.e. fostering spiritual maturity and planning for discipleship as a first priority. All other things flowed from this because it was through our mission and discipleship that we encounter and enhance our relationship with the Lord and, from that, our parish life.

Another important element was handing on our faith to the next generation. It was essential that we gave our youth our attention as a parish.

In all of this, Fr. Jay felt the parish was doing well and he expressed the hope that the parish could continue to nourish and foster all these aims.

4. Parish Life

A. **Financial Matters**

- (i) **Parish Accounts** – While the parish accounts still showed a deficit, the situation had improved somewhat. While it had been possible to keep costs

down in some areas, the existing high energy costs remained a significant element of parish expenditure.

- (ii) **Alive in Faith Projects** – The outstanding projects regarding the entrance to the car park and church windows had made some useful progress over the summer, with viable solutions now identified for taking forward to seeking final approvals and contractors for the works. So far as Alive in Faith funding was concerned, there would be some monies left after the existing projects had been costed and approved, at which point it was proposed that a parish meeting would be convened to ascertain how the remaining funds should be allocated. Some ideas put forward were to allocate some to desired youth projects or to support those in need, for example.

Other general maintenance projects relating to an area of damaged boundary wall and to maintenance of the church guttering were also now in hand.

B. Spiritual Life Matters

- (i) **Music** – Judy Reid asked that people let her know of any hymns that were not liked or if they needed her to play unknown hymns before the start of Mass, so people could familiarise themselves with the music. She also advised that the Sunday liturgy was going to revert to the use of the Lourdes Gloria and the Latin simple plainchant music at Sunday Masses. Due to lack of space on the hymn board, people were asked to note that the Hymn no.502 (Kyrie Eleison) would also be the cue to use the subsequent responses for the Sanctus (Hymn no. 505) and the Agnus Dei (Hymn no. 509). She was also happy to use hymn requests from people where appropriate to the Mass of the day, but it should be noted that there was no guarantee as to when such hymns would be used.
- (ii) **Volunteers** – It was clear from other reports made at the meeting that there was a serious need for more volunteers. Most in need were for: **A) weekly flower decorations at church.** At present there were only two regular volunteers and two occasional helpers. It would really help to lessen the load to be able to have enough volunteers to make up teams to work on a rota basis. **B) Readers and Eucharistic Ministers:** with the re-introduction of the Chalice at Mass, the need for more ministers at each Mass was now very evident. Likewise, more Readers would help spread the load across the Mass rotas.

C. Communal / Social Matters

- (i) **St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)** – Deacon Martin gave an update on the continuing work of the SVP within the Parish. They were hoping to reintroduce occasional Masses for the sick and housebound, to be held hopefully in early October (date to be confirmed), taking place in an afternoon, followed by tea and cake. Anyone who could help with transport on the day was asked to let Terri or Deacon Martin know. A new venture was the holding of a short service and social on one morning at Sanford House. Another afternoon event had not proved possible due to staff shortages.
- (ii) **Communion & Confirmation Groups** – This year, three children had made their first Communion in June and two had joined the Altar Servers group. There were six candidates for first Holy Communion next year. On 6th June, 13 candidates were confirmed at a special Mass conducted by Bishop Peter. It had been a very lovely occasion. Nine of the candidates were also Altar Servers. The next Confirmations in the parish would take place in 2025. Sunday Liturgy for children from Y1 to Holy Communion age would be starting at the Sunday 1100 Mass in a few weeks. It would be publicised in the parish

newsletter. There was also a section for this on the parish website. The Altar Servers' Group would also be recommencing their meetings shortly.

D. Parish Stewardship Programme

Philip Borthwick outlined details of the proposed Parish Stewardship Programme which was due to commence on the weekend of 23rd-24th September. The programme was made up of both spiritual and practical elements, aimed at encouraging greater participation in parish affairs, as well as asking people to review their weekly offerings. The Programme would take the form of three themed talks over successive weekends, with associated handouts.

E. Parish Events Calendar

- i. **Parish Auction** – This was scheduled for 27th October and it had been agreed that 50% of the proceeds would go to the parish and the other 50% to the Let the Children Live charity.
- ii. **Celebrating Harvest** – A suggestion was made for a fundraising event for plant and food to be sold with proceeds to be shared between the parish, the foodbank and CAFOD.

5. Other Matters

Car Parking – The need to reinforce Sunday Mass parking arrangements was raised following recent problems with congestion. It was agreed to put in place signage to direct cars one-way round the church and for cars to be parked in three rows to ensure maximum capacity.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.