

ST PETER'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Annual Report for Session 2014-15 Presented by the Council at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 8 June 2015

Introduction

1. This is the formal Annual Report of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). It records the principal work of the Council since the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2014.
2. In previous years, the Council's Annual Report also covered certain pastoral and other parish activities which are regularly brought to the Council's attention. However, it was decided at the 2014 AGM that these and all other activities should be covered by a separate report compiled from contributions from the leaders of the individual ministries, organisations and activities within the parish. This report *Annual Report of Parish Activities in 2014-15* has also now been published.
3. These reports and the minutes of Council meetings which provide a full account of business at each meeting are available on the parish website www.stpetersrchurchedinburgh.org.uk.

Membership of the Council

4. In September 2014, at the start of Session 2013-14, membership of the Council was at full complement:

Mgr Kerr, President	Stephen Dolan	Roger Eggins, Deputy Chair
Peter Nicholson, Chairman	Trish Dolan	Paul Gilmour
John Wastle, Secretary	Anne Donnelly	Jacqueline Heron
Alan Chudziak	Mark Dorrian	Ian Stewart
Agnes Dolan		

5. Having completed their first 3-year term of office, Jacqueline Heron and Ian Stewart are eligible to serve a further term. Trish Dolan, Paul Gilmour and John Wastle have given notice that they will stand down at the AGM on 8 June 2015, leaving 3 vacancies to be filled.

Parish survey

6. Work has continued on considering the feedback on parish life and liturgy provided by individual parishioners in the survey carried out in November 2013. These suggestions and comments covered a wide range of topics and to assist scrutiny were grouped under six main headings for consideration in detail by sub-groups of the Council:

- The Mass
- Other services and prayer opportunities
- Parish organisations and activities
- Fabric, technology and information
- Parish Community and involvement with the wider community
- General and miscellaneous matters.

7. In the event, the sub-groups have progressed at different rates, but most suggestions that were made by more than one parishioner have been given consideration. However, a number of points remain to be looked at further, in particular what form of social and cultural events the parish should attempt to organise. It should be noted that in some instances opposing comments were made and, in others, there are reasons why it is not possible to adopt a proposal. In particular, Mgr Kerr preached on why the present Sunday mass arrangements had to remain, despite requests that a second mass be reintroduced – one of the most frequently made suggestions in the survey.

8. Processing the results of the parish survey has proved to be a complex and time-consuming task. However, progress has been made and the Council will give priority in the next Session to completing its consideration and reporting its conclusions to the parish community.

Parish re-organisation

9. Undoubtedly, the most important business carried out by the Council this Session followed the letter of 10 January 2015 addressed by the Archbishop to the Deans of the Archdiocese, but published for general discussion. The letter proposed the reduction of the number of parishes in the Archdiocese from the present 111 to only 30 or, in effect, the amalgamation of each of the present clusters of parishes into one single parish, with one single church or parish centre. The Council along with many other parishes, regarded this as a regrettable reversal of the previous Archdiocese policy, as contained in the 2006 document *Now is the Favourable Time*, of supporting individual parish communities wherever possible, and moreover as a policy that would not work well within our own parish cluster.

10. The Council ensured that parishioners were made fully aware of the proposals at the earliest opportunity, and has recently issued a written report* to bring parishioners up to date with the many developments that have since taken place, including:

- an invitation from the Council to representatives of the other parishes in our cluster to a meeting to discuss a joint approach, followed by a joint letter to the Archbishop*;
- attendance at a meeting open to parish representatives from across the Archdiocese which resulted in common concerns and issues being identified;
- distribution of a pastoral letter from the Archbishop developing his thinking, while maintaining the core aspect of his proposal; and
- an open meeting to brief the parish on developments and seek individual parishioners' views, following which the Council wrote* to the Archbishop setting out St Peter's position as a parish.

* these documents are available on the parish website

11. The Archbishop has acknowledged the Council's letter noting that he plans to visit each of the clusters in the Archdiocese in the coming months and looks forward to meeting to discuss the way ahead. We understand that this programme of meetings will start in the autumn and extend into 2016. The Council will continue to keep parishioners informed of developments.

Liturgy Links

12. The Liturgy Links Group was set up in 2012 with the aim of assisting the Council 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 Council members and other parishioners, with representatives of different age groups and some of the varied “interests” in the parish at large. This Session the Group's agenda was dominated by its scrutiny of the considerable feedback from the parish survey relating in any way to the liturgy. A good deal of progress has been made on this front and details are recorded in paragraphs 6-8 of the minutes of the Council's meeting on 10 November 2014, available for reference on the parish website.

Parish support for charitable causes

13. In the face of an increasing number of requests for support from charitable organisations, the Council reviewed its current policy which is based on the outcome of a decision reached at the 2012 AGM:

"There was a discussion of whether the Parish might also support Mary's Meals - though that was also a very worthwhile cause, it was agreed to concentrate our fundraising on SCIAF."

After full discussion of the issues, the Council agreed to continue to accord top priority to SCIAF, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, in terms of financial support and to FreshStart in terms of support in kind. Other requests for charitable support will continue to be considered on an exceptional basis, with the proviso that the requesting charities should have objectives in line with St Peter's parish or the Catholic Church.

Altar server Ministry

14. At its November meeting, Council members welcomed a report by Ivor Clarke on the Altar Server Ministry, followed by a personal presentation at the February meeting. At present 21 altar servers - 11 boys and 10 girls - deployed in teams of six serve at Sunday Mass with everyone having specific roles. Ivor emphasised that parents of prospective altar servers 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 duty. Parents are also involved in training sessions and are expected to discuss training materials with their children. The emphasis was less on what the servers do, more on how and why they behave in a particular way in such a special place.

15. A number of issues were passed to the liturgy Links group for discussion: the use of thurible and incense; frequency of altar server service and deployment; membership of the Liturgy Links Team; recruitment of a supporting adult helper. Council members joined Mgr Kerr in thanking Ivor for his work and complimented him and the altar servers on the very high standards achieved.

Communications

16. On several occasions, the Council recognised the important role of the weekly parish newsletter in keeping parishioners informed and involved in parish life. In addition, Juliet MacKellaig, the parish website administrator, had in the course of the Session upgraded and relaunched the website, an important and comprehensive resource for information about the parish, including the Council and its work. The Council was particularly grateful to Juliet for taking on the unscheduled task of updating the online parish directory. Members were also grateful to Bruce Royan for updating the printed directory which has now been made available to parishioners.

Other PPC business

17. During the Session, the Council dealt with a wide range of business in the course of which members:

- confirmed their support for the bereavement counselling service and the arrangements for an annual Bereavement Mass
- agreed that work should start on drafting a modern constitution for the Council based on a model provided by the Pastoral Resources Department at Gillis Centre
- noted revised arrangements for readers at Sunday masses
- congratulated the Eco-Congregation Group on achieving official recognition for St Peter's as an eco-congregation.

In addition, the Council was grateful for reports on the work of parish Ministries and other organisations which, as recorded earlier, are covered in more detail in the new publication *Annual Report of Parish Activities in 2014-15*.

Finally

18. The Parish Pastoral council wishes to place on record its appreciation of Mgr Kerr for his leadership of the parish, and of all those who contribute in any way to maintaining and improving the life of the parish community of St Peter's.

St Peter's Parish Pastoral Council
8 June 2015