

ST PETER'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 FEBRUARY 2015 IN THE PARISH ROOM

Present

Monsignor Kerr (President)	Alan Chudziak	Mark Dorrian
Peter Nicholson (Chairman)	Trish Dolan	Roger Eggins
John Wastle (Secretary)	Anne Donnelly	Jacqueline Heron

Ivor Clarke for Agenda Item 3; and four parishioners as observers.

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Agnes Dolan, Stephen Dolan, Paul Gilmour and Ian Stewart.

Opening prayer

2. Mgr Kerr led those present in the Parish Pastoral Council Prayer.

Altar server training programme

3. The Chairman welcomed Ivor Clarke to the meeting. He recalled that on 10 November the Council had received and welcomed a report which Ivor had submitted on the Altar Server Ministry. Members had agreed that the specific issues raised by Ivor should be remitted to the Liturgy Links sub-group for consideration in the first instance. Ivor thanked the Council for inviting him to address members, indicating that it was a pleasure to lead this parish Ministry with, at present, 21 altar servers deployed in teams of six serving at Sunday Mass with everyone having specific roles, rather than just observing.

4. When prospective altar servers are placed on a list for training, parents are asked to assess their child's ability and suitability for the role and to commit to attendance every Sunday, not just when assigned to altar server duty. Parents are also involved in training sessions and are expected to discuss training material with their children. Ivor distributed copies of the material, noting that the emphasis was less on what servers do but how and why they behaved in a particular way in such a special place.

5. Ivor reiterated the issues which are to be discussed by the Liturgy Links team in due course: use of thurible and incense; frequency of service and deployment; membership of the Liturgy Links team; and recruitment of a supporting adult helper. In the meantime, Mgr Kerr and Council members thanked Ivor for his work and complimented him on the very high standard achieved by the altar servers.

Minutes of the meeting on 10 November 2014 and matters arising

6. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

7. The following matters arising from the minutes were addressed:

- Paragraph 3 - the Chairman reported that Roger Eggins had accepted an invitation to serve as Deputy Chair of the Council, and the meeting concurred.

- Paragraph 5 - Rosemary Rogerson is willing to organise the Mass again this year in a similar form to last year's, on Saturday 14 November. Mark Dorrian and another parishioner are willing to assist as required.
- Paragraph 5 - although only some readers were able to attend the training sessions on 24 and 26 November, those who did definitely found it helpful to be able to practise at the microphone, and points learned were shared with all readers. Impressions are that clarity has improved in the weeks since.
The two reader system was introduced from the first Sunday of Advent. Hopefully it is adding to the impact of the readings; no direct feedback one way or the other. Work is in hand to achieve a standard practice when the readers approach the altar – not always easy when a reader may have arranged a substitute.
One new reader has been added to the team but appeals, ahead of the training sessions and when the new rota was put out for completion, have not produced any further volunteers. We could use a few more now that two are on duty each week.
- Paragraph 5 - Bruce Royan's work on updating the website and paper directories had been affected by an "epic fail" and he was unable to make any progress before departing on an extended trip to the Antipodes. However, Juliet MacKellaig, the parish website administrator, stepped in and obtained all the necessary updating material from leaders of ministries, organisations etc. She has now amended the directory entries in the current website and is in the process of transferring them to a new parish website which is being tested before becoming live in the near future. Once all this has settled down, work can begin on a new paper directory. We will need to find someone to co-ordinate this work [**Action: Secretary**].
- Paragraph 6 - efforts are in hand to find an appropriate replacement for Colleen McCrone on the Liturgy Links sub-group [**Action: Ian Stewart**].
- Paragraph 8(3) - a note on procedures for receiving newcomers to the parish will be circulated to members shortly [**Action: Secretary**]. The parish website now carries the following note on the front page and in the welcoming section:
“In St Peter's there are many parishioners who are fluent in a wide range of foreign languages, especially French, Italian and Spanish. If you are a new parishioner or a visitor from overseas who needs advice, or just wants a chat in a familiar tongue, we will try to help. Please email us at welcome@stpeter'srchurchedinburgh.org.uk or speak to a welcomer or passkeeper at the back of Church.”
This note will also appear in the parish newsletter from time to time.
- Paragraph 13 - in view of the unexpected increase in the PPC's workload arising from the Archbishop's proposal to re-organise parish provision, work on the new Council constitution was in abeyance.
- Paragraph 14 - an e-mail has been sent to all leaders of parish ministries, organisations etc, copied to PPC members, explaining the decision at last year's AGM to publish a comprehensive report of parish activities and giving notice that contributions would be sought from them towards the end of April.

Organisation of parish clusters in the Archdiocese

8. The Secretary had circulated copies of the Archbishop's letter of 10 January 2015 about future provision of parishes in the Archdiocese, including a proposal to form a single parish comprising the current parishes of St Peter, Sacred Heart, St Columba and St Mark. The Chairman had spoken from the altar at Mass on Sunday 25 January about the importance of the letter which had been distributed to parishioners after Mass and posted on the parish website. We have undertaken to keep the parish abreast of developments.

9. Noting that the Archbishop's letter acknowledged the consultation around *Now is the Favourable Time* (NITFT) (May 2006), Mgr Kerr reported that at recent meetings Deanery priests had wished to be loyal to the principles and promises set out in that document, with its emphasis on sustaining active parish communities. The priests considered the Archbishop's plan too drastic, founded too much on the expected number of priests available in future: contrast the current estimate of 30 priests in 2035 with the NITFT estimate of 32-34 priests in 2015!

10. In a wide-ranging discussion, members supported the position adopted by the Deanery priests and highlighted the following key points arising from the Archbishop's letter:

- the preparation of NITFT and the results of the consultation on it (some 220 responses from all parts and levels of the Archdiocese) should form the sole basis for the current discernment
- a detailed consultation programme and timetable are essential, especially if church closures are possible by the end of 2015
- the letter failed to recognise the role currently played by the laity and, vitally, the potential for developing that role in the face of a diminishing number of priests
- much more information is needed for each parish/parish cluster to enable sound decisions to be made for their future
- St Peter's is a financially stable parish: less fortunate parishes could be easily and quickly closed down
- the priority we attach to sustaining parish communities extends to providing financial and other support to parishes in difficulty, including some form of "twinning" arrangements.

11. As announced in the parish newsletter on 1 February, we have arranged to host a meeting of representatives of the proposed cluster parishes on Wednesday 25 February to discuss issues of mutual interest and to explore areas of co-operation in relation to the Archbishop's letter. St Peter's will be represented by Mgr Kerr, the Chairman and the Secretary. Arrangements are also in hand for an open meeting early in March to provide St Peter's parishioners with an opportunity to discuss the implications of the letter.

Reports from sub-group leaders

12. Ian Stewart had indicated that in current personal circumstances he had not been able to hold a meeting of *Liturgy Links* sub-group: there was a full agenda but nothing pressing. Anne Donnelly reported that the *Parish Organisations and Activities* sub-group was still finding it difficult to translate its remit into proposals to based on parishioners' survey responses. Recognising the PPC's commitment to respond in some way to every survey comment, she undertook to try with sub-group colleagues to find a satisfactory way forward [**Action: Anne Donnelly**].

13. A report on a review of *Fabric, Technology and Information* systems had been circulated by Alan Chudziak, including research material obtained from appropriate internet sources. The report noted that any significant development of existing technology and information systems should be undertaken in consultation with the Archdiocese Media Director; and that such developments should be postponed to take account of the outcome for St Peter's of any re-organisation of parishes and clusters in the Archdiocese.

14. The Council considered four priority issues discussed in the report and concluded that:
- there was no case for installing *large screen projection facilities* in a church the size of St Peter's;
 - while some churches are using *Twitter and Facebook* as communication tools, the parish would require a dedicated team to administer the accounts on a daily basis;
 - the parish already has a comprehensive, and recently upgraded, *website* providing a wide range of relevant information for parishioners and visitors, along with links to other appropriate sites;
 - the provision of a block *email issue system* for the parish newsletter should be considered further in consultation with Juliet MacKellaig, the parish website administrator [**Action: Secretary**].

Reports on current pastoral activities

15. A note had been circulated setting out activity on: Family Services (Steve Hand); Youth Rock (Liz Brown); and a comprehensive report on works carried out on the church property (Alan Chudziak). The Council expressed its thanks to all those involved in these activities, and in the many others undertaken in the parish.

Dates of next meetings

16. The next meeting of the Council was scheduled for Monday 13 April. The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 8 June.

Any other business

17. Jacqueline Heron reported, on behalf of the Prayer Group that it had been necessary to cancel the DVD presentation "Catholicism - The New Evangelisation" to be shown over 6 Thursdays in Lent. The resources required to administer the programme, including intensive pre-planning, preparation of material and organisation of workshops, had proved to be beyond the reach of the Prayer Group. However, it was considered that the programme is well worth pursuing and the Council was asked for advice on this. After a short discussion, members concluded that the programme was too labour-intensive for a single parish to organise and that it should be drawn to the attention of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Resources Department at Gillis Centre for consideration [**Action: Jacqueline Heron**].

18. The following matters were reported and noted:

- Following the sale and planting of bulbs in the church grounds, the Eco-Congregation Group had the sum of £200 in reserve. The bulbs were now in flower.
- The Group would be promoting Earth Hour, 8-9pm on Saturday 28 March.
- It was confirmed that the parish would participate in Doors Open Day in September.

Closing prayer

19. Mgr Kerr led the meeting in a prayer and gave a blessing.