

THE SACRED HEART & ST MARGARET MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH, DEREHAM

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Minutes of a General Meeting of the Parish held on Wednesday 15th October 2025 at 1730 hours in the Emmaus Room

Chairman: Rex Baker

There were 14 parishioners in attendance.

The meeting commenced with an opening prayer by Fr Jay.

1. Apologies and Welcome.

Apologies were received from Kate Meehan of the Youth Club, Sonia Oberding and Jo Hurst of the Gardening Club, Rachel and Kevin Pugh (RCIA), Donal Hannon, Richard May and Lorraine Bugeja of the Social Team. Notes read out by representatives or received from them by the Secretary (except from the Social Team).

2. To receive the minutes of the Parish Meeting held 25 June 2025.

The minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 25th June 2025 were reviewed by the Chairman.

3. Parish Priest's Reflections/Report.

- a. The Departed. Father Jay mentioned the loss of many parishioners and that we remember them and their families.
- b. Parish Functions. We have some gaps in positions within the Parish, which are being gradually filled. He thanked Paul McIntee for helping with this matter by filling several posts.
- c. Candle Stand. The new Votive Candle Stand is running well and proving easy to maintain. The cleaning of the glass candle holders by the supplier is free, but the carriage is not. Paul McIntee said that there are 2 suppliers of candles for the candle stand and therefore we might be able to get replacement candles cheaper than at present (600 candles for £120). One month's donations to the Votive Candle Stand came to £109, so it might actually more than cover its costs.
- d. Marian Garden. The new Marian Garden is progressing. A self binding gravel pathway and activity area has been made and the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto is soon to be in place, built for free by a parishioner as a donation to the church. (Note: has been installed since the meeting).
- e. Spiritual Life. Father Jay stressed that our spiritual life is the most important and must take precedence over the day to day administrative requirements of the Parish. He advised that in the forthcoming months Parish amalgamations will be happening, which may or may not affect us.

4. Parish Life:

a. Financial Matters

- (1) Parish Accounts – Report of the Parish Treasurer. Paul McIntee provided printouts of the current state of Parish income and expenditure and explained that 3 quarters into the year we are at less than 60% of our budget expenditure, so there is a good chance of ending the year below the projected shortfall of £4,810 and that when Gift Aid donations and Alive in Faith expenses for the church's decorating and flooring are reclaimed the situation will look even more positive. There is also still money in the Alive in Faith pot for future projects.
- (2) Alive in Faith Projects.
 - (b) Resurfacing of the Presbytery Garden. Father Jay arranged for the firm Vastrad to put in a path around the Presbytery lawn and make a large activities area of self binding gravel, at a cost of £3,574, which had been approved by the Finance Committee. The work has been done and the cost paid out of church funds initially, but we will submit a retrospective application for Alive in Faith funding of the project to the Diocese, which we expect to be approved. The cost should therefore be reclaimed to our church bank account in due course.

b. Spiritual Life Matters

- (1) Music Group (Mass Hymns). Judy Reid reported the following:
 - (a) The highlight of the year was the Centenary Celebration. Musically the congregation sang really well, with great fervour and joy and lustily.
 - (b) The organ, however, was not good in the Centenary Mass. Some notes were sticking, even though the key was releasing. Then half way through, the main stop was cutting in and out, and the last hymn I had to play staccato. On 22 Sep 25 Boggis came and tuned the organ. Paul and I asked quite a few questions, but the answers were rather vague. We then stayed upstairs while it was tuned. On 24 Sep 25 Richard Bower, St Nicholas' organist and an organ builder and restorer, came and looked at it. Father Jay had met with Nick Walmsely and he had helped arrange this. He stayed over 3 hours and looked at the organ in great detail, while Paul and I asked many questions and learned a lot about the mechanics. He was wonderful, but what became apparent was that the mechanism needs restoration. The longer it is played continuously, i.e. as in a service, the more problems will occur, due to worn out mechanics and humidity. A full restoration would be very expensive, many thousands of pounds, so electric keyboard with good quality church organ sound is in place.
 - (c) I think the music has gone quite well this year. Holy Week, Easter and Christmas all went well. We continue to share the choosing of the hymns.
 - (d) Judy welcomed Paul McIntee as a Cantor and thanked him. Judy also thanked Kathleen, William and Mark (who is not even a parishioner), for all their contributions to the music, all the parishioners, who sing well and give plenty of feedback, usually complementary, which is very helpful and Father Jay, who is very supportive of the music.
 - (e) Father Jay asked Judy if the Our Father could be sung in Latin at the 6pm Mass on occasion. Judy said that would be no problem.

- (2) Lectors/Eucharistic Ministers.
 - (a) Gerry McCarthy reported that every Mass is being served well and everyone on the rota is being very flexible.
 - (b) Gerry said we still need more volunteers as readers and especially Eucharistic Ministers.
- (3) Catechists. Robbie Meehan summarised her activities as follows:
 - (a) Children's Liturgy. Liturgy sessions at 11 am Mass are being attended by 6 – 10 children.
 - (b) First Communion. Robbie said 12 children started First Communion study.
 - (c) Confirmation. Robbie said 8 people have started Confirmation Sessions. Deacon Rick is helping with the Confirmation preparation sessions.
 - (d) Altar Servers. Altar Servers are growing in number (22 now) and there meetings every 2 weeks. Robbie hopes to give them their medals on Boxing Day.
- (4) Baptisms. Robbie said a baptism is coming up on 27 Oct 25.
- (5) Funerals. Father Jay said that as direct cremations are becoming more common, he is not expecting so many funerals in the future.
- (6) RCIA. Rachel Pugh and Kevin Pugh are now taking the RCIA course, with assistance from Gerry McCarthy and Andrew Bell. Andrews has been doing a sterling job of providing the technical support regarding the projector for the videos.

Five potential aspirants have attended regularly and 7 parishioners have also attended regularly, in addition to Kevin and Rachel. The first six weeks of introductory sessions to the RCIA course ended 14 Oct 25, on the topic; Gift of Faith. There will be a break until the course resumes on 11 Nov 25; Why do we need signs and sacraments?; 18 Nov 25 - The Meaning, the Presence, the Sacrifice of the Mass; 23 Nov 25 - Delving more deeply into the Mass, Deacon Rick; 29 Nov 25, Saturday, 11 - 3pm - Advent Retreat with Deacon Rick and team (bring a packed lunch, sign up at the back).

Rachel and Kevin thank all who have supported and participated in the course so far. These sessions are open to everyone 6.30 pm Tuesdays.
- (7) Flower Arrangers Volunteers Rota. Jan Duffield said there are currently 4 flower arrangers and it is adequate at the moment.
- (8) Church Cleaning Rota. Catherine Perkins said we have 12 people now on a 6 week rota and is working well. They are finding cleaning of the new Votive Candle Stand quite easy.
- (9) Collection Counters Rota. Rex said there are 4 groups of 2 counters. It is adequate, but another group of 2 would be ideal.

c. Communal/Social Matters

- (1) Safeguarding. Paul McIntee stated that the first training course in Newmarket was coming up this weekend. Paul will be reviewing current personnel approvals in the

next few months. The Diocese is carrying of a review on who in what positions in a Parish will need a DBS check.

- (2) St Vincent De Paul Society. Martin Sanderson said there had been no request from within the parish and so they are concentrating on helping prisoners just released from prison, providing clothing (from charity shops) and rough sleeping equipment in case they do not have any accommodation. Not just helping Catholic prisoners.
- (3) Social. No members of the Social Team were present and no submissions had been received at the time of the meeting. Sec notes below:
 - (a) Centenary Mass. On Fri 25 Jul 25 we celebrated our Sacred Heart Church's 100th Anniversary of its consecration and dedication (21st July 1925). There was a beautiful Mass in the church, taken by Bishop Peter and supported by 5 priests, followed by the blessing of our statue of Our lady of Lourdes by Bishop Peter, an excellent buffet and then music and dancing in the Presbytery garden, all in very warm summer weather. The celebration, thanks to Our Lord's grace and all the hard work and time of dedicated volunteers, was a tremendous success and thanks are given to all who helped with preparations and took part in the celebrations on the day.
 - (b) Christmas Party. Donal Hannon subsequently emailed that the Christmas Party this year is still scheduled to be at the same venue as last year, Yaxham Village Hall, on 21 Dec 25, but Donal thinks we should have a public Parish meeting to discuss it.
- (4) Youth Club. Kate Meehan submitted a report, via Robbie:
 - (a) Kate will be attending the Wymondham Youth Group to observe how they work and will start our own Youth Group after that. She is planning to hold monthly events.
- (5) Gardening Club.
 - (a) Jo Hurst emailed a suggestion for water butts to be installed in the Presbytery garden and that the lawn needs cutting.
 - (b) Rex suggested we should fill the gap in the Presbytery hedge, lest someone falls through and is injured and we are potentially liable. Either mature shrubs or a solid barrier should be considered with some urgency.
- (6) Pastoral Parish Council. Father Jay said the PPC has been delayed pending the Diocese priestly restructuring. He said that is should be by appointment at first and then by election later. It will probably be implemented next year. Rex said the Council should elect the Chairman at least, but Father Jay considered it to be best by appointment, initially. The Council should consist attendees of each weekend Mass time (so from 1800, 0900 and 1100 hours Masses) and leaders of Parish groups. The PPC would probably have a quarterly meeting, with an Annual General Meeting (AGM). Paul pointed out that the Bishop has the remit to direct how PPCs are formed in his Diocese and Bishop Peter is still considering the matter.
- (7) Restructuring of Parish Committees. Parish committees are being reformulated, e.g. introduction of Health and Safety and Projects teams.

5. Other Matters. There were no further matters raised.

The meeting was closed with a prayer at 1930 hours.