

# **ST PETER'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

## **Annual Report for Session 2013-14 Presented by the Council at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 2 June 2014**

### **Introduction**

1. The primary purpose of this report is to document the work of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) during its 2013-14 Session which started in June 2013. The report focuses on the main matters addressed by the Council viz the Parish Survey (paragraphs 5-7) and Liturgy Links (paragraphs 8-9). It also summarises other topics covered during the year (paragraph 10).

2. The report also covers certain pastoral and other activities which are regularly brought to the Council's attention. In particular, we record with appreciation the achievements of St Peter's Justice and Peace Outreach Group (paragraphs 11-20); the efforts made on behalf of our younger parishioners (paragraphs 21-25); and the work of others which make a major contribution to the life of our parish community (paragraph 26).

### **Membership of the Council**

3. In September 2013, at the start of Session 2013-14, membership of the Council comprised:

Mgr Kerr, President	Patricia Dolan	Jacqueline Heron
Bruce Royan, Chairman	Stephen Dolan	Iona Macdonald
John Wastle, Secretary	Karen Glasgow	Peter Nicholson
Agnes Dolan	Steven Hand	Ian Stewart

4. At that stage there was one vacancy on the Council which we advertised but were unable to fill. In the course of the Session, Iona Macdonald resigned from the Council because of academic pressures and Mark Dorrian was subsequently co-opted as a member. Steven Hand has given notice that he would stand down at the AGM on 2 June 2014, leaving two vacancies to be filled.

### **Parish Survey**

5. In 2013-14, the Council's programme has been dominated by work on the parish survey. An intensive period of preparation in the early part of the Session covered the design and testing of an advance information flyer and questionnaire and the development of procedures. Consideration of the questionnaire design led to a decision to restrict the information to be collected:

- the number of Catholics in the respondent's households;
- on a voluntary basis, and for parish administrative purposes, the household address, telephone number and email address; and the number of occupants; their names and relationship to the head of household;

- parishioners' views on how well, or otherwise, current activities are being carried out; and their suggestions on how the parish might be developed further;
- details of volunteers for parish activities and organisations.

The reduction in the amount of demographic information to be collected led to a change of name from parish census to parish survey.

6. The survey was carried out on three consecutive Sundays 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013, and arrangements were made for questionnaires to be available for St Peter's parishioners attending St Columba's. An estimated 260 forms were handed out with 141 completed forms returned, including 14 from visitors to the parish. This was a rather disappointing return from parishioners given the preparatory work and the fact that the survey was made over a 3-week period. More positively, it was immediately clear that many interesting and helpful comments had been made. Some 30 parishioners had expressed interest in participating in parish activities, and these were followed up by the appropriate activity leaders.

7. A short preliminary report on the results of the survey was published in the parish newsletter on 26 January 2014. Since then, Council members have been engaged in classifying and tabulating the hundreds of comments and suggestions made in the questionnaires. A high-level summary has now been prepared and will provide the basis of a programme of work for the future on a number of themes. The summary will form part of a presentation on the survey at the PPC Annual General Meeting on 2 June 2014.

### **Liturgy Links**

8. The Council established the Liturgy Links Group in 2012 with the aim of assisting the PPC in its work by examining and considering matters that relate to the liturgical life of the parish and to offer suggestions and conclusions on these matters; and generally to assist liturgical planning in the parish. The Group comprises PPC members and other parishioners, with representatives of different age groups and some of the varied "interests" in the parish at large.

9. The Group had a number of issues under consideration during the Session and, following a very productive meeting on 12 March, submitted a comprehensive report with recommendations on a wide range of issues to the PPC for consideration. At its meeting on 28 April, the Council welcomed the report, noting progress on a number of matters and accepting the Group's recommendations for further action. The Council noted that the Group's current agenda had been set before the parish survey was made, but the future agenda would be determined by the many comments made by survey respondents on liturgical matters. (The Group's report and the Council's full response are contained in the minutes of the PPC meeting on 28 April 2014).

### **Other PPC business**

10. In the course of the Session the Council handled a wide range of business in the course of which members:

- promoted the Year of Faith with a number of initiatives

- published notes on the Vatican Decree “Indulgence for the Year of Faith”; the Christian Initiation of Children in St Peter’s Parish; and “Praying the Rosary”
- arranged a presentation from the altar on the work of the parish Prayer Group
- reviewed the arrangements for planning PPC business
- noted with favour the work of the St Peter’s Cardinal Winning Pro-Life Initiative Support Group
- established an experienced team to manage the parish library.

### **St Peter’s Justice and Peace Outreach Group**

11. The Outreach Group, comprising a small number of parishioners, works to address the needs of people and communities beyond our own parish. The Group is encouraged in this work by the Council, recognising that it is greatly significant in strengthening the parish ethos. The Outreach Group extend their appreciation to all those who help organise their events and are particularly grateful to the members of the parish for their unflinching and very generous support for these events. During this Session the Group has focused mainly on the following activities.

#### *Scottish International Catholic International Aid Fund*

12. The Group ensures that the parish newsletter frequently carries information on SCIAF’s work and ideals. Since 1 June 2013, the parish has raised £9,000 for our SCIAF Project *Agakura*, which trains young people in Burundi to farm small plots of land. The main sources of project income are the parish 200 Club and the Wee Box campaign, but substantial sums have also been contributed by the following initiatives, in no particular order: a talk by Professor Geoff Palmer on Scotland’s historical connection to slavery in Jamaica; a raffle for a limited edition print of the new dome in the King’s Theatre by John Byrne; a book sale; the Harvest Festival; sale of Christmas cards and goods; the Christmas Fair; a Jelly Bean guessing competition; several courtyard sales of goods and home produce; Pilates classes; donations from staff lunches and afternoon tea proceeds at Gillis Centre; and a Fairtrade Fashion Show.

13. In addition, an impromptu retiral collection on 8 September raised £930 for Syria and a further £250 was raised from Ann Royan’s sale of marmalade for SCIAF’s work with Syrian Refugees. A special collection for relief in the Philippines raised some £1,150. The Group strongly promoted SCIAF’s Lenten Appeal which focused on the Embera people of Colombia and three of our younger parishioners gave a presentation at Mass on the First Sunday of Lent describing the life of the Embera. The sum of £2,000 was sent in response to this appeal, including all income during Lent from Wee Boxes, Gillis donations, Pilates classes and £170 from the Lenten Hunger Lunch of homemade bread and soup in the parish room.

#### *Fairtrade*

14. The Outreach Group oversees our interests as a Fairtrade Parish and promotes the Fairtrade philosophy through local activities and the Fairtrade Fortnight. During the Session, the Group had a sale of Fairtrade goods in the courtyard after Mass on Sundays 27 October and 3 November raising £137. Fairtrade Fortnight was marked by a feature in the parish newsletter and a very successful Fashion Show modelling Fairtrade fashions which raised £800, of which £50 was donated to the Fairtrade Foundation and the remainder to our SCIAF project. Over 100 postcards asking the

Scottish Government to trade fairly and justly with Third World countries were signed by parishioners.

#### *FreshStart*

15. The Group continued to promote the FreshStart's work with those who have difficulty setting up their own home. Frequent inserts are included in the parish newsletter, highlighting the regular appeals for volunteers, and for specific household goods. Large quantities of goods are regularly delivered to the FreshStart warehouse at Pilton. FreshStart have extended their services by providing cookery classes for their clients and by making available basic food packs to them and the Group intend to support these initiatives.

#### *Christian Aid Week*

16. The Group encouraged parishioners to support Christian Aid events through a major feature in the parish newsletter. A number of St Peter's parishioners attended the opening Christian Aid Service at St Fillan's Church on Sunday 11 May and supported events during the Week, including the Christian Aid Spring Fair. St Peter's team of door-to-door collectors brought in the sum of £328.

#### *Eco-Congregation*

17. The parish Eco-Congregation Group, a subset of the Outreach Group, has worked up a head of steam during the Session. The Group contributed a bidding prayer to the Harvest Festival Mass on 29 September 2013 and arranged for the hymns to fit the Eco-Congregation theme. On 4 November, the Parish Pastoral Council considered and warmly endorsed the Group's application for the first-stage Eco-Congregation award which was subsequently submitted to the Assessors.

18. While awaiting the Assessors' response, the Group:
- placed recycling bags for a range of materials in the parish room
  - displayed a review of the Parish's carbon footprint and inserted an item in the parish newsletter asking parishioners to do a carbon footprint in their home
  - marked Earth Hour on Sunday 29 March` with an item in the parish newsletter and a bidding prayer
  - mounted a very successful photography exhibition "God's Creation" in the parish room which attracted over 50 entries from 23 parishioners and ran from Sunday 16 February to Sunday 30 March
  - commissioned plans to develop a corner garden at the rear of the church.

19. The inspection by the Eco-Congregation Assessors was carried out on 12 May and was attended by a number of parishioners in support of the Group. The Assessors announced on the day that they had approved our first-stage Award as an Eco-Congregation. However, on 20 May, the Assessors wrote that after further consideration they had decided to award an outright Eco-Congregation Award to St Peter's. The official award letter and plaque will be presented shortly. On behalf of all parishioners, the Parish Pastoral Council warmly congratulates the Eco-Congregation Team on their outstanding achievement.

### *Other outreach events*

20. The Outreach Group also marked:

- One World Week with a bidding payer at Mass on Sunday 20 October
- Migrant and Refugee Sunday on 19 January with a bidding prayer and an item in the newsletter. In addition, the proceeds of a courtyard sale of marmalade after Mass were sent to SCIAF's emergency appeal for Syrian refugees. The Privitera family represented the parish at a special Mass in St Mary's Cathedral
- Poverty and Homeless Sunday on 26 January with a piece in the parish newsletter and, at Mass, a bidding prayer; participation in the Offertory Procession by representatives of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Jericho House team and Freshstart; and a presentation by Keith Robertson of FreshStart on the work of his organisation.

### **Younger Parishioners**

21. The Council very much appreciates and encourages the Children's Liturgy which a committed team provides for 30-40 young children during Sunday Mass in school term time. It also welcomes the continuing development of services, usually Sunday Mass, at which primary school children and their families undertake elements of the liturgy, such as the readings and bidding prayers, the offertory collection and the offertory procession. These occasions are very successful, with younger children coming forward to participate. They also draw support from other teams within the parish, such as the passkeepers and welcomers, the Children's Liturgy, the music group, the hospitality team and the parish photographer.

22. This Session these services were held on 9 June to celebrate with the children who had made their First Holy Communion the previous day; on 25 August to mark the start of the new school year; on 24 November to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King; and on 30 March, Mothers' Day/Laetare Sunday. This last Mass was a very successful collaboration between Youth Rock and younger children, a real team effort with the Children's' Liturgy team, Youth Rock and the Music Group all playing huge parts. Apart from the readings and bidding prayers, our young people took on the offertory collection, the procession of gifts and the special collection. The Liturgy was really well received, as always, by parishioners and visitors alike – not least the rousing musical finale!

23. The Council welcomes the continuing progress of Youth Rock, the parish organisation for young people of secondary school age, and appreciates the work of the adult helpers. The Group's name, chosen by the young people themselves, reflects St Peter – the Rock. A group of members meets regularly for a programme of social and other events. The group is strong on music and has developed this under the tutelage of parishioners, Stewart McLellan and Sophie Bennett. The leader of Youth Rock, Stephen Dolan, serves on the Parish Pastoral Council as representative of all young parishioners.

24. Youth Rock met on 15 occasions in the past year, mainly on Sunday evenings. The Group marked the end of the 2013 academic year by providing the music at Mass on Sunday 23 June, at which members welcomed parishioners by distributing books and newsletters; did the readings from the altar and took up the offertory collection. Members enjoyed some particular occasions including music sessions, a Christmas Party, an evening of reflection and meditation and a celebration of the end of the 2014 academic year.

25. As recorded in paragraph 10 above, Youth Rock played a prominent part in the special Mass on Mothers' Day, having prepared the music and and crafted banners for the entry and retiral processions. As part of our Lenten preparation, members of Youth Rock collected last year's palms and burned them to produce the ashes used in the parish on Ash Wednesday.

### **Other pastoral activities**

26. Parishioners, and even visitors, will be aware that a wide range of pastoral activities take place in St Peter's throughout the year - far too numerous to mention individually in this report. The Parish Pastoral Council acknowledges and greatly appreciates the work which so many undertake to serve their fellow parishioners. However, the Council recognises the particular importance, in spiritual terms, of the work of the teams which provide the preparatory courses for baptisms, the preparation for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and for the Christian Initiation of Children, and the parish chaplaincy services at the Astley Ainslie hospital; and, in terms of social wellbeing, the ever-expanding services of the Hospitality Team!

St Peter's Parish Pastoral Council  
1 June 2014