**3rd Meeting**

**Of the**

**Parish Pastoral Forum**

**Monday 11 March 2019**

**7.00 p.m**

**In the Community Centre**

**Draft Minutes**

**Present:** James Johnson (Chair), Caroline Dixon (Vice-Chair), Father Tom Jordan, Sandra Tam, Joan Murphy, Miriam Parker, Katie Glavin, Carmel Osefoh, Mark O’Donoghue.

1. **Opening prayer** was led by Sandra Tam
2. **Apologies for absence:**  Apologies were received from Laura Fuller and Oliver Chime
3. **Vacancies:** None
4. **Minutes of previous meeting:**  approved
5. **Matters arising:** The Diocese has appointed a new Director of Finance, Anne-Marie Stockard, from Basildon parish. She is undertaking a full financial audit of the Diocese (this has already resulted in another resignation). Father Tom noted that although he is involved in a great deal of marriage preparation, many of the ensuing weddings are now taking place overseas. We have two baptisms coming up, and through the RCIA, a number of adults to be confirmed at Pentecost (mainly late confirmations – the candidates missed out when they were in their teens). The current teenage candidates are to be confirmed on September 15th, the occasion of the Bishop’s visit to the parish. The retreat is coming up: the ten candidates will join Collier Row parish at Abbotswick for this; a first step, as we are conferring with Collier Row, Gidea Park and Harold Hillon how to pool resources and share the workload. Our parish will, in future, mean our community. Parish Finance Committee: at a meeting in January it was decided to rotate the chairmanship, following Paul McLaughlin’s resignation. Communication and feedback from parishioners: it was noted that despite a number of personal approaches to possible candidates, no-one so far has stepped forward. Disappointing.
6. **Updates from PPF members:**

**Spiritual:**

Liturgy: Laura Fuller not present.

Music: only one volunteer for 6.30 Mass, and they obviously cannot commit to every week.9.30 Mass has produced two young volunteers, but although keen, they would not be able to cope with vagaries of the aged CD player, and with visiting priests who do not know the routine here. Takes time to set things up – maybe a bit more of investment in CDs? (Father Tom made the point that during Lent, there should only be music to accompany singing – but sometimes it can set the mood)

Sacramental: Liz Nicotra: nothing to report.

**Pastoral:**

St. Peter’s: Miriam Parker. Nothing especially to report, apart from school class Masses have taken place. The Advent carol service was held in the school for the first time last year – hitherto always held in church. In another move forward, Lenten ashes were distributed by staff at the school, not by Father Tom. Noted that Ash Wednesday is a solemn day, but not a Holy Day of Obligation. A point was made though that a lot of people like to receive ashes, and quite a few were unaware until the last minute that there was no evening service at St. Edward’s. Useful to have had some kind of list, or written information on alternative services. A joint newsletter would be very useful here. There is a mock-up of one – Julia Pitkin has it, but so far has not gone down too well with our sister parishes – fear of extra work maybe? But it will not be a weekly undertaking – probably quarterly or even less. Miriam Parker will bring a copy of a joint newsletter from Basildon parishes.

St. Peter’s PA: Katie Glavin. Parishioners make up the bulk of the PA, so is a way to bring school and church together, increase pool of volunteers. Katie will try and badger people a bit harder.

Steward of the Gospel: Caroline Dixon. Just received a phone call from Father Joseph Tan, from Harold Hill – he has just managed to find someone in his parish as their representative for parish partnership. The first meeting with clergy on the development of the partnership plan was held in January, and was mainly a social occasion, quite positive: one subject brought up was premises at St. Edward’s. Any improvement/work will in future need to be approved by the Diocese, but Father Adrian Graffy suggested that the meeting could count as a consultation and we could go ahead. Lukewarm reception from the clergy for joint newsletter (as noted above) but Caroline will persevere. Examples of joint newsletters would help (Miriam Parker to source from her home parish, and Julia in the parish office also has a mock-up). Next meeting is Thursday 21st March, and there are four further dates – to be confirmed. It is important that these meetings are fully attended. The agenda will include our youth, premises, and joining together for RCIA and Confirmation preparation. Confirmation: potential problem is age discrepancy across the parishes – ranges from 14 to 18 plus. Maybe it is time to take Confirmation back down to the age of 8, as it used to be? (Sequence should be: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion. Older children/teens could be catered for with non-sacramental courses on the history of the church, meanings of sacraments etc. and that would also be treated as a social activity). At a Stewards meeting it was suggested that two Youth Co-ordinators be appointed, one senior and one junior, to cover the two partnerships (Upminster/Hornchurch, and Romford/Gidea Park/Collier Row/Harold Hill). Father Dominic has a guide which gives job descriptions, management, salaries, funding and costings – this needs to be approved by the priests and by the Finance Committee. Father Dominic has already set something like this up in Basildon. Costings would be shared, and there is funding available (i.e Jack Petchey, Sisters of the Holy Cross (for one year) and the Catenians). Father Tom: to ask Julia to copy and distribute. Upminster apparently feels that this is over the top – one worker for the Deanery would be sufficient. There was a similar scheme in the 1980s, with Hornchurch parish as the base (as a result the 16plus group was set up) but when the youth worker moved on he was not replaced. The Bishop has expressed support in writing – Father Tom to flag that up. Next subject for Stewards will be premises, across the partnership. The Strategic Plan has twelve areas for renewal, each of which needs to be written up with a definition of how it will be taken forward – a huge amount of work, and a need for more people to take it on. Action: update at Mass, with appeal for more volunteers.

Charities: Joan Murphy. CAFOD: preparation day for Lenten appeal. SVP retreat on Sunday. DBS checks completed – with thanks to Nicola Johnson and Katie Chow.

Legion of Mary: Calista Ogbogu is in hospital following a stroke – Carmel Osefoh is to take over as President. Suggested that a get well card be sent to her in hospital – Father Tom can sign on behalf of the PPF. (Carmel will buy the card).

APF (Missio) – the parish is in need of a new representative, as the previous one has now moved away. Not an onerous job: collection of boxes, maybe speaking at Mass once a year. Father Tom to ask Julia to include in parish newsletter. Lenten lunches are on again, with usual help from the Guides!

**Temporal:**

**Finance:** Mark O’Donoghue. Meeting was held on 29th Jan., at which the B & M Fund figure were gone through. New Gift Aid work from the beginning. Currently about £60,000 in the bank, across 3 accounts. Mass collections: promoting standing orders may attract more money, and save on admin. and banking costs, not to mention time and effort in carrying cash down to the bank every week. GiftAid envelopes: numbers need to be re-allocated, as due to people moving on numbering is a bit haphazard. The envelopes have to be ordered in numbered batches – potential for waste if numbers not re-organised. Also noted that GiftAid money from second collections had initially been wrongly allocated – that has now been remedied. Next meeting: 14th May.

**Premises:** Mark O’Donoghue. Meeting on 16th Jan. Visit from Peter Johnson and Amanda Balicki on behalf of the Diocese to look at state of buildings. Would not entertain any development unless agreed by the partnership of parishes. Furthermore, much work needed would have to be referred to the Historic Churches Trust (certainly for St. Edward’s). Laity to be more involved: good, as they tend to be more of a constant in a parish’s life, all the more so at the moment with the situation regarding priests. Opening up to other parishes will also widen pool of expertise, hopefully, and maybe potential for sharing costs. For simplicity, any project needs to be kept below £10,000. Mark to produce some sort of document (including possible plans for buildings, financial implications) for Caroline to take along to the next Stewards’ meeting. Veolia in the past gave money to faith buildings, but not now – however, Katie has a list of potential donors. Next Premises meeting: 20th March. Noted that planning permission has run out for replacement of blue hoardings with railings.

**Parishioner Representatives:**

James Johnson.

* Safeguarding – DBS checks completed – thanks to Katie Chow and Nicola Johnson; in this parish fell behind, but now made good headway. Safeguarding a big issue now and is being followed up by a national Commission, which is checking individual dioceses are up to date with it.
* Social: Annette Bacon: this section put on hold for now.

Carmel Osefoh:

* Fair Trade: in process of finding out more about how to become a Fair Trade parish – that has fallen behind.
* Sunday Hospitality: no response from Judith Nicholls. Julie Smith/Joan Murphy aiming to start up coffee mornings on a regular basis. Suggested that re-launch might be helped along by vouchers for free teas and coffees. Carmel to involve Judith as well.
* Uniformed groups: the same issue – shortage of leaders. Father Tom suggested that John and Annette might like to make an appeal for volunteers after Masses. John Hartie grateful to the parish for free use of hall, but points out that toilet facilities are well below satisfactory. Long waiting list for Beavers, but Brownie numbers fairly low (15 currently on roll): queried as to whether this is a result of move to Sunday afternoon, rather than a weekday meeting. Suggested rather that this dip in numbers is across the board, not limited to St. Edwards. And Rainbows/Guides: current intake from across the whole area, not enough interested in this parish. Action to remedy this: advertise through the school? Organise some sort of activity, fundraising or social, to raise the profile of the uniformed groups?

Also suggested that John Hartie’s name should be put forward for a Bene Merenti award, in recognition of his 30 years of service to Beavers and Cubs. Joan to give details to Father Tom.

Sandra Tam:

* Pre-School: Lisa Bradshaw: Director of Education is due to visit the pre-school; there is also a possibility of a nursery being established at St. Peter’s.

1. **Communication with and feedback from parishioners**

The “somebody else can do it” mentality was raised – maybe the answer is to put in print that only one person has answered so far, or that so many people are needed. Katie Glavin suggested that this approach worked with recruiting helpers for the Children’s Liturgy group.

1. **Items not covered above.** Nothing.
2. **Date of June meeting:**  Monday 24th June at 6.30 p.m. The next meeting should be our AGM, and was suggested that it should be an open parish meeting. Father Tom, James Johnson and Caroline Dixon to discuss the format. Father Tom to lead the opening prayer on that occasion.
3. **Final prayer:** led by Father Tom.