

# Our Lady's & St. Joseph's AGM 24<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## Agenda item 5

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF OUR LADY'S CHURCH, ACOMB AND ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH, GREEN HAMMERTON HELD IN THE FR KELLY ROOM 3 DECEMBER 2017

**Present:** John Kesterton (Chair), David Copeland, Fr Tony Lester (Parish Priest), Marek Lichtarowicz, Giles Nightingale, Kath Lyall, Rosemary Phizackerley, Nan Saeki, Amanda Sturdy, Claire Young and 18 parishioners

The meeting began at 11.00 am

**1. Opening Prayer**

Fr Tony opened the meeting with a prayer.

**2. Introduction and welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the members of the PPC introduced themselves. Anyone who wished to join the PPC was invited to express an interest.

**3. Apologies**

Apologies were received from David Barber and Rebecca Kramm.

**4a. Chair's Report**

The Chair's report highlighted the regular attention the PPC paid to engagement with the parish and evangelization. Progress had been made on access to the built environment, on raising awareness of the importance of access, and more work was planned. A new team was in place for First Communion preparation, and a new hymn book supplement had been produced.

It was emphasised that the PPC was still a learning body. A number of activities were underway. Ways to introduce new catechists and readers were to be considered. One questioner asked how lists of contributors to different activities were shared. It was also requested that the parish website be kept up to date with the names of priests.

**Agreed:** That the Chair's report be noted and that the PPC action the points raised in discussion.

**b. Financial Statement**

The PPC considered the Financial Statement of income and expenditure. Members expressed their appreciation of the transparency of the statement. The scale of contributions set by the Diocese was clarified.

A question was raised about the scale of repair work on the fabric of buildings over the past year and whether or not this was proportionate. A member also asked whether or not there were members with specific financial expertise to advise the Committee and whether or not the Committee had yet set a budget. Consideration was given to

encouraging Gift Aid contributions. Small donations also received relief. The stipend of the parish priest was noted and explained as standard across York.

**c. Society of St Vincent de Paul**

Over the past year, the society had dealt with someone in financial difficulty because of delays in benefit payments, as well as families in need made known through school contacts. The report expressed particular concern at the closure of Windsor House, where residents were already being moved out, although it was not clear at this stage where alternative accommodation had been made available. The reasons for the closure, made by City of York Council, had been queried by a number of organizations.

The report updated members on the Food Bank and informed them that Christmas Fare had been requested. It was good to see Food Bank donations in the Offertory Procession. The Society was looking for more members to carry out visits.

**d. First Holy Communion Group**

It was reported that the new team was finding its way. Over 2 weekends in June last year, almost 40 children had made their First Communion as part of the parish. This year 28 children were currently participating in the sessions working towards a celebration date of 2 June. The group was aware of numbers of families not already attached to the parish and the accompanying need for evangelization. Fr Tony noted that the children had been well prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation last year, and that all the clergy present had noted this.

**e. Care for Our Common Home.**

The group aimed to find ways in which they could act both in the present and future to promote the health of the planet. Extensive planting had been carried out over the past year and cleaning of some of the less attractive areas was planned. More helpers in the garden especially in spring and summer would be welcome. Sustainable Christmas leaflets had been circulated at Mass,

**f. Youth Group**

A variety of activities had been run over the year for the youth of the parish. These included crafts, team activities and Christmas and Easter meetings. Members also participated in the Harvest Sunday evening mass. Work was ongoing to recruit new helpers, youth leaders and new younger members. Activities to support local charities were planned.

It was reported that there had been very positive feedback from Energise after the group visit. Questions raised during the discussion included: what happened to the over-15-year-olds? Had there been a teen mass? There were plans to bring older teens through the group as leaders and helpers. It was reported that a Lourdes helper team had gathered at Middlesbrough.

**g. Music in the Liturgy**

The report set out the aims and activities of the group to provide musical support for the liturgy. New members were always welcome for playing the organ, for the music group and for leading the sung psalms. Points raised in discussion included suggested contact with schools to encourage young people to become involved, ensuring that liturgy meetings are listed in the bulletin.

**Agreed:**

- i. That the report of the Chair of the PPC be noted.
- ii. That the comments and discussion on the Finance Report be passed to members of the Finance Committee when appropriate.
- iii. That the reports of the parish groups be noted, including requests for new members to participate in the parish groups
- iv. That Fr Tony raise the issue of young people's participation in the Mass at OLQM School.

**4. Report of the Parish Priest (Verbal)**

Fr Tony became the parish priest of Our Lady's Acomb and St Joseph's Green Hammerton on 1 September 2017. The Carmelite Community had a reduced presence, but remained committed to being in York. Fr Tony reported that his initial experience working as a parish priest had been both challenging and exciting. Fr Tony thanked everyone for their welcome.

He drew attention to the high points at the beginning of his ministry which included the Harvest Festival, the involvement of the Youth Group and the generosity of the parish. The Food Bank collections continued this theme and reflected the origins of the procession of gifts. The parish was in good heart, was very inclusive and visitors commented on the number of children and young people at Mass.

The Welcome Statement had been strongly supported by the parish and was being well publicized.

Fr Tony went on to consider future plans for ministry in the parish. One aim over time would be to combine the different groups that contributed to the liturgy to better reflect the spread of ages throughout the parish. For example, younger people could be encouraged to become readers and ministers. Young people should be given a voice in the parish.

Access was also focus of attention as some people were unable to use the steps to reach the sanctuary which imposed unacceptable limitations on who could become a server or reader. The lectern and chair in the sanctuary would need adjustment to facilitate wheelchair access. Perhaps Gift Aid income could be overtly targeted at addressing this.

With fewer Carmelites in the York community at present and a focus on the Priory in Aylesford and the south of England it would be necessary to adapt the Christmas cycle of Masses, and this information would shortly be shared via the website and newsletter (Christmas Eve 4 pm: St Joseph's; 6 pm: Our Lady's with Nativity, Carols and First Mass and 10 am: Christmas Day at Our Lady's).

The discussion included a strong welcome for and appreciation of Fr Tony for settling in so quickly and a warm thanks for his ministry.

**Agreed:** That the report be noted and the PPC note the points raised by Fr Tony.

**5. Questions from parishioners**

A question was raised with Fr Tony about the opportunity to light candles at/after a Mass for the dead.

Johan Bergstrom described Carmelite Spirituality Group meeting at Our Lady's and invited anyone interested to come along.

**Agreed:** That questions and information be noted and actioned as appropriate.

The Chair thanked everyone for their work and contributions at the meeting and over the past year.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm