

THE SACRED HEART & ST MARGARET MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH, DEREHAM

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish held on Wednesday, 15th May 2024

19 parishioners were present.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm with an opening prayer by Fr. Jay.
Kevin Pugh in the Chair.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Rex Baker, Stephen Smith & Kathleen Edmunds.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 6th September 2023 were received.

3. **Parish Priest's Reflections**

Fr. Jay spoke on the theme of the Parish Vision: *Mitte Rete (Cast the Net)*, in which we were encouraged to widen our horizons beyond our own small parish boundaries and to avoid falling into a 'congregational mindset.' We are enabled to explore other parishes within our Deanery and by our words and actions, to be an active and good influence to others outside our parish. *Cast the Net*: the net of compassion, love and tolerance; to share the net of the Sacred Heart, the net of our parish. But not only to share with others, but also to learn from others; to have the heart ready to share and connect with others. As we represent the parish, we have to be conscious of our words and actions in welcoming others.

Referring to the point about attending other parishes within the Deanery, some concerns were raised about there being only one Mass on Holy Days of Obligation and that the time of the Mass, at 1730, was felt to be unsuitable. Fr. Jay responded that liturgically, 1900 was the beginning of the next day's liturgy. He referred to the fact that the Diocese encouraged parishioners to attend other parishes for Mass and he supported this approach. However, Fr. Jay said he would look at a compromise with a view to, say, a Mass time of 1830. A suggestion was put from the floor that a survey of parishioners on the matter might be helpful.

4. **Parish Life**

A. Financial Matters

- (i) **Parish Accounts** – The Treasurer's report was received and it was noted. An increase in Offertory and Gift-Aided receipts was welcomed. Parishioners were encouraged to sign-up to the Gift-Aid scheme if they were tax payers.

In regard to the Parish Finance Committee membership, Fr. Jay informed the meeting that the Treasurer had given notice of his intention to stand down from this post at the end of the year and suitable replacement for this important parish role was being sought. In addition, Eleanor Teale had left the Committee. A prospective new member for the Committee was Michael Manley. Catherine Perkins volunteered to rejoin the Committee to fill the vacancy left by Eleanor Teale.

- (ii) **Alive in Faith Projects** – It was reported that there was some £25,000 remaining in the parish's projects fund. Much of this was being allocated

towards the replacement of the church heating system, plus church redecoration (including refurbishment of the windows) and flooring. Following extensive investigations of types of heating systems, the Parish Finance Committee had concluded that the most feasible and cost-effective solution was to replace the heaters with a like-for-like system. It was also noted that the refurbishment of the church windows would also meet an outstanding requirement of the parish's quinquennial survey report.

Of the completed Alive in Faith projects, the re-surfacing of the car park entrance was felt to have been very successful. The damaged boundary wall had been repaired, albeit to a somewhat unattractive finish visually. A general tidying-up of the area around the wall was to be carried out. The church guttering had been inspected and deemed safe but written confirmation of this was awaited. Finally, the refurbishment of the windows to the sacristy and church porch had been completed.

Referring to car parking, the importance of the one-way parking system to ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles was highlighted and the need for a volunteer to act as a parking attendant at larger services and funerals at the church was raised, since there was often congestion meaning that any emergency vehicles needing to access the church at such times would not be able to do so.

B. Spiritual Life Matters

- (i) **Music** – Judy Reid advised that Ann Murkin had offered to sing the Psalm at occasional Masses. It was also proposed to provide a singing practice before the 6pm and 11am Masses on a monthly basis or so. She expressed her pleasure at being invited to play for the First Communion Mass and that playing at the children's Stations of the Cross had been a very special occasion for her. Finally, the Eucharist Prayer number on the hymn board was to be included again after Pentecost.
- (ii) **Lectors / Eucharistic Ministers** – Gerry McCarthy explained that there were some new volunteers but more were needed, especially Eucharistic Ministers. Until numbers increased, there would be occasions requiring volunteers to multi-task as Readers/Ministers. He suggested it would be nice to have some volunteers of other nationalities to join the Readers Rota, and even to read in their own languages. Fr. Jay advised that efforts in this regard were being made.

Fr. Jay drew attention to the new RSV Lectionary which was being introduced later in the year. This would involve two separate books, one for the Gospels and one for the Readings. The books had been ordered and would come into use at Advent.
- (iii) **Church Florists** – Janice Duffield reported that currently there were three members of the team working well at the moment but more volunteers would be very welcome.
- (iv) **Cleaners** – Catherine Perkins advised that there were sufficient volunteers at present working to a seven-week rota. However, she asked for people using the kitchen to be very careful about what they disposed of in the kitchen sink, following the discovery of candle wax deposits in the sink and blocking the waste pipe that week.
- (v) **Church's Year of Prayer** – Sr Camilla highlighted that as part of the preparations for the Church Jubilee and the Year of Prayer, a booklet entitled 'Teach us to Pray' had been produced. Sr Camilla offered to share this in the

parish. She also offered to help with any initiative the parish might like to do in this regard. She would provide a link to the theme for the parish bulletin.

C. Communal / Social Matters

- (i) **Safeguarding** – Fr Jay informed the meeting that Kathleen Edmunds was standing down as the Parish Safeguarding Representative and that a prospective successor to this important parish role had been found.
- (ii) **St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)** – Deacon Martin gave an update on the continuing work of the SVP within the Parish. It was hoped to have another Mass for the Sick and a suggestion from the floor was made that it be opened up to the parish as a whole, say, at a 6pm Saturday Mass.
- (iii) **First Communions** – Robbie Meehan reported that there were seven children making their first Communions this year, five girls and two boys. This year, new books had been introduced, offering more in-depth faith learning. A new Catechist, Rosie, had joined the Group to replace Marion Campbell who had moved away. Both Rosie and Robbie had completed the Foundations in Faith for the New Evangelisation, a national course for Catechists supported by our Bishop Peter, and they would be receiving their Certificates at the Cathedral in July. The parish was asked to keep the Communion candidates in their prayers. Finally, the reintroduction of the children's liturgy at the 11am Sunday Mass was going well.
- (iv) **Altar Servers** – On behalf of Kate Meehan, Robbie reported that the Altar Servers' Group met on a fortnightly basis and meetings included faith learning and practice on how to serve at Mass. It was hoped some of the new first Communicants would go on to join the Altar Servers Group. The annual Altar Servers Mass and BBQ at the Cathedral would be taking place on 20th July.
- (v) **Youth Club** – Fr. Jay explained that this group was currently in abeyance. He was hoping it would be possible to re-establish the group in the future.

5. Other Matters

- a) **Parish Newsletter** – Fr Jay advised that a volunteer was being sought to take over the publication of the parish newsletter from Elaine, who had notified her intention to step down from this role later in the year.
- b) **Community of Our Lady of Walsingham** – Sr. Camilla announced that their Community would be celebrating their 20th Anniversary on 14th July, to which all the parish were invited. Offers to host some of the invited guests were sought.
- c) **Holiday** – Fr. Jay announced that he would be taking his annual holiday between 2nd June and 3rd July this year. Fr. James Walsh and Fr. Michael Stack had kindly agreed to cover Sunday Masses while Fr. Jay was away.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.