



Parish Council Meeting MEETING MINUTES

March 2014

Meeting Details

Meeting Name:	St Joseph's Parish Council
Chairman:	John Forte
Date:	Tuesday, 11 March 2014
Time:	8:00pm
Location:	St Joseph's Priory

Invitees/Attendees

Name	Role	Present
John Bates	Chairman Health & Safety and Safeguarding	Apologies
Fr John McGowan	Parish Priest	Yes
Fr Bob Davies	Carmelite Community	Apologies
John Forte	Finance Committee	Yes
Christine Cornwell	Evangelisation Activity Group	Yes
Ros Burton	Liturgy & Church Activity Group	Yes
Stephen Forster	Outreach Activity Group	Yes
Kasia Misiewicz	Pastoral Activity Group	Yes
Nan Jacobson	Social Activity Group	Yes
Paul Rayner	Youth Activity Group	Yes
Mike Carney	Mass Representatives	Yes
Joan Barham	Secretary	Yes

Agenda Items

Item	Subject	Presenter
1.	Opening Remarks	John Forte
2.	Matters Arising from Meeting Minutes of 21 st January 2014	John Forte
3.	2015 Centenary Update	Fr John McGowan
4.	Carmelite Chapter	Fr John McGowan
5.	Catholic Education after St Joseph's	Fr John McGowan
6.	Greater Openness, Visibility and Transparency of Council	Fr John McGowan
7.	Holy Week and Easter Liturgies	Fr John McGowan
8.	Matters Arising from Activity Group/Committee Reports	John Forte/All
9.	Health & Safety Update	John Forte
10.	Review of Action Items	John Forte
11.	Any Other Business	John Forte
12.	Closing Remarks	John Forte

Meeting Notes

1. Opening Remarks - John Forte

- The meeting began with everyone present praying the Parish Prayer. Fr John then gave an opening blessing.
- Apologies were received from John Bates and Fr Bob Davies.
- Nan Jacobson was welcomed as the new Council Representative for the Social Activity Group.

2. Matters Arising from Meeting Minutes of 21st January - John Forte

- There were some matters arising from the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, 21st January 2014. As a result the necessary corrections were made to the previous minutes, please see "[Meeting_Minutes_\(21Jan14\)_REVISED_11Mar14](#)" for revised document.
- **Item 3** – We have found someone to co-ordinate the centenary social events, Christine Maye.
- **Item 5** – Both Fr John and Fr Bob will be going to the Provincial Chapter in May.
- **Item 8** – Fr John has been in communication with the General Definitor in Rome about our possible twinning with Malawi. The General Definitor suggests that a group go to Malawi on a fact finding trip and report back upon their return. As he is from Malawi Fr John invited him to first come here and talk to us; he said he would be willing to do this. There is a question of jurisdiction as Malawi is not under our Province – Nigeria is our African country. More communication will be required with Fr George in Rome as well as the Spanish Provincial as Malawi falls under their Province.
- **Item 8** – Stephen Forster made clear that the concern expressed last meeting about supporting two projects was not from the Justice & Peace Group, but from Fr John. The Justice & Peace Group promoted this project as an addition to our support for Cameroon and it was not in any way to replace it.
- **Item 9** – Christine Maye has agreed to be in charge of organising Parish Day this year. Tony, Mary and Karen, who are still on the Events Team, have offered to help Christine. Dates have been proposed for Parish Day but not yet agreed – hope to confirm date by this weekend. The Council agreed on the importance of having revenue from social events and welcomed Christine's appointment, offering her their full support.

3. 2015 Centenary Update - Fr John McGowan

- **Calendar** – The diary of events is filling up quite quickly thanks to the Spirituality Group which has been imaginative in coming up with a variety of activities throughout the centenary year. It has worked very hard to put a programme together.
- **History** – The big project for the History Group is making a DVD about the parish called “A Day in the Life of St Joseph’s Parish”. Andrew Godfrey and Michael Hargreaves are working on this.
- **Cemetery** – The Cemetery Group continues to meet and is working away.
- **Fundraising** – The Fundraising Group has had two meetings now. There is a lot of confidence in the people that are on the committee, consisting of David Roberts, Christine Maye, Sean McCormick, John Forte, Fr Bob and Fr John.

Fr John then handed over to John Forte for an update on the Church, as follows:

- John Forte was invited to join the Church Group at the point where it was looking at church architects and practices. He has prepared a document “*Rationale for Decisions for Centenary Celebration Mar14*” which is a summary of all the steps that we have taken thus far. Parish Council members were asked to take this document home to read and absorb. It is exceedingly important that we all appreciate how we have reached the decisions made and this document provides the rationale behind where we are today.
- The Brief that was produced and sent out to various practices was very well received. We were congratulated on the quality of the document by the three architects on our shortlist. The Church Group has done a lot of work, in particular, our qualified architect who has worked exceedingly hard. The group identified twelve companies including those recommended by the Diocese, the Carmelites and various people. It researched these companies and identified possible contenders for what we are trying to do. Twelve became six and they, in turn, were shortlisted to three. These three firms were invited to respond to our Brief. They all responded positively and the group met them each of them separately, which took at least half a day. Each meeting started with tour of our site and then there was discussion about various aspects of the Brief – some about our ideas and some about their ideas in response to the Brief. After these meetings all three firms came back still interested in the project. They were then invited to make a presentation, again a half day session, and the group gave them until the end of February to let us know if they were still interested in going forward. They all replied positively well ahead of the deadline. This meant that the group was able to meet on 12th February to discuss the pros and cons of each company. At one stage the group thought it would be hard pressed to make a choice because all three firms were very able. It didn’t come to that because one of the three firms was head and shoulders above everyone else when it came to the “nitty gritty” and unanimous decision was reached – Lee Evans Partnership. A letter was sent inviting Lee Evans Partnership to come and meet us, which they accepted so instead of three feasibility studies we will only need one.
- The next step is for a Feasibility Study to be conducted by our architect to tell us what is and what is not possible on our site. They will give us details of what can be done and what we must forget because it cannot happen. When we have agreed the outcome of the study, the architect, at that stage, can produce information for outline planning permission. We need to go to this step because without outline planning permission there is no project. This is the next big step. The architect has indicated that this process is likely to take until the end of June. There cannot be any consultation until outline planning is given. When this happens, we can work on the details of the project and that is the time we will be consulting initially with the Parish Council and eventually with the parish at large.
- At this point, we don’t know how much the building work is going to cost because we don’t have all the details of the project. We have no idea of the kind of money we’re talking about and must resist the temptation of guessing or throwing figures in the air. We have an expert architect with a lot of experience in church renovation projects. He is well known to the Diocese having done a lot of projects for Bishop Peter when he was in Portsmouth Diocese. The architect is also a committed Christian (not Catholic) and understands our aims.
- It has taken a lot of hard work and prayer to get to this point. The Lee Evans Partnership has been commissioned to conduct the Feasibility Study which will cost in the region of £4,000 to £5,000.
- The Church Group will prepare a communication to the parish about where we are and next steps.

- The position of the Council in the overall decision making process was questioned and subsequently discussed. Stephen Forster asked that his dissent be recorded as he is not happy with the decision making process, where he feels too many decisions are being made prior to discussion with the Council.
- The Council thanked the Church Group for all the effort they have put into this process thus far.

4. Carmelite Provincial Chapter - Fr John McGowan

- The Carmelite Provincial Chapter will take place from 5th to 17th May 2014. Both Fr John and Fr Bob will be going. Fr Michael McGoldrick was recently elected as the new Provincial. During the Chapter the Carmelites have to look at real possibility of closing some of their houses out of ten in this Province.
- Cover for Sunday Masses will be organised and it is possible that alternative arrangements may need to be made for weekday Masses. Most likely there will have to be a reduction in the overall number of Masses – at the moment Fr John is trying to sort out supply for the duration of the Chapter.

5. Catholic Education after St Joseph's - Fr John McGowan

- Worried that the majority of our children leaving primary school don't go on to Catholic secondary schools. Fr John is meeting the head teacher and the chair of the board of governors from St Michael's Catholic Secondary School, Wycombe on Friday, 14th March to discuss.
- Parents could also consider St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School in Langley, but they need to know that it is an option for them. It was highlighted that the recent changes to the 11+ exam means that it is more possible for children to sit the 11+ in both Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.
- It was suggested that transport, both in terms of distance and costs, could be a deciding factor for parents in their choice of school. There are no public transport links to St Michael's, St Bernard's or Joan of Arc so children have to use school buses to get there if parents cannot drive them.

6. Greater Openness, Visibility and Transparency of Council - Fr John McGowan

- Please refer to "*Transparency Report Jan14*" which was distributed ahead of the meeting.
- Everyone agreed that we were happy with the proposals made last meeting and should progress on this basis.

7. Holy Week and Easter Liturgies - Fr John McGowan

- Our Holy Week and Easter Services this year will broadly be the same as last year. There are no significant changes.
- Last year we moved the 11am Mass to 12 noon on Passion (Palm) Sunday, however we feel that this year we can move it back to 11am. Our evening events have a new start time of 8pm so that it gives people time to get home from work and out again.
- The Walk of Witness followed by Stations of the Cross will take place this year. However, Fr John will be working with the other local church leaders to change this for the future. After 3pm on Good Friday everything should be quiet, there should not be anything going on in the church – it is a time of waiting quietly and prayerfully.
- Fr John to invite the Bridgettine Sisters to our Easter Vigil.
- There will be no Healing Service during Lent; intention is to have one in early summer instead.
- A leaflet with a list of all our Lenten activities has been emailed out to our parishioners and posted on our website. Some paper copies are available from the Parish Office.
- There will be an Easter Card given out over the weekend of 5th/6th April with details of all our Holy Week and Easter Services. This card will also be distributed, one per family, to the school. The information will also be emailed out the week before Easter and posted on our website.

8. Matters Arising from Activity Group Reports - John Forte/All

- Refer to the following reports received for information about each Activity Group:
 - *"Evangelisation Report Jan14"*
 - *"Outreach Report Mar14"*
 - *"Liturgy & Church Report Mar14"*
 - *"Pastoral Report Mar14"*
 - *"Youth Report Mar14"*
 - *"Finance Update Mar14"*
- Looking through the various reports it is amazing how much work is going on in the parish. The Council expressed their thanks to all the working groups for effort and hard work.
- The Council congratulated the London & Slough Run and SHOC on their Winter Night Shelter initiative for rough sleepers in Slough. It is so impressed by what has been achieved and the success of this project is a great credit to both charities as well as the churches involved.
- The recent SHOC Quiz Night was packed and very well supported by our parish.
- The Eucharistic Minister Retreat at the end of January was exceedingly well organised – thanks to everyone involved. It is hoped that this becomes an annual event.
- SVP hosted a successful pancake and coffee morning on Shrove Tuesday. Only concern is about the Youth SVP which despite various plans has not yet got off the ground. Paul to talk to Michael about this.
- Asked if it would be possible for SVP members to use one of the parish phones to contact SVP clients without access to email. Some members currently using mobile phones for this which is quite expensive – cheaper to use land line and make contribution towards costs. Kasia to discuss making a financial contribution with John Forte.
- For our youth we are trying to get a Year 10 group up and running. Also brainstorming how our youth can get involved in the Centenary. Considering how we can engage St Joseph's School more. Looking to organise something social for our Altar Servers so as to link them into our youth ministry.
- Currently Year 7s meet once a term, Year 8s meet once every half term and Year 9s are meeting monthly as they are prepared for Confirmation. The pop-in after school on Wednesday idea for those at secondary school has not really worked out.
- An update to the parish regarding our financial situation has been in the Newsletter for the past two weeks. There has been a positive response to the accompanying blue prayer card, particularly from those with standing orders.
- Maurice Carkett has retired as chairman of the Furniture Market and this role has been taken on by David Parkhouse. Maurice has been made an Honorary Life President in recognition of his dedicated service. An announcement was made in the Newsletter and Fr John has written to Maurice. The Council asked John Bates to write to Maurice on their behalf, thanking him for all his effort and his many years of hard work.
- The recent storms have caused significant damage to the roof of Denham church. It will, most likely, mean that the entire roof needs to be replaced. We are liaising with the Diocese as this should be covered by our insurance. The roof of the Furniture Market also requires attention. Expect that it will cost in the region of £4,000 to £5,000 to make the necessary repairs with no help from the Diocese, as damage not caused by wind.

9. Health & Safety Update - John Forte

- John Bates and John Forte recently met with a Fire Prevention & Safety expert and been around our three churches with them. Their report has only arrived today, 11th March, so still needs to be looked at.

- Our Health & Safety Policy has been finalised and is now displayed in all churches as well as the Parish Centre and Hall. We are now legal as regards policies.
- John Bates and John Forte to meet and review the risk assessments that were done and put together an action plan to address any items requiring attention.
- Please report anything broken, not working, faulty, etc to the Parish Office so that it can be entered into our Maintenance Book and duly fixed.

10. Review of Action Items - John Forte

- **Action Items** – Reviewed and updated action list – see Parish Council Action Items (as at 11Mar14).
- **A10 re: Catechesis** – This is an ongoing process. Details of events for catechists are circulated to relevant groups/individuals as they arise.
- **A128 re: Legacy Chalfont Fair Equipment** – Re-assigned to John Forte. Confirmed with Ed Poole that all equipment is in working order. Need to follow up regarding inventory, process for usage and access.
- **A133 re: Tidying Up Narthex** – This is ongoing. Some work has been done on the side porch but there is more to do – working through a list of items that need attention.
- **A137 re: New Collection Bags** – These have been ordered and are in the process of being manufactured. We expect to have the new bags ready for use at Easter.
- **A138 re: Eucharistic Prayer Numbers** – Looked at accommodating Eucharistic Prayer numbers on Hymn Boards but concluded that the best option was for the celebrant to announce it from the altar.
- **A145 re: Larger Format Weekly Newsletter** – Two weeks into a three month trail of larger format newsletter. It is early days but there has been a positive reaction thus far. Feedback welcome – please contact the Parish Office with comments.
- **A148 re: Meeting with Chair of Governors at St Michael's Secondary School** – Meeting arranged for Friday, 14th March.
- **A152 re: Centenary Pilgrimage** – Pilgrimage will be to Avila in September 2015.

11. Any Other Business - John Forte

- **Stephen Forster** – Are we satisfied that the house bequeathed to parish is properly insured? John Forte to double check this.
- **Stephen Forster** – At the recent “Bacon Buttie” event in the Parish Centre there was no ramp for disabled access to the Parish Centre and the Hall wasn’t opened so that the ramp there could be used. John Forte to talk to John Bates about this.
- **Mike Carney** – What are our contingencies if it should happen that the Carmelites close this house, albeit not now but a possibility for the future? Should we be thinking about a strategy for the next 10 years? Everyone present agreed that we should not take the Carmelites for granted.
- **Fr John McGowan** – Contacted by Terry McEvoy, a member of the Feast of St Peter Organising Committee, regarding the possibility of St Joseph’s Parish getting involved. Agreed that the parish should have a presence at this event. Fr John to follow up with Terry.
- **Joan Barham** – Thanks to those groups which have reviewed their content on our website and provided updates. For anyone who has not replied, assumption is that their information is correct and up-to-date. In process of making updates and revising parts of the site over the next few weeks.

12. Closing Remarks - John Forte

- As the next Council meeting is not until May, John wished everyone a happy and holy Easter. The meeting was closed with prayer from Fr John.
- Next meetings are Tuesday, 20th May 2014 and Tuesday, 8th July 2014.