

ST JOHN FISHER RC CHURCH, NORTH HARROW

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 27th NOVEMBER 2017

Held in the Parish Hall, 19:30 hrs

Present: Approximately 40 parishioners and Parish Council members attended the meeting.

1 Opening Prayer & Welcome

The meeting opened at 19:35 with a prayer led by Fr Shaun

2 Catechist report

Kay O'Connor summarised participation in preparation for the Sacraments over the past year. The number of Baptisms has risen while the number of First Communions (55) has declined slightly. 49 candidates were confirmed at Westminster Cathedral & 5 RCIA candidates were confirmed at Easter. Young people preparing for Confirmation have been actively involved in Sunday masses and a number of the previous year's candidates are now readers at mass. The number of marriages (5) was an increase on previous years.

4 Finance Report

Mike Parkinson presented an overview of the financial situation for the year ended 31st December 2016.

- The bank balance is approximately £180,000
- Income increase was due largely to the timing of Gift Aid repayments.
- The downward trend in offerings continued. A planned giving campaign will take place when Growing in Faith finishes. A planned giving campaign normally results in higher weekly offerings.
- Outgoings were slightly higher but a healthy surplus was maintained.
- Payments continue to be made to Westminster Diocese for the church building loan. Almost half of this payment comes from the Growing in Faith fund.
- The biggest outlay is the Diocesan assessment which was £45,000 in 2016 (£21,000 the previous year). This will increase again in 2018 as the levy is rising from 29% to 33% of assessable income.
- Antoinette Moriarty was thanked for her excellent work as book keeper for 4 years. Fiona Moreira has now taken her place.
- An Income/ Expenditure report is available on request from the parish office.

5 Parish Council Chair's report

Neil Cocking gave a report of key events over the past year.

- JohnPromise has left the Parish Council & a replacement is being sought.
- Love in Action activities were successful

- The Bishop's visitation resulted in a favourable outcome for the parish.
- A number of fund raising & social activities have taken place.
- A successful pilgrimage visited Poland.
- Harrow Citizens were founded
- Noticeboards are going up soon outside the church.

6 Property

The church and house are generally in good condition but there are some concerns about the hall. Essential wiring is needed and this will cost approximately £13,000. Plumbing work has been carried out and the roof in the passage at the back of the bar is leaking. Investigations are continuing to find the source of the leak. In future years it may be necessary to review the rents paid by hall users to reflect the ongoing maintenance costs. In the church the loop system will be renewed as it is not effective in all areas. To complete this some re-wiring will also be necessary in the church.

A parishioner raised a question about renting out the hall for productions on the stage. This is not possible at the moment because of health & safety problems back stage. The storage space under the stage is now locked because of the presence of asbestos.

A question was asked about plans to have a pre-school class at St John Fisher School. Neville Ransley, chair of the school governors, replied that there was no current plan to do this.

7 Parish Priest Report – Fr Shaun Middleton

- Love in Action. 4 actions were completed & the cycle of activities will be repeated in 2017. Catechesis on issues accompanies the practical action:
 - Toys for children of prisoners (2016 & 2017)
 - Mary's Meals clothes collection
 - Toiletries for Bakhita House guests
 - Pies for the food bank.
- Harrow Citizens pre-founding assembly took place in June 2017 with participation from parishioners and St John Fisher School performers. Father Shaun has preached at the Hatch End synagogue.

A question was asked about representation of the Christian faith in Harrow Citizens after Father Shaun moves at the end of 2017. He replied that Rod Green from St Peter's Church, West Harrow, is the current Chair and a number of other churches are considering membership.

- Social activities have included coffee mornings, quizzes, sing-alongs, a meal for older parishioners & the International Day with the school. More work is needed to encourage more participation from different ethnic groups within the parish.

8 AOB

The difficulty of parking for morning mass was raised. Some parents delivering children to the pre-school are parking outside marked lines and blocking access to spaces. Father Shaun will look into this issue.

9 Listening Exercise

Small groups discussed one of the following local issues: Care of the elderly, Mental Health, Social Housing and Waste & the Environment. These were the top 4 voted for at mass the previous weekend.

10 Closing Prayer: The meeting closed at 20:50 hrs with a prayer led by Fr Shaun.