

ST JOHN FISHER RC CHURCH, NORTH HARROW

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 26 NOVEMBER 2018

**Held in the Parish Hall, 19:30 hrs
Notes in addition to attached presentation**

Present: 25 parishioners and Parish Council members attended the meeting.

1 Opening Prayer & Welcome

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

2 Introduction

The Chairman, Neil Cocking, welcomed those present.

3 Apologies were received from Penny Ransley.

4. Parish Council Report

Neil welcomed Fr Graham to his first Annual Parish Meeting since taking over as Parish Priest in January 2018. He also reported that John Promise, a former parishioner, is continuing his training for the priesthood and will shortly be ordained as a Deacon.

Property issues that have been dealt with in the past year were listed, including electrical work in the Parish Centre. Ongoing issues include improved lighting on the path to the Small Hall, improving paving at the Social Club entrance and replacement of opaque with clear glass in the Reconciliation room door.

A successful car park clean-up and clearance of the hall stage have been carried out.

Many people give time to parish work &, without them, the parish could not thrive. All were thanked for their contribution.

4 Parish Priest's Report

Fr Graham outlined the ideas raised in parishioner gatherings over the past 6 months. Approximately 80 people had attended one of the gatherings.

Liturgical life of the Parish

- Adoration; on weekday and Sat morning
- a Healing Mass/Mass for the Sick
- Masses – early mass in Lent; Friday evening in Lent; Sunday evening; First Friday evening; St Stephen's Day; Special mass for St Francis Xavier. Mon 3 Dec; fewer Sun masses
- monthly Divine Mercy rosary
- more novenas
- Joining in antiphons and psalm response
- Music – youth/childrens' choir, Sat mass; 8.30am mass, coordinator role.....
- How to receive Holy Communion
- School mass welcomed

Spiritual life of the parish

- Small faith-sharing or formation groups; Lectio Divina gp?
- further clarity about mass intentions - change envelopes?
- Parish Mission...Redemptorists, schools
- Statue travelling around houses for rosary
- Celebration of wedding anniversaries
- Introductions/prayer partners welcomed
- Mother's prayers

Neville Bayross requested occasional house masses after the Rosary.

Understanding of the Faith

- Catechism classes for children at non Catholic schools
- Catholic resources on line
- Library of resources
- Theology on Tap talks
- CTNH/ecumenism
- Parishes working together.....Our Lady & St Thomas, St Luke

Community life of the Parish

- Confirmation outreach noticed SVP/HCPT, serving in the mass
- what can we do for Young people/adults?
- Sri Lankan example of how to care for the elderly
- New parishioners' lunch/gathering; Engagement with new people
- Tea/coffee after 10am mass
- How to get involved with e.g. Women's group & SJF ladies group; Knitting group
- Volunteering challenges in C21st
- more social activities; Quiz nights, international evenings, Video night; ceilidh
- International Day with SJF primary school welcomed; Christmas bazaar?
- UCM?
- Recruiting younger people for music and other ministries

A big challenge is how to encourage more people to be active in the parish. Fr Graham made some suggestions at the meeting:

- Give personal invitations
- Adopt ideas from Divine Renovation
- Run an Alpha programme to ignite interest in Faith questions

Claire Mendonca raised use of school communication channels, e.g. 'save the dates' for events.

Numbers at this meeting may be improved by holding the Annual Parish Meeting on a Sunday afternoon or at a different time of year in daylight.

Social Outreach

- Harrow Citizens - social fund; Wealdstone, how can we help/get involved, credit union
- Trusted traders

- Love in Action and what came from it...Foodbank when?
- 1 to 1/Caritas profile raised

Fabric of the Parish

- Draughty church windows
- More cleaning and counting teams
- replace Crucifix on outside of church
- Radio microphones less effective than ambo microphone
- amount of litter and general cleanliness of grounds
- Parking problems
- projection onto screen
- use of technology
- importance of DBS coordinator role
- Cafe like St George's, Sudbury
- Email suggestions

80th Anniversary – long list

- a course taking us on a journey through the Bible or to learn about the Holy Spirit;
- developing small groups to follow from these courses;
- a parish family retreat day;
- a trip to Rochester, seat of Cardinal John Fisher;
- an overseas pilgrimage;
- a quiz night;
- developing our church building with an outside crucifix, a grotto or stained glass windows;
- a nationality themed evening;
- a parish fiesta,
- a Corpus Christi procession and parish celebration on our patronal feast.

Fr Graham reported that an encouraging number of people had volunteered to organise 80th Anniversary events.

5. Finance Report for the year ending 31st December 2017

Income Key Points: -

- Total income £264,081 (down from £310,132 in 2016)
- NB 2016 figures include gift aid refunds from 2013 and 2014
- Offertories excl. gift aid £122,902
(down from £126,382 in 2016)

Outgoings Key Points:-

- Overall expenditure £238,049 (down from £258,530 in 2016)
- £53,500 loan capital repaid plus £2,027 interest
- Largest outgoing - Diocesan Assessment £40,031
(down from £44,953 in 2016)

A question was asked about how the £40,000 Diocesan assessment is spent. The Diocese Report & Accounts are available at the back of the church and on the Diocese of Westminster website.

7 Catechist Report

Kay O'Connor presented the following table of participants in Sacramental programmes:

| | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| Baptism Preparation Families | 9 | 8 | 18 | 13 | 14 | 26 | 18 |
| Confirmation Candidates | 47 | 48 | 46 | 46 | 47 | 61 | 48 |
| FirsCommunion/Reconciliation | 46 | 44 | 55 | 57 | 46 | 54 | 65 |
| Rcia Adults | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Saturday Religious | 0 | 0 | 12 | 10 | 19 | 31 | 36 |
| Marriage preparation | | | | | | | 1 couple |

Families only attend baptism preparation for first babies. The changing demography in the parish seems to mean that fewer families with babies but the number of older children remains static. Marriage preparation takes place in neighbouring parishes. Saturday morning RE classes are no longer held as St John Fisher school can take in all parish children. All children in the parish of First Communion age can join the Sacramental preparation programme.

8 Points raised by parishioners

Pat & Tony McWilliams raised the ongoing problem of parking for morning mass at 9:30am. Some spaces are occupied by local residents & others by pre-school parents dropping children at 9:15. Parishioners have also been leaving their cars in the car park all day. Neil Cocking responded that there is work going on to repair the car park gates. Other suggestions were to move morning mass to 9 or 10am (local on street parking is not possible between 10 & 11 am) or see if the pre-school could open their doors earlier.

Rose raised children taking too much wine at communion. If this occurs refer children to Kay for re-training.

Sheila O'Brien reported that the Social Club entrance paving is in a dangerous condition. This is being investigated.

Distribution of communion at the back of the church as well as the front was proposed. Sometimes it does not seem to be clear that there are 4 ministers. One suggestion was that holding up a host would make this clearer.

Fr Graham thanked all who contribute to parish life in any way. He feels this is fundamentally a thriving parish but we need to work on growth. The latest census shows that about 800 people attend Saturday evening/ Sunday mass (900 in 2016).

9. Closing Prayer:

The meeting closed at 20:35 hrs with The Grace led by Fr Graham.