

Parish of St Mary: Minutes of PPC meeting 11th June 26.

In attendance: Mike W; Katarina N, Alan D, Ann Marie C, Cathy M, John J, and Fr Festus. **Apologies:** Peter M.

1. Introductory reading (1Cor 12:12 ...) and prayer: Litany of Hope.

2. Synodal reflection/ Listening

'How can we move forward as parish in 2026?' Responses:

- Invite/ call new and younger parishioners to take on/ take over parish roles
- Achieve position where more parishioners feel they can contribute to parish life. The recent Mother's Day liturgy showed that there are new people willing to get involved.
- Receive catechesis/ formation – support for all existing church members as well as applicants for receiving the sacraments
- Be in a position where fundraising/ parish income matches parish needs
- Review Sunday mass time at St Columba's so that attendees have time to stay back at the end and interact, creating a family feeling/ atmosphere. A small number of the more elderly at St C's do stay and chat at the back of church. At the same time a significant number arrive late and leave as early as they can. The absence of a room equivalent to the room & kitchen at St Peter's makes socialising harder to achieve at St C's.
- An active and united PPC which gifts its time and develops spiritually.

3. Actions pending from last meeting, and matters arising

- i. **Pilgrimage.** John, Santina and Fr F are visiting Ladyewell (near Preston) to preview the site. The planned parish pilgrimage date is August 29th.
- ii. **Financial statement** – Alan has completed a balance sheet. He is to meet with Fr and prepare a financial statement to be read out at all masses.
- iii. **Sound system and clarity** – All in agreement that the new microphone/ sound system is a significant improvement; although there is a query about the positioning of the speakers at St C's (the rear two being in the organ loft). There remain concerns that Fr's voice is lost, and needs projecting more effectively to the back of church, particularly when he's sharing his enthusiasm; and Fr is aware of this. At the same time several recent sermons – funerals and the Corpus Christi homily – were received very well.

- iv. **Parish communications** - The system of reading the bulletin aloud from the lectern after mass is unpopular at St Columba's, including by the readers themselves (although percentages of the congregation for/ against not known). Some have already read the notices before mass; others haven't, and don't listen when it is read out! This is linked again with: ...
- v. **Timing and length of mass:** The later mass time at St Columba's leaves people anxious to get back home. A longer Sunday mass (more than an hour), and longer homily are unpopular for some. There is no recommended length of sermon/ homily. Fr is more than prepared to reduce his homily to one sentence (!) to see if that results in fewer people wanting to dash off.
Agreed: the length of mass to be monitored; voice projection to be targeted; the system of reading the notices at every mass to be reviewed(?); and the positioning of the wall-speakers.

4. **Agenda items received**

i) **Children's liturgy and catechesis/ sacramental preparation at St Peter's.** (Illustrating the points made above about new/ younger volunteers.) We cannot expect catechists to continue indefinitely into their 80s. Fr asks us to look out for/ recommend to him parishioners whom we think would be good to involve in these ministries – subject of course to DBS vetting.... The invitation to come from him as parish priest, but the names to be suggested/ prayed for by ourselves.

At the same time we need to encourage more families at St Peter's to bring their children along – on several Sundays there have been none.

ii) **Publication of PPC minutes**

A printed copy of these minutes to be displayed at both churches, given that not all can access them online.

5. **Parish Priest's concluding input.**

Fr re-emphasised that he sees the election, formation and spiritual development of the parish PPC to be key to the growth of the parish. He would like to explore an annual away-day together, at a venue such as the Briery or Hinsley Hall.

He concluded our meeting with prayers and a blessing.

6. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 24Th September, 7.00pm St C's.