

WGC Catholic Churches’ Advisory Council Meeting Minutes



St Bonaventure’s



Our Lady’s,
Queen of Apostles



Holy Family

Date:	Tuesday 7 th February 2017	Venue: Our Lady’s Sacristy
Chaired by:	Father Norbert	
Present:	Anna Grogan, Kathryn Hubbard, Alan van Hek, Steve Allardice, Peter Vincent, Christopher Douglas, Bill Hayes, Ernest Owusu-Afriyie, Ellen Allardice (Minutes)	
Apologies:	Ann Chappell, Paul Chappell, Jason Loh, Fr. Martin, Antonio Monteiro	

1. Fr. Norbert opened the meeting at 7.45pm with a prayer.

2. Fr. Norbert welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new member, Christopher Douglas. Christopher said that he has served as an Altar Server at Our Lady’s, and is helping with the Confirmation programme. He attended World Youth Day last July.

Fr. Norbert highlighted the agenda and asked for additional items. The following items were added as AOB:

- Transport for Elderly
- Young People – Proclaim 2017

3. Minutes of previous Open Meeting held on 22nd November 2016:

The previous meeting minutes were agreed in their accuracy.

No matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. Parish Centre

Fr. Norbert advised that he had received a revised floor plan just before Christmas and has asked Kyle Smart to produce an interactive, visual image of the proposed refurbishment for parishioners to review and comment on. The earliest start date is expected to be Oct/Nov 2017, dependent on planning permission. Once the revised documentation is available, the next step is for the Hall Committee to meet with the Diocesan surveyor. No definite bookings will be taken after October 2017.

Fr. Norbert said that a question had been raised by a parishioner as to who the parish centre will belong to. The status of the Parish Centre will need to be clarified under charity and canon law, in order to establish the responsibility for any loans required to complete the project. At present, all three parishes are contributing via Growing in Faith donations, and going forward Our Lady’s will be giving up sole ownership of the present hall and land. It is very important that this has been raised at this stage, in order for everything to be made clear that this is a joint project and the hall is for everyone. It was noted that it is important that the structure and direction of the project should be agreed as soon as possible so that in future a new parish priest could continue the project easily.

The three Finance committee Chairs met recently with Fr. Norbert, and details of how a loan of around £500,000 might be acquired and administered were discussed. When the Growing in Faith fundraising concludes, it was felt reasonable to invite parishioners to continue with contributions if possible. Work will already have begun by this stage, so people will see something tangible. There is also the possibility of further donations and legacies. The three Chairs agreed that it would be useful to publish on a quarterly basis, the income and expenditure of the Parish Centre; so parishioners have an understanding of the running costs.

5. Post Year of Mercy – ‘Called to Serve the Sick’

Cardinal Nichols has decided that following on from the Year of Mercy, there will be a continuing initiative: ‘Called to Serve the Sick’ starting on Saturday 11th February with the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and ending on the annual Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. Bishop Paul McAleenan has been asked to lead this initiative. Three events will help in this mission to help the sick:

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- 1) Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes with Anointing of the Sick on 11th February 2017 at Westminster Cathedral
- 2) Mass for bereaved parents at Westminster Cathedral on 11th March. An invitation has been included in the newsletter.
- 3) Blessing of carers at Masses across the Diocese on the weekend 8/9 July.

On Monday 6th February, Fr. Norbert and two parishioners attended a meeting to discuss an initiative to raise awareness of mental health with four parishes across the Diocese being selected to host a Mental Health Awareness training day. This will take place on Saturday 1st July in WGC and will serve primarily WGC including the other Christian churches, but will be available for the Deanery and beyond. There will be a maximum of 40 attendees and would be suitable for those who welcome at Mass, members of the SVP and carers. Mind (mid-Herts) will help with the delivery of the training. It is hoped that a core group can be formed from the attendees who can then go forward to provide training for others.

The WGC parishes hold the annual Mass for the Anointing of the Sick facilitated by the SVP, this year it has been arranged for 10th June 2017. Fr. Norbert advised that the suggestion had been made to include a blessing of carers as part of this Mass rather than on 8/9 July and Janet Lewis (the President of the local SVP Conference) agrees. An invitation will be extended to carers to attend.

6. Proclaim Initiatives

- Care of the Bereaved

It has been suggested previously that a card could be sent to the recently bereaved as a way of reaching out to people to show support. It would not just be a case of sending out a card, it could be an opportunity for the individual/family to get in contact if they wish. Fr. Norbert asked Anna Grogan if she could gather a group of 4-5 parishioners to pursue this idea. An outcome may be the formation of a bereavement support group, which could be available at times such as the Blessing of the Graves in November.

- Young People

The ideas from the previous meeting were reviewed and Fr. Norbert asked Christopher if he could gather a group of young parishioners to explore the various ideas and develop a plan to offer young people something that they would like to attend.

- Care of the Sick

Anna Grogan has been working on a leaflet that could be used by Eucharistic Ministers and housebound parishioners when they receive Holy Communion at home. Some Eucharistic Ministers (both Sunday Ministers and those who bring Holy Communion to the Sick) have asked if there could be some instruction. There may be an opportunity for this to take place in the summer months.

The initiative for those parishioners who are finding it difficult to attend Mass due to lack of transport was discussed. Ernest has been asked to find out about a list of housebound parishioners who may like to be contacted. It was recognised that some housebound parishioners may have reached a point where they are not able to attend Mass, a way of inviting these parishioners could be through their family or through the Eucharistic Minister that visits them. The item in the newsletter has created interest. Other areas of consideration for a formal transport scheme would be implications for safeguarding, ensuring adequate parking is available, whether having a minibus would be appropriate. With regard to the storing of information, the parishes are currently not formally registered for Data Protection purposes. Ernest reported that the group has representatives from the three parishes, and will next meet on 9th March. It was noted that it was a good sign of parish life that a group has been set up to look into this area and has been able to report back to the Advisory Council.

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7. Newsletter

A parishioner sent a request to Fr. Norbert following the appeal for agenda items in the newsletter. The request was in relation to the newsletter: given that it now covers the 'news' for the three parishes, could the format be changed to an A3 folded sheet so as to provide more space for presenting news items. An example of an A3 folded newsletter from a St Albans parish was provided as an example and was passed around the group.

Fr. Norbert asked for comments:

- Large print versions of the newsletter were made available, but have not been taken in the past.
- Costs will increase if change to an A3 format as will use more paper and more ink. Use of colour will also increase costs.
- A3 version would enable combining of weekly diary with newsletter.
- What would be the primary driver for changing from the current format? If for larger print, then it is possible to access the newsletter via the Joint Parishes' website and can be enlarged from there. Large print versions can be made available.
- If reason for changing is for solely for layout, whilst this would make it more appealing, do not consider that this justifies a significant change, can find everything in the current format.
- Will increase time and effort to produce the newsletter
- An A3 folded sheet may intimidate some people, current format is easier to fold up and take home to read.
- Would require changes to equipment that are used to produce newsletter.

Overall, all attendees were in agreement that the current format and content of the newsletter was satisfactory, there does not appear to be enough demand for a revamped newsletter.

Fr. Norbert pointed out that significant effort goes into producing the newsletter and expressed his gratitude to Kathryn and to all who help with preparing, folding and distributing every weekend.

8. AOB

The Catholic Youth Festival 'Flame 2017' will take place on 11th March at Wembley Arena. Cost of tickets is £20. There will be groups attending from John Henry Newman and Nicholas Breakspear Schools. Christopher offered to talk to young people in the WGC parishes to see if there is any interest in a parish group attending. Fr. Norbert pointed out that travelling to and from Wembley could be difficult. He also said it would be interesting to see the outcome of the festival, will it invigorate parish life?

Lent will start on March 1st with Ash Wednesday, there will be booklets for adults and children, along with Lenten calendars. As for previous years, there will be Stations of the Cross weekly in all three churches, and also Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The early morning Mass on the First Friday will continue, this provides an opportunity for those who may not be able to attend a weekday Mass and those who go along find it a very uplifting start to the day.

CaFE (Catholic Faith Exploration) have produced a new DVD course called *Beloved Disciples*, aimed at the over 60s. The course is divided into 4 sessions. An excerpt will be used by Fr. Frank in his talk at the CWL meeting on Tuesday 14th February.

The names of the members of the Advisory Council have been highlighted on the front of the minutes which will be available at the back of the churches, so that parishioners can know who current members are. A suggestion was made to upload the minutes to the Joint Parishes' website.

Another way of reaching housebound parishioners would be to consider live streaming Masses. Some London parishes currently do this.

As mentioned at the previous meeting, summer 2017 may be an appropriate time for any long serving members of the council to stand down.

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9. Date of Next Meeting with reports from parish groups

It was agreed at the previous meeting to invite parish groups to attend a meeting to provide an update of their activities. Groups could be asked to provide written reports to facilitate sharing of information. An open invitation will be made to groups including Safeguarding, SVP, CAFOD, CWL, Transport, Finance, taking Holy Communion to the Sick and Justice and Peace. It was noted that this information could provide a basis for a welcoming pack for new parishioners. There could be a display of information of all the groups with an outline of what they do.

The date for this meeting was agreed: Wednesday 14th June at 7.30pm. The meeting would be held in the Parish Hall, with the facility to have slide presentations if desired.

The date for the Open Parish Meeting was agreed: Monday 18th September at 7.30pm, also in the Parish Hall.

9. Closing Prayer

Fr. Norbert thanked everyone for coming and said he really appreciated people giving up their time and the way in which they had contributed.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm with a prayer led by Fr. Norbert.

