

MINUTES OF PARISH AGM 22nd June 2010

Fr Tony Whale opened the meeting with prayer at 7.45pm, with approximately 70 parishioners in attendance.

Mike King (Chair) explained the role of the Co-ordinators and their areas of responsibility. He thanked Fr Tony for his input (spiritual and otherwise) since his arrival in the parish. Fr Tony commented on the changes in the parish since he was first here as a deacon many years ago and congratulated all concerned for the upkeep of the premises.

Co-Ordinators' Reports

Liturgy – Michelle MacDonald

- Michelle reported on the various aspects of Liturgy within the parish and the fact that the questionnaire results had highlighted an interest in liturgies other than the celebration of Mass. A series of early morning 'commuters' services will be arranged in the near future.
- Children's Masses have been very popular and it is hoped that pupils from St Peter's and St Andrew's schools will be more involved in the parish.
- Some discussion then followed concerning replacement of the church organ. After consultation with experts our options seem to be a pipe organ at approximate cost of £30,000 or an electronic at around £10,000. It was agreed that cost must be balanced against likely use of the instrument. After further debate the Team will put forward details to the parish and endeavour to determine the will of the majority.
- New translation of the Missal – it is hoped that with adequate explanation of the reasons behind the changes, the parish will at least be positive about them.

Formation – Caroline King (Report given by Mike in her absence)

- Huge thanks were expressed to all those who already give so much of their time as catechists. The parish is always in need of more.
- It is very important that the young people of the parish are not segregated in any way, but are embraced by every aspect of parish life. Modern communication systems are particularly suited to youngsters and we should be using them.
- Adult formation is crucially important and the questionnaire revealed that ethical and moral issues are of great concern. John Greenland has volunteered to lead a discussion group which will focus on such issues.

Danny Lynch raised concerns about the lack of youth representation at the meeting and also requested feedback from the Youth Worker funded by the Ashted Churches Together. It was suggested that younger parishioners should be encouraged to 'shadow' the Co-ordinators and it was reported that the Youth Worker, who is very involved in the local schools, would be coming to address the parish sometime in September.

Marriage and Family Life – Fina Tisi

Fina sees her role as that of Co-ordinator of what families wish to see happening in the parish. Ideas from the Questionnaire included:

- A mother and toddler group
- A post-communion group
- A post confirmation group
- Marriage Refresher days
- Celebration of anniversaries

Local Community – Jan Cassar and Keith Merrett

Keith reported on the analysis of the recent questionnaire from which it was noted that parishioners had expressed interest in concerts at St Michael's, organised walks and theatre trips.

Simon Fielder is willing to help plan a series of concerts with wide-ranging content, and Keith is in the process of organising a series of walks to be led by himself and Gerry MacAmhlaoibh – with guidance from Bill Archer.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Keith reported that all essential checks have been carried out for the parish. There is understandable concern about the level of bureaucracy but the fact is that paedophiles are twice as likely to be part of a church congregation than other communities.

Any concerns in this area should be referred directly to Keith.

Care of the Wider Community – Ted Le Riche

This area of responsibility includes:

- CAFOD – led by Philip Ward
- Christian Aid – led by Pat Cass
- Justice and Peace – led by Paul Gruzalski
- Ecumenism – led by Ted

Ted encouraged as many people as possible to attend the Christian Unity service to be held at St George's on 7th July. He would like to encourage all the churches in Ashted to participate in other themed services, sharing our different traditions.

Peter Andrews appealed for more involvement of Catholics in the running of the regular youth group in St Michael's Hall for the Ashted Learning Difficulties group, which he and Maureen were instrumental in setting up.

Paul Gruzalski urged the parish to get young people involved in Justice and Peace issues as this will attract their interest more than attendance at church services does. He also appealed for more parishioners to join existing House Prayer Groups.

Finance – Jeremy Webb

Jeremy emphasised that the Finance Team needs to ensure that parish income covers its weekly expenses.

Particular expenses which have been incurred or are about to be incurred include:

- New church heating system – completed
- Replacement windows – funds allocated
- Refurbishment of hall kitchen – to come
- Upgrading of hall heating – to come

Parishioners were encouraged to 'Gift Aid' their donations wherever possible since this increased the value to the parish by 25% and to pay by Standing Order as this made it easier to plan the finances. Despite the difficult financial situation those who could were asked to give more.

Copies of the 2009 Financial Report were available at the meeting and had been published in the Parish Magazine. It was pointed out by Bill O'Neill that it would be more helpful to publish a commentary on the accounts in addition to the figures themselves.

In response Mike King acknowledged that communication from the Team was not always at its best and would be improved.

Fr Tony expressed his appreciation and thanks to Jan Cassar for her very effective management and care of the Hall, which is not a financial liability.

Parish Website

Steve Rouse formally launched the new parish website which is accessible by all the Co-ordinators so that it can (and must be) constantly updated.

Fr Tony emphasised the crucial importance of having the weekly Newsletter posted prior to the weekend, so that newcomers or visitors to the parish can always have access to up to date information.

Steve will be posting photos of the Co-ordinators provided all are in agreement.

Fund Raising

Mike King introduced Tricia Barker and her daughter, Gemma, who have very kindly taken responsibility for a series of fund-raising activities in the parish.

Having listened to the various reports Tricia highlighted the following:

- To fund replacement organ, windows, hall kitchen and heating we need c. £50,000
- If each of the 500+ families in the Parish 'Gift Aided' £1 per week for 18 months, the money would be raised!
- It is essential that the parish takes ownership of this fund-raising project – Tricia and Gemma to lead it.
- It is proposed that the project will have wider outreach than just the parish – our schools and the village community will be encouraged to take part.
- The new website will be a very valuable tool.

Mike thanked all those who attended and encouraged feedback on the matters under discussion.

Deacon Peter Andrews expressed his heartfelt thanks to everyone in the parish for all of their support for him and his family since their arrival in the community 21 years ago.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm