

Parish of St Mary, Bradford

Minutes of PPC Meeting 11th September 2025

Present: Fr Festus, John Joyce, Alan Duerden, Katrina Nzeribe, Michael Waite, Ann Marie Coubrough

Apologies: Kath Irvine, Peter Maloney, Linda and Eddie Whiteoak

John opened the meeting with a prayer, and read out our agreed purpose as PPC from our PPC Handbook.

Ann Marie agreed to take **minutes** of the meeting.

1. We began with a Review of the last 3 months since June's meeting

- using around the table '**Conversation in the Spirit**' as modelled by the Synod – (Listening, not commenting; not dismissing views we disagree with; all encouraged to participate;) after sharing two scripture readings from: '*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document*'. Vatican, 26 October 2024)

Themes arising :

- We have a fuller **spiritual programme** in church, with much more emphasis on prayer - silent adoration and formal prayers. Comments included:

'Really lifted by the additional spiritual inputs'

'The whole- parish procession was a good opportunity to meet and get to know people.'

It is encouraging that there are more activities in church. We have an open invitation from Fr – 'What do you want me to do?'

At the same time, are we too inward looking?

and there is an ongoing need for Formation in the faith (knowledge) - at all ages

- **Cohesion socially** remains a challenge. There are many within our 2 churches whom we don't know well enough - their talents and their needs, especially with regard to new people coming and a need to encourage more participation in existing programmes

This theme was taken up by several of us. Comments included:

'There has been a welcome increase in numbers attending – for example a number of African families -some from outside our immediate parish area.'

'We don't fully understand the factors involved or the demographics of those coming'.

'We don't know where from and or who they are. We are welcoming, but need to be even more so.'

'Reaching out is really hard'

'How far does the school encourage church attendance?'

'Fr being at the back of church really helps, letting everyone know they are important.'

'There are barriers to be overcome, in moving to the next step - both spiritually and socially'

'But there is a growing conviction that the Spirit is leading us'

2. Moving forward - Implications of the above for the next 3 months in the parish (and beyond) including the Parish Annual Programme.

Spiritually we need to move out from our comfort-zone, making more use of scripture, mortification, and responding to calls for volunteers.

Progress on the spiritual front will flow over into other areas of activity.

If we persevere, some at present not attending church may start coming. Those who left when Covid happened may well have left anyway in a few years, without Covid. A remnant who are convinced will be more active, and through them more will be drawn to church.

There is a need to

i) integrate; break down barriers across both churches and with new people coming to church. Look for opportunities for dialogue – conversations/ listening to each other and those on the margins. Get to know newer parishioners, and work out how we might approach/ progress this.

Specific comments/ suggestions included:

The social committee is so important

The relationship with school is so important

Fr Festus has a key role encouraging new people to play an active role in church life.

Welcoming is so important. It used to be that no-one spoke to you when you came.

We should move round more and get to know new people! We all tend to sit in the same place.

Could we go round church for an extended Sign of Peace to introduce ourselves to each other? (Fr: not at that point in the mass.) So perhaps at the end before/ after the final blessing?

Need to let people know what is going on in the parish life not just by notices but by personal invitation.

Invite people to give their details to add to the parish register.

ii) We need to 'Call forth' more volunteers especially catechists, passing on tasks to newer/ younger parishioners; and

ii) Evaluate and engage with the needs of the area where we live, outside of our church walls.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of last meeting Minutes of the last meeting 6th March 2025

- Parish **retreat** - not in a position to take this forward this year
- **Jubilee Year and Pilgrimage.** Agreed to organise a visit to St Anne's Cathedral Leeds on Saturday 18th October for mid-day Mass and tour/discussion on the life of the Cathedral.
- Agreed each member of the PCC would invite someone to attend the next PPC meeting.

4. Any other business

Father circulated an updated programme for the Parish year. This will be available at the back of both churches for parishioners to take and distribute to their friends and families.

The Rosary will be said before each Mass throughout October.

Feedback from suggestions

Fr Festus read out notes/ comments that had come in to him via the Suggestion boxes -

- The Reader- at St Columba's - to read the responsorial psalm verses, and the congregation to only reply with the antiphon/ response. We will do this, beginning at Saturday night Mass this week
- Change Evening Mass to daytime Mass at St Peters? – This is not possible due to Fr Festus having Deanery and Diocese meetings on a Tuesday morning.
- New microphones for better sound needed. This has already been carried out; and Fr Festus will try and speak up / project his voice.
- Ask people to register their details to add to the parish records
- Form a parish WhatsApp group. Not sure if this would be welcomed – because of giving out personal contact details
- Posting job adverts in the parish bulletin and in the notice boards. Better to sign-post people to job adverts sites (apart from diocesan vacancies).
- Biddings prayers no longer personal to the parish with the book being used. Need to change back to previous system of in-parish bidding prayers and not use the book. Agreed. Alan to speak with Margaret about how we can take this forward.
- Form a worship group. We need to encourage people to attend the programme that Fr has put together.

7. Date of next meeting

Thursday 27th November 7pm at St Peter's

8. Fr Festus closed the meeting with a prayer and a blessing.