



St. Francis' Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2012

The meeting opened with our usual prayer for guidance.

Present Tony Berkeley, Chris Browne, Wendy Cullen, Kay Field, Hugh Gibbons, Jane Gow, Peter Hermon, Mary Looney, Michael Looney, Susan Meese, Jacqueline Power, Sue Roche, Fr. Tom Taaffe and Theresa Taylor.

Apologies Apologies were received from Julia Bowden, Gerry Devanney, Paula Liverseidge, Jerry O'Shea and Clare Sherlock.

Minutes Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Group Reports;

- **Education** Coordinator Sue Roche.

The **RCIA** programme has two candidates, one of whom is due to re-locate to the U.S.A. The possibility of both candidates being received into the Church before Christmas will be discussed with Father Tom. The last meeting was cancelled as no parish outreach group was able to attend. (NB: this was largely due to short notice, the fault of the outreach coordinator, for which I extend my sincere apologies). The response to the parishioner information sheets was disappointing, the candidates are trying to be pro-active but we are not responding as a wider parish. Another couple have made contact with a view to joining the programme.

The **children's liturgy** group has three groups with 50 – 60 children in total. There are six catechists on site each Sunday; all are CRB checked and there are, also, a number of parent helpers. We would like the children to feel more involved in the Mass and would like the children to be collected in time to participate in the offertory of the gifts.

Candidates are from year 3 and above, to date 40 children have registered for the **First Communion** programme; the closing date for registration is Sunday 2nd December. Of the 40, 15 are from St. Francis School, the rest are distributed in 13 different schools. Concern was expressed regarding the effect of the building work on lessons, in that would the parish rooms be available. If not, alternative arrangements will need to be made.

Registration for the 2013 **Confirmation** programme opened on 17th November. Confirmation is open to those in years 9 and above. There are currently 3 catechists. Sessions will be held in St. Francis School during the spring term.

Baptisms are arranged with Father as requested and at convenient times. There are few **marriages** booked in, none from outside the parish. The next meeting for **Time Out Ministries** is scheduled for February. There will also be a Lenten preparation session for catechists, readers etc. Any proceeds from these sessions will be donated to the parish funds.

- **School** Head teacher Jane Gow.

There are, currently, 2 vacancies for Foundation governors. As part of the school development plan they would like to create links between the school's RE programme and the children's liturgy sessions. Angela McCarthy and Tracy Wilkinson, from the parish, are going into the school on Thursday mornings to assist with music. The use of the school hall for Mass while the church is closed has been approved by the governors. A meeting will need to be arranged with the prospective key holder. Forthcoming events include,

December 7th: Advent reflection and reconciliation.

December 12th/13th: Reception and Key Stage 1 Nativity, 1.30 both days.

December 21st: Carol and Christingle service

- **Outreach** Coordinator Sue Meese

The **Bereavement** group has been running since January and currently has a team of 5 ladies. They are hoping to recruit, with Father's help, at least 1 male! The purpose of the group is to be a listening/supportive link between the bereaved family and church. Ultimately it will be to deliver funeral liturgies in the absence of a priest. This is a 4/5 year plan, depending on circumstances and time. They have attended listening courses, with more planned and are waiting to be scheduled onto a vulnerable adults training session. They were active in the preparation of the Mass for the Dead, which took place on November 5th and it was very well attended.

The **Justice and Peace** group have been collecting for the Bracknell food bank and the Medaille trust establishment in Southampton. They have been very pleasantly surprised and grateful for the generous response of the parish and school.

Parishioners and pupils contributed to the **Cafod** Thirst for Change Campaign, including many cards among the 60,000 sent to the Government.

Parishes in England & Wales raised over £9million for CAFOD in Lent - doubled to £18million under the UK Aid scheme

The CAFOD Romero/St Francis Cross to mark 50 Years of CAFOD is now in place on the Friary wall. It's a subject of Hugh's forthcoming Thought for Week in the Ascot & Bracknell News.

Hugh has sent out a news release showing that nearly £60,000 for CAFOD has been raised by schools in the pastoral area in the last ten years.

Pupils and parishioners will be invited to provide Christmas and New Year greetings to the parish of San Francisco de Asis in Mejicanos in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador - as a first step to see if they would welcome us linking with them.

The **SVP's** collection was very successful, raising £700, for which they are very grateful. They have been supporting several people over the last year and it has been a drain on their resources. It was agreed that they need to raise their profile in the parish and make people aware of what they have achieved each week.

The **KSC** have been actively campaigning against the Same Sex Marriage and abortion law amendments. They have joined the Prayer Chain, lobbied their MPs and tried to raise awareness of the issues within their parishes. Tony attended the Supreme Council in October, which was held in Glasgow. Among the many reports of their achievements over the year, there was discussion about the decline in numbers and ways to recruit new members. They were also very pleased to be able to present a cheque for £500 to the Thames Valley Hospice, the proceeds of their annual sponsored walk. They would like to thank all who contributed in any way to making this event such a success.

The **UCM** recently held their AGM which brought about some changes on their committee. Wyn Vickers and Moira Matthews have come to the end of their term of duty and are being replaced by Sue Meese and Bridget Barrott-Chambers. Our grateful thanks are extended to the outgoing committee members who were very efficient and are going to be a hard act to follow. Next year is the Centenary of the establishment of the UCM and is also the 75th anniversary of the UCM in the Portsmouth Diocese. As such we have several celebrations to look forward to and also hope to share this celebratory year with events for the parish.

Coffee for Carers is "ticking over", with a few regulars and some young Mums who attend as and when they can. More posters are needed for display in the pre-school and school.

- **Finance** Coordinator Peter Hermon

Donations have been received which, including reclaimed tax, amounts to £40,000. Income is down, due in part to large contributors relocating. We have secured a loan of £168,000 for the refurbishment of the church; therefore the work will be going ahead and it is hoped we can sort out the lighting, sound system and decorating at the same time. We hope to have a sample of the new flooring for the parish to see. However repayments of the loan, over 7 years, will amount to £2,000 per month. That combined with the running costs of the parish means we will definitely have to dip into the donations until such time as/if the sale of the North Ascot land is completed. The sale is ongoing, but could take up to 2 years to complete, and negotiations have been taken over by the Diocesan office as trustees. A maintenance fund will need

to be set up for any future work that becomes necessary. Berkeley Homes, Waitrose and the Churches Trust have all been approached for funding. There is a charge of £125 required for registration with the Churches Trust.

A scale of charges for use of the church has been agreed. The Marriage folders are ready and the first one has been sent out.

- **Worship** Coordinator Mary Looney

A new **flower arranging** rota is being prepared for next year. It is hoped we can have 2 collections to boost funds for the flowers.

There are not enough **Eucharistic ministers** for the Saturday mass. Ideally we need 2 for Saturday and 5 for Sunday.

New **altar servers** are coming forward and a rota has been established. A training programme is to be set up.

Isabelle de Silver is retiring from the post of **Sacristan**. More people are needed to take on this role. Also more families are needed to take on **welcoming** parishioners before mass.

- **Parish Office** Coordinator Tony Berkeley

We are very pleased to have appointed **Wendy Cullen** as **parish secretary**. Wendy will be in the office Tuesday – Thursday mornings, 9.30 – 12.30.

A major reorganisation of the office is taking place with new filing systems and much of the paperwork being consigned to properly filed archives.

- **Safeguarding** Coordinator Paula Liverseidge

There are several CRB checks in progress. Some people have yet to return their forms and there are old ones that will need updating.

A.O.B.

- The Tom O'Connor evening was a great success and raised £3,200. Our thanks are extended to Tom and his team.

We had a stall at the Sunninghill Victorian Street Fayre, selling Christmas goods. The final figure has yet to be confirmed. We are also taking a place at the Berystede Christmas event.

- Work has started on the loft. AED have been appointed project managers for the works. A glass inner door and panel is to be installed in the hallway of the Friary, enabling the front door to be left open (as are the doors of the church). Father will have seasonal displays in the inner hall. The door will be added security for Father, at the same time fostering a welcoming, open door policy. An alarm system is to be installed.

Fr. Tom commented that there are no age restrictions for the ministers of communion. We need to encourage an attitude of ministry and create a welcoming atmosphere for families.

It was agreed that we are very lucky to have such committed, talented musicians and singers in our parish. Our grateful thanks are extended to them all.

It is likely that children's liturgy will take place in the school during the renovations and a time made for them to relate what they have been doing.

Father expressed his gratitude for all the ongoing help and commented that there is a lot going on that is not always immediately visible.

Proposed dates for Future Meetings

Wednesday 20th February, 22nd May, 21st August and 20th November 2013