

St Robert's Church Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of Meeting

held at St Robert's Centre, Monday 11th December 2023

Present: Fr. Simon Bradbury, Jack Clarke, Mick Hopwood, Margaret Tolan, Dave Baker, Hayley Rowat, Marie Baker, Lisa Madden, Caroline Walker

Apologies: Paul Barry – Report submitted

1. Fr Simon opened the meeting with a prayer.
2. Jack welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes from the last meeting were agreed as read.
3. No matters arising.

4. Clergy Update

Fr Simon has support from Mgr Donal, Fr Bill, Fr Terry and Fr David Burke (Army chaplain) available on a regular basis and Fr Laurie has also offered to help. Fr Simon is able to do 5 masses however, he is unable to meet with parishioners after the 9am and 10am if he does so. Consequently, it's good to have the occasional supply and it gives parishioners a change of voice. It was good to have a supply at St Robert's recently, for example, for the 11am as he was able to attend the St Aelred's Christmas Fayre.

Fr Simon is away for 2 weeks in January – he has cover for 2 Fridays and 1 Wednesday so far; it will mean we are unable to offer mass every day over this 2 week period.

Fr Simon has been supporting St John Fisher School and is there later in the week for their reconciliation service. He has developed a good relationship with Francis the lay chaplain who does great work there.

Fr Simon speaks often with the headteacher of St Robert's and attends for the occasional Mass/visit/classroom session. He is attending the nativity play this week.

Fr Chris is the hospital chaplain and Fr Simon covers when needed.

There may be some form of reorganisation in the deanery next summer as Fr William at St Mary's Knaresborough will return to Ampleforth. Bishop Marcus has already said, however, that he doesn't envisage any parishes will need to close. Other deaneries have had such re-organisations recently and have managed simply through rationalising Masses.

Fr Simon's focus is on visiting sick and housebound parishioners in the lead up to Christmas.

Next year we have 4 people signed onto the RCIA programme, including 3 young people. We are organising a parish trip to Rome. In Spring we will look to another parish outing along the lines of previous ones to Ushaw and Rievaulx. There is a plan to have a Eucharistic Ministers get together training session followed by a social. Next week, the presbytery is hosting the cleaning angels, flower ladies and weekly counters as a thank you for their support. Lisa is organising a similar event for musicians, welcomers and altar servers.

Positive feedback following the announcement for welcomers in the bulletin and look to promote something similar for choir members and altar servers. A suggestion of a 'recruitment drive' where each ministry could set up a table in the parish centre and parishioners could ask questions, find out more about the commitment etc. Suggested to do a training session for the current altar servers who are working towards the Guild and they could help to train new altar servers. Look to do this end Jan / beginning Feb time.

It was noted that some cultures wouldn't respond and wouldn't think to put themselves forward and suggested that Jack could invite them personally.

April 2024 Bishop Marcus is celebrating Mass in St Robert's to confer the ministry of Lector on Jack and another diaconate candidate from Wakefield.

The Deans recently looked at the net assets, income and gift aid in each parish across the diocese.

The figures for St Robert's suggested that the time might be ripe for an appeal, particularly in terms of encouraging more people to use gift aid. The meeting recognised the generosity of all our parishioners and the sensitivity of realising there is a cost of living crisis. In such an appeal, there will be an awareness that some people are not in a position to financially commit to a Standing Order nor to increase their giving. However, it was agreed that in the new year a finance appeal would be made, perhaps with a 'workshop' style event in the parish centre after the Masses to help people understand and sign up to gift aid.

It was noted that capital costs at St Robert's have been high recently due to repair and renovation costs of Beverley House. Flat 1 should soon be ready for rental.

The roof on the lady chapel is expected to be repaired soon.

The numbers attending mass are increasing. An average over 2 months identified as : 5pm – 118, 9am – 160, 11am – 175. Heading in the right direction and back to pre covid numbers. Across the deanery attendance numbers are higher.

Fr Simon would like to arrange an international mass where parishioners come in their native dress and hymns and prayers offered in each language. Each group could lead a prayer or hymn. This will be taken up in the new year.

5. Finance report – Report is attached.

6. Social report – Since the last meeting we have had advent wreath workshop, men's' evening, all souls cakes, bible study. Marie will contact Francis at SJF about a Ceilidh.

7. Music – Christmas is set to be busy, recently have been practising after the 11am mass. The choir have learnt and used 3 new pieces over October and November and have received positive feedback.

The choir have sang at 2 weddings recently in the parish.

The carol service is on Sunday and anybody is welcome to sing or play; just be at the rehearsal at 5pm.

New members have joined the choir, looking to have a social get together just after the Christmas break.

Lisa raised concerns over the handrail leading up to the choir loft as the condensation is making it very slippery. Caroline and Fr Simon to look at a 'rubber sleeve' to place over the handrail.

Children from St Roberts school joined the choir and suggested the children could be more prominent rather than just signing along with the choir. Suggested the children process in and sit on the 2 front pews. Suggested also that the children read the scripture readings next time too.

8. Safeguarding – Mick is confident we are on top of it and whoever requires a DBS in place has one. Currently there are 36 people with DBS with 3 people due for renewal. There are 3 new ones going through the process. Mick asked us to make safeguarding more prominent on the website. The diocese will do an inspection at some point.

9. Youth Group – Fr Simon confirmed the joint group being held at St Aelred's is going well. 12 children regularly attend. There are no computers or electronic devices. The children play table tennis, pool, bake biscuits followed by lectio divina. Great work is being done by Marie and the other volunteers.

On Sunday evening Fr Simon was able to attend their youth prayer service for peace at St Aelred's. This was well attended and afterwards parents had made different foods for everyone to enjoy such as curry, goulash etc.

All very positive.

10. Children's Liturgy – Varies week on week in numbers. This week 2 new children attended. Sacrament of Reconciliation starts in February. Mary's Angels generally has 7/8 children attend.

11. Lenten Project – last year the decision was made not have a Lenten project and for families to donate to their own chosen charity.

This year, one proposal has been received. The deadline for submissions is 7th Jan. Once the deadline has passed all proposals are to be sent by email to the committee and then a vote will take place between masses. Jack to confirm the process and timeframe with Paul Barry.

12. Any Other Business

Warm spaces – A suggestion was made to use the parish centre as a warm space.

Volunteers to make tea and coffee. Could offer games/music. Mick to check with diocese whether volunteers would need DBS as could be vulnerable people attending. Hayley will check with St Marks as she knows the lady who set this up there. If not possible for this year we will look to do next year.

Health and Safety – those who have the door code to the church are asked not to share it without going through the parish office or Fr Simon. Health and safety issue if people are coming into church late at night and have an accident or use candles. There are also issues with insurance. The church is generally open from 9am – 4.30 (3.30 in winter) Monday – Friday, Saturday afternoons and mostly all day Sunday though the opening times at weekends in particular may vary.

Coffee and tea after mass is going well, lots of parishioners attending regularly.

Look to purchase some smaller round tables for upstairs.

The soundboards have been installed in the parish centre and a notable difference has been made.

RCIA candidates from last year met up and Margaret Tolan and Fr Simon are planning on a more formal gathering.

Suggestion of an open AGM on 30th June 4-5pm that parishioners can attend.

13. Dates for next 2 meetings Mon 11 March and Mon 10 June both at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8pm with a closing prayer.