

Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Llay and Christ the King, Rossett

Minutes of the Parish Advisory Meeting

30 June 2016 at 7.45 pm

Parish Hall of St Francis of Assisi

Present: Canon DB Lordan, Parish Priest; Helen Zammit-Willson, Chair; Geraldine Downing, Parish Secretary; David Davies; Liz Davies; John Fernee; Vera Jones; Alan McDonald; Jennifer Parry; Jean Partington; Ashley Rogers; Carol Wareing; Barrie Williams; Carol Williams

Item 1 - Opening Prayer

Canon Lordan opened the meeting with prayer.

Item 2 – Apologies

Apologies were received from

Eileen Chandler; Roger Chandler; Eileen Evans; Christopher Graffius; John Hogan; Kathy Home; Oonagh Thompson; Val Tomlinson

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 4 February 2016 were accepted as a true record.

Item 4 - Action points from last meeting

No action points were given at the last meeting.

Item 5 – Update on parish finances

Ashley Rogers and David Davies provided “Extracts from the 2015-2016 Parish Accounts”, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, and can be found on page 5.

This synopsis clearly shows that the parish financial position is strong. As at 5 April 2016 the parish holdings are £139,948.00.

The Parish Financial Statement and the simplified statement presented to the meeting, records all sources of income under its own title, this includes the income from the Solar Panels. In this way it is easy to locate a source and amount for the period required. John Fernee asked why the income differed for the hall and the presbytery during the same period. It was explained that the meter readings are separate and carried out at different times.

Due to the balance of the parish account, it was asked if the parish intended to deposit a further sum with the Diocesan Internal Deposit Scheme (DIDS). This was confirmed but explained that this would be considered at the end of the year as is the practise. Ashley reminded the meeting of the purpose of DIDS, the help it provides to the Diocese and how the interest is shared between parish and Diocese.

Thanks was also given to David Davies for his assistance in preparing the Annual Parish Financial Statement for 2015/2016.

Item 6 – 100 Club Update

Roger provided the following information.

As at 30 June 2016:

Membership	86
Membership Receipts	£1125
Christmas Gift Receipts	£180
Total Receipts	£1305

Prizes Awarded	£180
Prize Money for July 2016 to April 2017	£660
Total Expenditure	£840

Expected minimum donation to Parish 2016/17 **£660**
(Assumes further membership Christmas 2016)

The meeting was advised that Andrew Darby is going to the World Youth Day in Kraków and his costs have been met from the proceeds of the 100 Club. Thanks is given to Roger for all his efforts in promoting and running the Club.

Item 7 – Update from the Property Group

John Fernee advised the meeting that the following work had been carried out

- Llay flooring bubbles repaired by contractor
- Hall gutter blockage removed
- Hall kitchen paint touched up
- Loose floor tile fixed in Rossett church
- Ceiling plaster repaired in Llay church toilet

The next job in the pipeline is the trimming of the hedges.

Item 8 – Update on Sumy

John Fernee reported the following

Sale of Cakes in February raised about £1,650 (\$US 2,300) for Valentina. This included some £320 from sales of Steve Williamson's book, and was handed to Fr Voitek after Easter. Valentina is quite weak, suffers from high blood pressure, and receives daily injections by a visiting nurse. She is now about 58, and has been bedbound since the age of 14.

Funds from our Sumy account plus individual donations from parishioners were provided for:

1. Andrei Tkachenko (Shostka) aged 23, - about £1,100 was donated to pay for an operation to remove his brain tumour. His mother Luda has visited our parish. The tumour was very deep rooted and subsequent laser treatment for 6 weeks was also needed. He is now at home, nursed by his mother, and recently his health started to improve.

2. Natasha Ostrovskaya (Sumy) - about £600 was donated to pay for an operation to remove her lung tumour. She has visited our parish. After her operation, she is now undergoing a 4 stage chemotherapy programme.

Item 9 - Social and Fund Raising Update

As reported to the PAC in July 2014 and again at the AGM on 21 Sept 2014, there is no formal Social and Fund Raising Group. Lorraine Pizzey continues to provide hospitality at a variety of functions within the parish and thanks was extended to her by Canon Lordan for all that she does.

It was agreed that due to the parish financial position, parish fund raising events are unnecessary. It was acknowledged that social events in the parish do help to nurture the parish community but the organisation and execution of these events calls for more than one or two persons willing to do the work and, most importantly, for parishioners to support them by their attendance.

Parishioners are encouraged to step forward if they have an idea for a social event and are willing, with help, to organise it, without fearing that they will be called upon time after time to provide another.

Item 10 – Parish Future

Following the issue of the Bishop's Pastoral Letter for the Second Sunday in Easter 2016, Into The Future 1 dated September 2015 and Into The Future 2 dated 23 March 2016, parishioners raised a number of questions concerning the information and decisions contained in these documents. Parishioners wanted to understand why consideration was being given to closing the church in Llay and building another in Rossett, when to many it seemed more reasonable to close the church in Rossett and continue with the church in Llay. A few parishioners have written to the Bishop stating their views and asking for clarification but of those who attended this evening's meeting and had written to the bishop they did not feel that the replies they had received addressed their concerns.

Prior to this evening's meeting, Helen contacted Canon Lordan and asked if he could provide

- The background on the decision i.e. the rationale
- What the final decision will depend on
- Any timeline for making the decision
- Will there be any consultation with the parishioners.

Canon informed the meeting that he had passed the questions to the Bishop who had kindly written back with an explanation. This explanation was given to everyone and can be found on pages 6 & 7. However, the meeting felt that the Bishop's response did not answer the questions they had raised but reiterated information given in the documents mentioned above and with which the parishioners were familiar.

Canon reminded the meeting that the Bishop had decided on an “**Appraisal** (my emphasis) for a new church build in Rossett and with the closure of Llay” The parishioners stated that they understood this point but what they wanted to know now were specifics e.g. what will be the criteria of the appraisal; why even consider closing a church in Llay and incurring costs to build a new one such a short distance away. Canon also reminded everyone that the Church is not a democracy and of the duties and responsibilities of the Bishop. Everyone agreed with this and stated they understood, however they continued to feel that they needed to understand more fully the reasoning and also the process that will be implemented. With this in mind it was proposed and accepted that Helen should contact the Bishop and ask for a meeting between him and 4 parishioners to discuss the specific points that are concerning the parishioners. The findings will then be presented to the parish at the AGM.

ACTION POINT: Helen to contact Bishop

Item 11 – Arrangements for AGM

The AGM will be held on Sunday 18 September 2016 after the 11.00am Mass at Llay.

ACTION POINT: Geraldine to prepare a report for the AGM

Item 12 – AOB

Parish Day Out: John Fernee advised that the parish SVP Conference is now 1 year old and proposes to organise a parish day out on Wednesday 27 July 2016. Details will be published shortly.

Lampedusa Cross: Canon advised that the Cathedral has received a Lampedusa Cross from CAFOD which we are all invited to go and see. The Lampedusa Cross was crafted by an Italian carpenter as a symbol of hope for the survivors of a shipwreck three years ago. The boat was filled with over 500 refugees who were fleeing Eritrea and Somalia. On route, the boat caught fire, capsized and sank; 311 people perished. Inhabitants of Lampedusa helped save the lives of 155 people. The carpenter collected the broken pieces of wood that had washed ashore and made the Lampedusa Cross. He offered a handmade cross to each of the survivors as a sign of hope, solidarity and love.

More information can be found on the Diocesan website.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 20 October 2016 after the 7.00pm Mass in Llay

Extracts From 2015-2016 Parish Accounts

Funds		6 April 2015	5 April 2016
○ Current (No.1 Account)		33,506	59,561
○ Diocesan Internal Deposit Scheme (DIDs)		80,111	80,187
○ Business Reserve Account		9,611	
○ Sumy Account		4,395	
○ Petty Cash		233	200
○ TOTAL		127,856	139,948
○ NET ASSETS		127,856	139,948
○ INCREASE IN FUNDS			12,092

NOTES		UNRESTRICTED INCOME	
○ Sumy Account closed		○ Offertories	45,072
○ Building Account closed		○ Tax Refund	8,639
Fundraising		○ Fundraising	2,662
○ 100 Club	1,425	○ Solar Panel Income	3,889
○ Christmas Draw	648	○ Other Income	4,236
○ Mile of Pennies	589		64,499
Bank Interest		UNRESTRICTED EXPENDITURE	
○ DIDs	76	○ Lay employees	-5,047
○ Business Reserve	4	○ Clergy costs	-6,497
Solar Panel Income		○ Travel & Hospitality	-1,173
○ Hall	1,817	○ Office expenses	-2,703
○ Presbytery	2,072	○ Establishment costs	-8,716
Other Income		○ Property costs	-6,343
○ Bishops Fund	304	○ Liturgical & Pastoral costs	-3,852
○ Church Students	305	○ Diocesan levy	-11,111
○ Poor Parishes	17	○ Other costs	-5,912
○ Donations	206		-51,353
○ Votive Offerings	750	RESTRICTED INCOME	
○ Repository	1,030	○ N & D Collections	4,672
○ Newspapers	1,064	○ Restricted Parish Collections	796
○ Books	218	○ Sumy	2,882
○ Hall	120	○ Nightingale House	1,550
		○ Other	8
			9,909
Sumy income in year		RESTRICTED EXPENDITURE	
○ Soup Supper	1,149	○ N & D Collections	-4,408
○ Book Sales	328	○ Restricted Parish collections	-796
○ Cake Stall	1,405	○ Sumy	-4,200
Sumy Expenditure in year	-4,200	○ Nightingale House	-1,550
		○ Other	-8
Sumy Carry Forward			-10,962
to 2016-2017	3,187	NET TOTAL INCOME	
			12,092
Liabilities			
Due to Parish Priest (Estimate)	-4,750		

For the Parish of Llay and Rossett Parish Meeting 30th June 2016

Firstly my thanks for the parishioners concern and interest in the future of the Diocese.

Secondly the rationale for all of the proposed changes and structuring can be found in *Into the Future 1* and 2, but to recap they are:

1. The basis of the church- its unity and catholicity is the diocese which is divided into smaller areas of pastoral responsibility, viz. parishes, but the Church is not congregational;
2. At the very centre of our faith is the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries at which Holy Communion is received;
3. At best one Sunday Mass is celebrated in each parish;
4. The desire of the Catholic community is for Sunday Mass and there is a commitment to it even if it comes at some cost
5. The overall plan is to provide Mass within a reasonable distance for the greatest number of parishioners who in turn are desirous of the greatest number of people across the Diocese having the opportunity to get to a Mass.
6. Alternative services, e.g. 'Word and Communion' are no longer considered a realistic or appropriate alternative especially in urban/suburban areas where most people are able to get to Mass at another church without great inconvenience.

Thirdly the overall model of the church as we have it at the moment is not working and has not worked for two generations, the *status quo* cannot be maintained.

Fourthly as bishop I am confident I can ensure Mass is celebrated in each parish of the Diocese every Sunday of the year if there is a reduction in the number of churches and they are distributed through the territory of the Diocese in a more equitable way.

Fifthly already people choose where and at which time they participate at Mass, as suits them and disregarding historic parish boundaries and membership of this or that parish, i.e. they opt out of their own parish in favour of some other either on an occasional basis or permanently.

Sixthly, specifically for your parish: 1. The provision of three Sunday Masses between two churches less than three miles apart for 206 participants (2015 Mass Count figures) is unsustainable;
2. Neither existing church has a capacity of 200 plus;
3. The current alternatives which are already chosen by some, are
Wrexham – Cathedral or St. Anne's, Saltney, Buckley.

Seventhly a way forward would be to have a single church in the parish that had sufficient capacity and was nearer equidistant from the other parishes.

Eighthly any new development would be subject to a rigorous feasibility study and appraisal which would take into account these and any other relevant factors, e.g. Local Development Plan (LDP) projections for development and growth (this current shows less than 1% for the parish), Census figure trends (these currently show a declining population in the parish). For any new church building project the aim would be

that it is (financially) cost neutral thereby not loading the Parish with a debt. Any 'new build' would be a huge statement about the optimism of and commitment to the Catholic Church in the locality as well as providing the community with a very significant focal point.

Ninthly a priest or priests will be required to service HMP Berwyn when it opens in a year's time, thereby adding to the demand upon the presbyterate for a group of Catholics who by definition cannot choose where or when to go to Mass. The Catholic population of the prison is projected to be as large as that of this parish.

Tenthly I can offer no accurate timeline for these changes as I know not the longevity, health or length of service of any of our priests; all I know is that when Cn Lordan ceases to be Parish Priest for whatever reason, not only will I not be able to replace him with another resident priest I don't know that I will have a priest able to celebrate Mass in the Parish at all, thus the need to make changes here as well as elsewhere in the Diocese to enable one priest to celebrate Mass in two or three Parishes each Sunday.

Eleventhly the current ratio of priests to people and especially to Mass attendees indicates we have no shortage of priests compared to the rest of the world or even Europe. Part of the issue is that we have created too many parishes that were even too small in the first place and divided them further with chapels-of-ease or daughter churches.

Penultimately, if the parishioners are able to come up with (an) alternative scheme(s) that resolve all of the problems annunciated for the Parish and the Diocese I would be delighted to know them and enter into a meaningful consultation.

Finally three of points I would like you to reflect upon and answer at least to yourselves:

Pope Francis has through his Pontificate said that churches should have open doors, literally as well as in terms of welcoming, that they be used as places of quiet prayer and evangelisation as well as of liturgical worship. How do you individually respond to that request and invitation?

Saint Jerome said, 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ' or 'The person who does not know the Gospel does not know Jesus;' I put to the Diocese a challenge of reading Saint Luke's Gospel from beginning to end during Eastertide. Did you accept that challenge and complete it?

What strategy are you developing as a parish community to evangelise and catechise, and / or to re-evangelise those Catholics who no longer take their place in the parish? Or is the parish Mass attendance to continue to decline as it has by approximately 150 since the year 2000.

† Peter

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