



## Parish Council Meeting MEETING MINUTES

July 2016

### Meeting Details

Meeting Name:	St Joseph's Parish Council
Chairman:	John Bates
Date:	Tuesday, 19 <sup>th</sup> July 2016
Time:	8:00pm
Location:	St Joseph's Priory

### Invitees/Attendees

Name	Role	Present
John Bates	Chairman Health & Safety and Safeguarding	Yes
Fr Michael Spain	Parish Priest	Yes
Fr Martin McDonald	Carmelite Community	Yes
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 Bates
2.	Matters Arising from Meeting Minutes of 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	John Bates
3.	Health, Safety & Safeguarding	John Bates
4.	Matters Arising from July Activity Group Reports	Fr Michael Spain
5.	Parish Christmas Lunch	Fr Martin McDonald
6.	Planning for Annual General Meeting	Joan Barham
7.	Review of Action Items	All
8.	Closing Remarks	John Bates

## Meeting Notes

### 1. Opening Remarks - John Bates

- The meeting began with a welcome from John Bates.
- Fr Michael then led everyone in prayer.

### 2. Matters Arising from Meeting Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 - John Bates

- There were no matters arising from the Meeting Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- Stephen Forster dissociated himself from the position taken in the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 in relation to the Disabilities Act and the Equalities Act.

### 3. Health, Safety & Safeguarding - John Bates

- We have been constantly on at the Diocese, and their representative, to find out when the health and safety specialist will conduct a review of our premises. This independent advisor is also supposed to evaluate our compliance with the equalities legislation for church properties. Despite many enquiries on our part (both verbal and written), we have yet to receive any response.
- Whether they come quickly or not, we want to improve things for people with disabilities and those less able. To this end, we have had a meeting with a view to building a ramp for disabled access on the car park side of the church, taking some space from the current disabled toilet. This would be subject to planning permission/consent and drawings are currently being prepared so this can be progressed. Stephen Forster said he had checked with the Planning Office and they said that Planning Permission would be required for a ramp; it wouldn't be covered under "permitted development".
- We will continue to press the Diocese not only on this matter, but also on a host of remedial work that remains to be done following the church refurbishment: painting that didn't happen, guttering that wasn't completed, a trench which was not filled in properly, our ongoing issues with the sound system as well as adjustments required to the lighting system.
- John Forte continues to chase the Diocese about our refurbishment costs as he still hasn't been given the final figures. Sadly our experience in dealing with the Diocese, over many years, is that they are notoriously slow dealing with everything.
- John Kerrison visited our premises last year and met with Fr Michael and Stephen. He made some simple recommendations that would benefit those less able when using the church, parish centre and hall. These enhancements would amount to relatively small expenditure. Stephen was asked to send the list to John Bates and John Forte. We will progress these improvements as and when we can.

- We are looking at an automatic door, with a press button, for the disabled access to the church and the disabled toilet. If the door can be managed and secured appropriately, then this facility could be made available when events and functions take place in the parish centre/hall, thereby providing disabled facilities.
- With regards to Safeguarding, Mary Forsyth has done a wonderful job getting us up to date with DBS checks. This is no mean feat given the high volume of parishioners which require checking. The Council thanked Mary for her efforts and is very pleased that we are on top in this important area.

#### 4. Matters Arising from July Activity Group Reports - Fr Michael Spain

- Refer to the following reports received for information about each Activity Group:
  - "Evangelisation Report Jul16"
  - "Outreach Report Jul16"
  - "Liturgy & Church Report Jul16"
  - "Pastoral Report Jul16"
  - "Social Report Jul16"
  - "Youth Report Jul16"
  - "Finance Report Jul16"
- Running an **Alpha Course** is being considered – it is the strongest runner for us in the absence of a Parish Mission. We want to reach out to those beyond the 40-50 parishioners who regularly attend our spiritual events or pastoral activities. Fr Michael feels it is worthwhile exploring, especially as there were so many positive outcomes when we last ran this over 15 years ago.
- **Upper Room** leaflets were distributed. This is an ecumenical initiative in conjunction with other local churches. The concept is around the clock prayer every day of the week where people can pray for our local community. You book an hour via the website and by return you receive the entry code for the Prayer Room. We plan to put something in Newsletter to promote this initiative. It was suggested that it would be better to promote our own prayer and devotions, particularly Eucharistic Adoration. In response, Fr Michael said he wanted to be part of encouraging this initiative.
- Joan was asked to promote the LIFE Group's fundraiser "**Songs for Life**" in the Newsletter. This musical evening with the Wycombe Male Voice Choir, under the direction of Louise Child our 11am music leader, will take place on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30pm in St Teresa's Church in Beaconsfield.
- The Council was delighted at the tremendous support that **SHOC** has received for its recent fundraising efforts, namely £1,700 from the Quiz Evening and £3,425 from the Golf Day. These funds help SHOC continue its service to the homeless and vulnerable.
- **Tea & Chat**, which continues every Thursday throughout the summer, donated money to the **CWL** in support of its work with a local Women's Refuge. The CWL ladies were thanked for their service in welcoming Holy Door Pilgrimages.
- The **Justice & Peace Group** asked that we think seriously about the use of **renewable energy**. This was considered when the church was redone last year. Unfortunately, we didn't receive favorable feedback from the Diocese on this matter, especially with regards to the use of solar panels. We were also advised that local residents/authority might not deem it appropriate given that we are a church and the building is visible from the street on both sides (i.e. the solar panels would look unsightly).
- Following the **Cameroon Education Fund** appeal in April, we have sent £4,000 to the Family Life Office in Kumbo to help with the primary and secondary education of orphaned and vulnerable children.
- **Carlos and Leonora Santistevan**, long standing members of the parish, are moving to Columbia later this month. The Council thanked them for their support over the years, in particular their involvement with the Justice & Peace Group and the Rosary Circle. We wish them every happiness in their new home and all the best for the future.
- **Church Cleaners** are in urgent need of more volunteers as well as someone to lead the team. The personal appeal by Fr Michael in the Easter Newsletter didn't attract any new people. He really hopes to

get a men's cleaning group going and, this coming Thursday, you will find him learning the ropes as he joins the cleaning team for the first time. It was highlighted that it is not the sole responsibility of the priests to find more cleaners; it is our collective duty – we all use the church after all – to identify parishioners who might be able to give about an hour of their time once every 5-6 weeks to keep our beautiful church clean and tidy.

- Going forward we will have a retiring collection for **Christmas and Easter flowers**. This has been done in Holy Name for many years and now this will be extended to St Joseph's. Fr Martin has also reinstated the Church Flowers donation box. Maureen Murphy and her team provide a wonderful display of flowers week in, week out and excel themselves at Christmas, Easter and when we have big celebrations such as First Communion and Confirmation. The Council thanked the ladies for their hard work.
- Fr Martin clarified that **we should not double up on ministries**; for example, the same person should not be a Reader and a Eucharistic Minister at the same Mass. We are at a point where we need to identify new Readers and Eucharistic Ministers, especially for the Saturday 5:30pm Vigil Mass. They will, of course, need training and Fr Martin felt it might be time to organize another retreat/meeting for all those involved in these important ministries. We were reminded that Eucharistic Ministers must be appointed and commissioned by a priest.
- The **SVP** report was great; there is a tremendous amount of work going on and lots of people benefit from what this society does. As with other groups, there is a shortage of volunteers – a plea for help will be made in September when we have our annual SVP Appeal.
- The Council was very happy that Celia Tobin has offered to organize **Parish Day** and hopes that everyone will pull together and get behind Celia for what is an enjoyable day out for people of all ages. The **Grand Draw**, one of our biggest fundraisers, will take place at 4pm on Parish Day, 17<sup>th</sup> September. Thank you to those who gave up a couple of hours to stuff envelopes as well as those who took the time to hand deliver raffle letters, saving us approximately £600 in postage.
- We have a **problem with car parking** in the overlap between the 9am and 11am Sunday Masses. Those from the 9am congregation staying for refreshments take up spaces in the car park which are needed by the 11am congregation. This is compounded on the weeks that we have the Baptism Preparation Course. **We really need to keep the Priory side free for emergency vehicle access and disabled parking**. It was agreed that those involved in the Baptism course can park Priory side.
- John Bates and John Forte have attended a meeting with the local residents, a representative from the local Parish Council and a representative from Bucks County Council. They were trying to encourage us to increase our parking facilities, unaware that they were talking to open ears. The result is that we are looking to utilize the space between the cemetery and the fir trees. It was agreed by all parties that it would be better to enter the car park via Priory Road and exit on to Austenwood Common as it wouldn't create the same congestion as our current arrangements. We have also had the same suggestion from a number of parishioners. So, we need to look at planning the routes in and out of the car park, widening the entrance/exit, remarking the parking spaces and grasscrete the areas we can. This will require Planning Permission but the Council and the Local Authority want it so we think we will secure the necessary consent. We have had no promise of money to make this happen but they might be able to help us with a "matched funding" scheme. We are working on this but our biggest problem is finance. We don't know whether the Diocese will approve the changes, however, the support of the local authorities may help us with that.
- **Isabel Fawcett** has made a great start as our Youth Worker and feedback suggests she is visible, available and approachable. She is off shortly to World Youth Day in Poland. When she returns we hope to be able to offer her a lengthier contract (her current one due to expire end of November).
- Since the publication of our **finance situation** a few weeks ago, there has been a noticeable increase in our weekly collection. We sincerely hope this will continue, albeit that the summer holidays are almost upon us. With the loss of Events Team income, we are planning to re-launch the **200 Club** on Parish Day in an effort to improve our income. It will be administered by Teresa Evans, our Gift Aid coordinator, and the money will be used to supplement our maintenance budget.
- The Council noted that throughout every report submitted, groups were in need of assistance, with some really struggling. We need to consider having another "**Sign Up Sunday**" or something similar. A suggestion was made to have a "**Help Wanted**" section in the Newsletter. Fr Michael/Ros to follow up.

- Talked again about formally including **Activity Group Reports** as part of the Parish Council Meeting Minutes and publishing them on the website. After a short discussion it was decided that we will continue as we do today; input for quarterly meetings will not be published on the website, input for the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Report will. Throughout the year, the priests will exercise their judgment and will pick out highlights, acknowledgements, successes, appeals, etc. for communication as they feel appropriate. The **Annual Report** summarizes the year's work as well as promoting the group. A copy is available for everyone and every new parishioner receives one when they register with the parish so they can learn more about what we do and how they can get involved.

## 5. Parish Christmas Lunch - Fr Martin McDonald

- Years ago we used to have a Parish Christmas Dinner. It was very successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Fr Martin would like to start this up again as it is a great way to bring everyone together. The date is the Fourth Sunday of Advent – **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> December**.
- There is a lot to do to make this happen. It will be a sit-down meal with traditional Christmas dinner in the Parish Centre/Hall. We need to organize some cooks, sort out the bar, recruit people to set up the venue beforehand and clear away afterwards, find someone to do the music, get someone to organize a raffle, etc. There should be plenty of advertising beforehand. It will be a ticketed event as we have to be mindful of the numbers.
- The Council congratulated Fr Martin on this great idea and gave him its full support

## 6. Planning for AGM - Joan Barham

- The AGM will take place on **Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October** at 3pm in the Parish Centre. Following the established timescales, parishioners are invited to submit topics for Any Other Business in writing by Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> September. The AGM agenda and meeting papers will be available on the website and church notice boards on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> September. Parishioners wishing to table questions must do so in writing no later than Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September. As well as a poster, there will be an article in the Newsletter in the four weeks leading up to the AGM and it will also be included in the Notices.
- Ahead of the meeting we will produce a Parish Annual Report which will be made available both electronically via the website and in paper format by means of an A5 booklet. The overall content will be broadly the same as last year.
- In order to achieve this, **all reports need to be submitted to Joan by Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> September** (eight weeks from this meeting). Reports should broadly cover highlights of what has been achieved this past year as well as plans for the next 12 months.
- Joan to organize production of the Annual Report and make the necessary AGM preparations.

## 7. Review of Action Items - All

- **Action Items** – A new action list was created – see "*Parish Council Action Items (as at 19Jul16)*".
- **M001** re: *Re-appointment/election to PC* – Please see table below for details.
- **M002** re: *Youth SVP and M0022 Engaging 12-15 and 15-18 Year Olds* – Isabel is now on board and together with Youth Ministry Team will be looking closely at both of these actions. The feedback from this year's Confirmation was that the young people really enjoyed, and got a lot from, the service element of the programme. There was also very positive feedback from one of the homes who attended our Senior Citizen's Christmas Party. We really need more volunteers and helpers to explore some of these opportunities and, if viable, get them off the ground.
- **M004** re: *Disabled access to Church/Parish Centre* – We now have a ramp which provides access to the Parish Centre, albeit that some adjustments need to be made. We are looking at providing ramp access to the church (*please see Health & Safety notes above for details*).

- **M008** re: *Transport to Mass* – This is now under control with the SVP. The answer to this is: if a priest asks you to take someone to Mass then you will need a DBS Check. If an individual asks you for a lift to Mass as a friend or neighbour you don't need a DBS Check.
- **M030** re: *Make Appeal for Church Cleaners* – Fr Michael would like to put something in the Newsletter again in order to recruit more helpers. However, it was agreed by everyone present that this time it should be backed up by an appeal from the altar.

### Parish Council Re-Appointment/Elections

Name	Role	Position	Term/Expiry
John Bates	Chairman	Appointed	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> November 2016
	Health & Safety and Safeguarding	Appointed	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> October 2016
Fr Michael Spain	Parish Priest	Appointed	<i>Chapter in May 2017</i> September 2017
Fr Martin McDonald	Carmelite Community	Appointed	<i>Chapter in May 2017</i> September 2017
John Forte	Finance Committee	Appointed	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i> October 2017
	Vice Chairman	Appointed	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> November 2016
Christine Cornwell	Evangelisation Activity Group	Elected	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> October 2016
Ros Burton	Liturgy & Church Activity Group	Elected	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i> October 2018
Stephen Forster	Outreach Activity Group	Elected	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i> October 2018
Kasia Misiewicz	Pastoral Activity Group	Elected	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> January 2017
Nan Jacobson	Social Activity Group	Elected	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Term</i> March 2017
Paul Rayner	Youth Activity Group	Elected	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</i> October 2017
Mike Carney	Mass Representatives	Elected	<i>Annual Term</i> September 2016
Joan Barham	Secretary	Appointed	<i>Subject to Carmelite Community approval.</i>

*Extract from Parish Council Constitution, Section 6.1 pertaining to Term of Appointments:*

All appointed/elected Council members (members) will serve for a period of three years, at the end of which, they may stand for a second term. No member will serve for more than two consecutive terms on the Council without a break of a 3-year term, at the end of which they may be reconsidered for re-appointment/election.

## 8. Closing Remarks - John Bates

- **Year of Mercy** – There is a Jubilee for Catechists in Rome on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> September. We are having our own one here in St Joseph's which we are hosting on behalf of the Diocese. We will be using the same reflection as Pope Francis for the Jubilee in Rome. Please encourage catechists to come.
- **Church Wheelchair** – The SVP donated a wheelchair for use in St Joseph's Church. It has been used on many occasions. There is a problem with the brake which David Bentley has been unable to fix. It was suggested that we contact the Mobility Shop in Chalfont St Peter as they are specialists in this type of equipment. John Forte agreed that we can find funds to get it fixed. Kasia will contact the shop and find out if repair is possible.
- **Four Mikes on Bikes** – Thanks to everyone for their prayers and support. Appreciate the work done to keep articles in the Newsletter as well as creating and updating the fantastic Blog. We do not know, as yet, how much has been raised and unfortunately no report for this meeting from the London & Slough Run. Donations are still coming through online and via the special giving envelopes. We hope that when we return after the summer holidays we will have a better idea of the funds raised.
- The meeting concluded with a prayer led by Fr Martin.
- Next meeting is Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm in the Priory.