

St Robert's Church Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of Meeting held at St Robert's Centre

Monday 7th July 2025

Present: Fr. Simon Bradbury, Dave Baker, Jack Clarke, Marie Baker, Ed Dyer, Margaret Tolan, Sue Collins, Richard Boscoe, Karen Shemwell

Apologies: Caroline Walker, Paul Barry, Hayley Rowat, Mick Hopwood, Lisa Madden

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

Fr Simon opened the meeting with a prayer.

Jack welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes from the last meeting

Agreed as read.

3. Matters arising

No comments made

4. Clergy update

- There was a successful day of recollection led by Fr John Butters.
- 8 people were received into the Church over Easter following the RCIA course. 3 more individuals have expressed an interest for the Autumn programme.
- The Rome pilgrimage reunion on 5 July went well. Thanks to Marie and Dave for hosting.
- Fr Simon has had a varied involvement in the Parish, including visits to the schools and hospital.
- Fr Simon will be away from the end of July into August, with Mgr Donal Lucy and Fr Terry McGrath lined up to cover.

5. New Parishioners Welcome

All agreed that this event worked well last year and there was support to run it again.

Proposed that it will take place on 15th September at 7pm.

6. Building Fund

Jack shared that £50k has been awarded from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation and the total, including Gift Aid, now exceeds £100k. Works are expected to start in Autumn. Fr Simon and Caroline are continuing to chase the Diocese and architect for an update.

7. Committee Reports

Children – [emailed report]

- The children's liturgy group is very well attended. Last Sunday we had 36 children!
- Mary's Angels has seen a couple of new families too and has a steady 7/8 children attending each session.
- We mentioned last Sunday about the possibility of separating the children at coffee after mass due to the noise. Steph said she'd be happy to volunteer to run a

"creche" upstairs for half an hour where parents can drop off their child and go downstairs to enjoy a quieter coffee. Or, parents can stay with their children upstairs. It was noted that this is a testament to the success of the coffee mornings through growing numbers. The PPC formed a consensus to support this idea but noted that we would have to be conscious of safeguarding (consider DBS checks and checking children in and out with their parents). Partitioning downstairs was also considered as an option

- Fr Simon attended sports day at St Robert's primary school and will be celebrating the Y6 leavers mass coming up. There was a consensus to approach Jill Collins to see if she would like to join the PPC to help build links with the school.

Social – Marie gave the following updates:

- Events over the last quarter included:
 - Easter: hot cross buns after the Vigil Mass
 - May crowning
 - Saints talk
 - Movie night (noted that both the Saints talk and Movie night were late in the afternoon on a Sunday and both were well attended)
- Future plans include:
 - Summer Bible Camp: 29 registered, which is only 1 short of the capacity of 30 and has grown significantly from the 19-20 last year. There are 15 volunteers (all adults DBS checked)
 - Mary tea: to be after the lunchtime Mass for the Feast of the Assumption of Mary on Friday 15th August
 - International Mass is pencilled in for 31st August but it was noted that this is the last weekend of the school holidays. Marie will check the availability of those who will likely be involved to see if this works for them, with 7th September as an alternative

Finance – Ed shared the proposed Annual Parish Statement and Financial Summary for FY24/25 with the group. There was support for publishing it over the next few weeks. He also gave an update on the Finance Committee and the plans to spread around the work of the Chair in order to make it easier to hand over the responsibilities to another individual. The Committee is seeking 1-2 new members to join to help with this.

Music – [emailed report]

1. Thank you, Caroline for advice on making choir loft safer/more spacious (and for generally being a huge support, it's very much appreciated). New routines in place for storage of resources.
2. FAO Paul - Summer break from 20th July so no Sunday sung psalm/gospel acc until start of term in September. Happy to plan hymns if Michael playing - will check his plans. Will remind Paul to tell 11am readers.
3. Numbers very inconsistent at moment and some weeks really struggling to make planned programme work with available voices.
4. Hoping to relaunch evening practices next term and would be grateful for help on bulletin/website to encourage parishioners to join in. Fingers crossed this will have an impact on plans for repertoire & capacity for supporting liturgical in Advent/Christmas and also at regular masses.
5. Any feedback on new psalms?

6. Need to have another big clear out at some point... have so much music & multiple copies of scores for a much larger choir (eg 6 part arrangements) which is not accessible to current voices. Do you want me to keep everything or ask advice from Tom Leech & team re what they can use? It's all really old and therefore completely legal to photocopy if for example we kept one or two copies...
- Richard noted that the Diocesan choir would benefit from having a microphone so that they can be heard clearly with the music. Richard to pick up with John Ibison.
 - Fr Simon said that the Diocesan Choir currently attend monthly but that it might be more appropriate for them to attend other Churches as well and move to a once per term frequency.
 - It was noted that Emma did a great job playing the piano at the 9am Mass on Sunday. There was support to encourage her to be involved on a regular basis if it helps cover for John Ibison or to enable him to sing in the choir more.
 - There was a discussion around the Deanery headteachers social that Fr Simon organised, which was well received as an opportunity for the headteachers to get together and discuss issues.
 - Marie proposed that we organise a Teacher Appreciation Week at St Robert's Primary School (e.g. bringing cakes to school as a thank you to the teachers. Sue suggested approaching Jill Collins to find an appropriate date for this).

Safeguarding – no report received

8. Committee Membership Update

Jack explained that it's good practice to rotate the membership of the PPC every c.3 years. Jack, Dave, Marie, Margaret, Hayley and Lisa have all served for 3 years or more and so will be stepping down. Jack will stay on the PPC under his new role as Deacon in future. The PPC meetings will be kept open to allow people involved to provide an update on their given areas. Fr Simon has asked Ed to take on the role of Chair from Jack. It was further agreed that new committee members will be finalized by the October PPC meeting. The intent is that this meeting will have the incoming and outgoing members present to better serve the transition.

9. Evangelisation programme update

Good meeting held on 17 June to discuss the proposed Apologia programme, which will commence in Autumn with the first session covering "The Mass". Proposed that it will take place once per month on a Sunday (late afternoon) for c.1hr30.

10. Next meeting date confirmed as 13th October.

Any other business

Paul raised by email a request to set up WhatsApp groups for the different readers over the weekend to help with coordinating and swapping. There was a general consensus that this would be helpful for those involved in the ministry but it was agreed that it would need to be carefully managed with clear rules and a group administrator controlling access. Fr Simon said that he will speak to Caroline about this.

Fr Simon noted that the windows in the Beverley House flat are in need of replacement or refurbishment. The flat is being rented but the single glazed windows don't open properly and are very draughty. A quote was received for £15k. Other quotes will be obtained,

including for the flat on the other floor as well. There was general support to have the work done in order to maintain the upkeep of the building.

Good progress has been made on the automated bells, which should toll for the first time in 2-3 weeks.

The meeting finished at 7.50pm with a closing prayer.