



Parish Council Meeting MEETING MINUTES

November 2013

Meeting Details

Meeting Name:	St Joseph's Parish Council
Chairman:	John Bates
Date:	Tuesday, 26 November 2013
Time:	8:00pm
Location:	St Joseph's Priory

Invitees/Attendees

Name	Role	Present
Charles Whitehead	Chairman	Apologies
Fr John McGowan	Parish Priest	Yes
Fr Bob Davies	Carmelite Community	Yes
John Forte	Finance Committee	Yes
John Bates	Health & Safety and Safeguarding	Yes
Christine Cornwell	Evangelisation Activity Group	Yes
Ros Burton	Liturgy & Church Activity Group	Yes
Stephen Forster	Outreach Activity Group	Yes
<i>Pending</i>	Pastoral Activity Group	n/a
Tony Hetherington	Social Activity Group	Yes
Paul Rayner	Youth Activity Group	Apologies
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 8 th October 2013	John Bates
3.	2015 Centenary Update	Fr John McGowan
4.	Pastoral Area Council Update & Bishop Peter's Message	Fr John McGowan
5.	Carmelite Provincial Chapter in May 2014	Fr John McGowan
6.	Christmas Mass Times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for Children's Mass on Christmas Eve 	Fr John McGowan/ John Bates
7.	Name Change Consultation – St Joseph's Gerrards Cross <i>versus</i> St Joseph's Chalfont St Peter	Fr John McGowan
8.	Catholic Schooling for Our Children	Fr John McGowan
9.	Baptismal Programme Update	Christine Cornwell
10.	Health & Safety Update	John Bates
11.	Finance Committee Update	John Forte
12.	Matters Arising from Activity Group Reports	John Bates
13.	Review of Action Items	John Bates
14.	Any Other Business	John Bates
15.	Closing Remarks	John Bates

Meeting Notes

1. Opening Remarks - John Bates

- Fr John opened the meeting with a prayer.
- Apologies were received from Charles Whitehead and Paul Rayner.
- Charles Whitehead, having served his term of one year under the new constitution, has decided step down as Chair of the Parish Council. Fr John has asked John Bates to be the new Chair; he has accepted this role and been duly appointed.

2. Matters Arising from Meeting Minutes of 8th October - John Bates

- There were no matters arising from the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, 8th October 2013.

3. 2015 Centenary Update - Fr John McGowan

- The Architect's Brief has been tweaked rather than radically changed since the last version seen by the Council. 10-12 architectural firms were recommended to us and these were shortlisted to six. From those six, the Brief Committee chose three to approach and selected one reserve. Members of the Parish Council were asked to review the final draft of the brief and provide feedback to Fr John within the next week. Hugh Davies from the Diocese has also had sight of the brief and said it was one of the best he's seen.

- The next step is to write to three firms and invite to come and meet Brief Committee in January. At this point, John McKenna, a parishioner and civil engineer will join the committee. Following the interviews we will ask the architectural firms to produce a sketch of some kind.
- The Brief Committee will then evaluate the three ideas submitted and select a preferred architectural firm. Choosing the architect is not just about the design; it is also about how well/easily we can work with the firm. Communication is of the utmost importance as they will need to be able to communicate to the parish in an open meeting the vision and plans. All three designs will be shared with the Council, along with the Brief Committee's recommendation. If it is in agreement, we will then contract the architectural firm and move on to the next stage of the project.
- We will need a specific fundraising committee for this major project and will be looking for a professional fundraiser to do this. We think we have one in the parish. The company used by the Diocese for Together in Faith was suggested as a possibility. Fr John has been in contact with Roger Mills, an ex-parishioner with a lot of expertise in this area. He has already given Fr John some input on what needs to be done and has offered to come and visit us in January to help give us kick-start our fundraising campaign.
- The other Centenary Sub-Groups (History, Cemetery and Spirituality) are now meeting regularly, working together and coming up with ideas. We have also created a planning calendar for the year and slowly various dates are being filled in. Early next year we will have more fixed events in the calendar. Overall Fr John is very happy with the progress.
- Christine and Fr John are planning to organise a Pilgrimage to Spain as our centenary coincides with the 500th anniversary of Teresa of Avila's birth. The History group is looking to update Pam Bacon's book which she wrote for our 75th anniversary. It is also considering making a DVD "A Day in the Life of..." to touch every single aspect of parish life as well as a five minute collage of photographs showing the parish from its early beginnings to the present day. The Cemetery group is looking at the possibility of adding a Memorial Wall as one of their ideas.
- It was suggested that we need a communications plan to share centenary matters with parishioners, over and above the intention to host an open meeting (including the theological and liturgical drivers for the design) once we have some plans. A proposal to have "Frequently Asked Questions" available on the website as well as an item in the Newsletter every 4-6 weeks was thought to be a good option.

4. Pastoral Area Council Update & Bishop Peter's Message - Fr John McGowan

- Bishop Peter came to Our Lady's School in Chesham Bois to visit our Pastoral Area last week. He was filmed for a ten minute DVD in which explains his plan to have one priest in the other three parishes (Chesham, Chesham Bois and Little Chalfont) in the not too distant future.
- In the film, he also talks about the comprehensive report made by a strategy group established to look at this specific challenge. St Joseph's was represented by Mike Carney and Margaret Harwood. The group's recommendations include having a full time administrator for the Pastoral Area and keeping all of the existing Mass Centres open with at least one Mass every Sunday. The Bishop reinforces this positive fact in his address.
- Here in St Joseph's we will not be affected by this as much as the other parishes. However, as part of the Pastoral Area it is good for us to know what is happening and what is involved in taking things forward. Fr John commented that he would like the Carmelites to be involved somehow; he feels they have a historical responsibility. There is a new priest in Chesham Bois, Fr Graham Platt. He is quickly finding his feet and trying to build up the community there.
- The intention is that Bishop Peter's film will be shown in all four parishes after all Masses on the same weekend, most likely before Christmas.

5. Carmelite Provincial Chapter in May 2014 - Fr John McGowan

- The Carmelite Provincial Chapter will take place from 5th to 17th May 2014. During this time a new Provincial and Provincial Council will be elected. Priors will also be elected as part of this process. This is a time of change and the Carmelites are looking at the possibility of having to close houses as the

numbers of priests/friars are reducing. Ahead of the Chapter all the houses in the province will be looked at. This can be an unsettling time because we don't know if we will have any personnel changes. We will need to arrange cover for Masses during the two weekends of the Chapter.

6. Christmas Mass Times - Fr John McGowan/John Bates

- Refer to "2013 Christmas Card with Mass Times" for details of all the Masses over the Christmas and New Year period. This will be distributed with the Newsletter at all Churches the weekend of 14th/15th December. These details will also be posted on the website and Church notice boards.
- The Christmas Tree and Crib will be erected in St Joseph's Church before the Carol Service which takes place on Sunday, 15th December.
- The 5pm Children's Mass on Christmas Eve will be handled the same as last year. To prevent overcrowding and potential health & safety issues, only children and their families will be asked to attend this Mass. A note about this will be included in the Newsletter every Sunday in Advent. We will need 5/6 stewards for this Mass – this will be organised by John Bates.

7. Name Change Consultation - St Joseph's Gerrards Cross versus St Joseph's Chalfont St Peter - Fr John McGowan

- Since he first came in 1982, Fr John has wondered why our Church is known as St Joseph's Gerrards Cross when it is in fact located in the village of Chalfont St Peter. Why are we not St Joseph's Chalfont St Peter? Having debated this query a while, the Council concluded that we will leave things as they are. We will continue to refer to ourselves as St Joseph's, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross as we currently do in our letterhead. It was highlighted that some automatic postal address searches show the Priory/Church as Bull Lane rather than Austenwood Common; however it was agreed that the most important consideration is that our post, deliveries, etc arrive at the correct post code SL9 8RY.

8. Catholic Schooling for Our Children - Fr John McGowan

- Most of our children who leave St Joseph's Primary school don't go on to a Catholic secondary school. This is something to be concerned about and Fr John really needs help with tackling this. We believe that our young people should have a Catholic education.
- The Council discussed the following two questions: What can we do to make it easier for parents to send their children to Catholic schools? What can we do to connect with those not attending Catholic schools?
- Our catchment secondary school is St Michael's in High Wycombe. Fr John plans to meet with the Chair of Governors to explore what we can do in this area. St Joan of Arc in Rickmansworth is another, more popular, alternative – this is out of Diocese and out of County.

9. Baptismal Programme Update - Christine Cornwell

- Refer to "Report for NORES BAPTISM MTG 31 10 2013" distributed ahead of the meeting.
- Since the new programme was piloted in June, 22 children have been baptised whose parents have participated in the formation sessions. There are another five children to be baptised in December.
- At the end of October the Diocese hosted a meeting in Luton at which Veronica Murphy from the Archdiocese of Liverpool spoke, accompanied by her colleague Pat. The intention was to hopefully launch this new programme across our Diocese but only 16 parishes were represented. A good number of our team attended and Christine was invited to talk about our experience implementing this new approach, in particular how we handle the Enquiry Stage.
- What we are doing is working very well and we are gradually getting more people involved in doing the formation. We still need to address the follow-up stage after baptism and a small group from within Team Baptism are getting together to look at this. One idea is to have a Jesse Tree activity for Advent –

too late for this year but something to consider for next year. The other idea is to invite all the families to special 9am Mass on the Feast of the Holy Family or the Feast of Baptism of the Lord in January and have refreshments and cake afterwards. Fr John thought this was a good idea and agreed that we can do this on the Feast of the Holy Family.

- Everyone present thanked Christine for the wonderful job she is doing on this.

10. Health & Safety Update - John Bates

- Health & Safety should be on the Parish Council agenda as a standing item going forward.
- We need to display our health & safety policy in all our churches. John Bates, John Forte and Fr Bob are working together to produce the policy, ensure it is documented and displayed as required.
- There needs to be clear instructions in each church about what to do in case of accidents. This is in hand.
- In the area of safeguarding, Ros is working to determine which Eucharistic Ministers are taking communion to people outside of church. In future only these Eucharistic Ministers will require a DBS check. This is a step change from the previous mandate by the Bishops of England and Wales.

11. Finance Committee Update - John Forte

- The good news is that we are in credit; the bad news is that had it not been for a very generous legacy we would still be in the red. We are still not taking enough via our weekly offering plate to cover our costs. Legacies are one-offs and should really be taken out of day-to-day running costs. Tony de Vletter is to liaise with Hugh Davies from the Diocese to see if we can open a special account. With the centenary, we do now have special circumstances where we will need a lot of money and there is no reason we shouldn't ring fence large donations such as legacies for special projects.
- All our maintenance work is now up-to-date and we have caught up on our backlog. We have a good maintenance programme and procedures in place. Our only major worry is the roof on the church in Denham. This has had a temporary repair as we cannot work on it now until the spring. We have had this problem every year for about five years now so it does need attention. We plan to write to Hugh Davies for his suggestions on permanent repair.
- Our heating in St Joseph's Church seems to be working well. We had a good reaction to our appeal to keep the main doors shut and our thanks to the Mass Representatives for their efforts in this area. We upgraded the radiators thanks to Events Team funding and this has significantly improved the heating.
- We have our gift aid well under control, but our records still need to be checked regularly. When John Forte became chair of the Finance Committee, our rate of gift aid donations was 30%. Thanks to the efforts of Paul Smith we are now up to 67% which is slightly over the diocesan average of 63.5%. The annual Gift Aid Appeal will take place sometime next February.
- In response to a query it was confirmed that if we took the legacy out of our accounts we would be running at a deficit of circa £10k for the year. We really need to receive approximately £1k more a month in our weekly collections to keep things on an even keel.

12. Matters Arising from Activity Group Reports - John Bates/All

- Refer to the following reports received for information about each Activity Group:
 - "Evangelisation Report Nov13"
 - "Liturgy and Church Report Nov13"
- **Evangelisation** – Next meeting on 9th December where Parish Council Representative will be elected.
- **Social** – (1) The **Cool Beanz** event in October had a disappointing amount of support from the parish. The band themselves attracted 25 people and a further 25 came along from the parish. The result is that the event just about broke even. (2) The **Pub Quiz** went very well, had a lovely

atmosphere and people seemed to really enjoy the evening. The profit from this is still to be confirmed.
(3) We now have 500 bottles of **Apple Juice** thanks to the apples in the orchard being picked by some Confirmation candidates in half-term. These will be on sale after Mass this coming weekend for £2.50.
(4) Quite a few **members of the Events Team are stepping down** after several years' effort. Fr John is working on finding new people to join the team which now needs new ideas and new energy.

- **Liturgy & Church** – Michael & Kate Hargreaves have retired from organising the Eucharistic Ministers after 10 years of service. Fr John/Joan to write a thank you letter for all their efforts.

13. Review of Action Items - John Bates

- **Action Items** – Reviewed and updated action list – see *Parish Council Action Items (as at 26Nov13)*.
- **A10 re: Catechesis** – Prepared list of various groups and current training offered. Need to meet with Fr John and Fr Bob to decide what else is needed.
- **A82 re: Paddy Deacy's Grave** – This is ongoing but will be picked up as part of centenary plans if no further progress can be made in the meantime.
- **A89 re: Road Markings and Parking for Priory Road** – Still getting no response from the Council. As we will have to talk to them about our plans for the centenary we may be able to incorporate this issue into our discussions with both county and district councils.
- **A128 re: Legacy Chalfont Fair Equipment** – There has been an exchange of emails about this. Next step is to organise a meeting between Tony Hetherington, Ed Poole and Fr John. It was suggested that a spare key for the Parish side of the Terrapin should be kept at the Priory.
- **A133 re: Tidying Up Narthex** – Looked at the Narthex and prepared a report with findings. Now need to discuss this with Fr John.
- **A137 re: New Collection Bags** – John Forte showed a prototype of a new bag frame that would be much better than what we currently have. Needs to work with Ros on designing a custom-made bag for the frame with a suitable zip location.
- **A140 re: Reading Ministry and Handbook** – Compiled various source materials for handbook which now need to be consolidated and refined.
- **A142 re: Council Representative for Pastoral Activity Group** – This will be discussed at a meeting before Christmas but they are not yet in a position to elect someone as there have other pressing roles (secretary and treasurer) to fill within SVP as a matter of urgency.
- **A143 re: Council Representative for Evangelisation Activity Group** – Election will take place at the next group meeting which will be on 9th December.
- **A144 re: Council Representative for Mass Representatives** – Mike Carney was elected to the Council on behalf of the Mass Representatives.
- **A145 re: Larger Format Weekly Newsletter** – December, January and February newsletters have just been delivered so cannot change anything before then. Now received samples and costs for larger, A3 sized newsletter but still need to assess the additional production time. Not a problem to create a new layout to include all the necessary information in a larger, easy to read font size.

14. Any Other Business - John Bates

- **Fr John McGowan** – In the closing stages of appointing a new Choir Director, a lady called Heather Henry. The intention is to combine the current 11am choirs under Heather's leadership. The new Pastoral Advisory Group comprising Fr John, Fr Bob, Charles Whitehead, Sally Taylor and Joan Barham met for the first time. More details to follow in due course.
- **Mike Carney** – Requested that Ministry of the Sick be discussed at a future meeting. Decided that this should be put on the agenda for the Pastoral Advisory Group.
- **Christine Cornwell** – Highlighted that there seems to be several sets of tea, coffee, sugar, etc in the First Committee Room, all labeled for use by different groups. Understanding was that when we became

a Fairtrade Parish we would have the one source of fairtrade supplies that everyone could share. The Council re-iterated that this was the decision made and there should only be one set of supplies in the kitchenette for use by all groups.

- **All** – Everyone present was united in their sincere thanks and appreciation of Charles Whitehead for his time as chairman and agreed that we should mark his service in some way. John Bates was welcomed as the new chairman and wished a successful and long tenure. With John's appointment the position of Vice-Chair is now open; Fr John to appoint a new person to this role.

15. Closing Remarks - John Bates

- The meeting was closed with prayer from Fr Bob.
- Next meetings are Tuesday, 21st January 2014 and Tuesday, 11th March 2014.