



Diocese of Nottingham: The Good Shepherd Parish Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 29th November 2023

In attendance: Phil Bray (Chair), Philip Martin and Canon Philipp Ziomek.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Canon Philipp.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from John Doherty, Oliver Kuras and Francesca Lynch.

3. Parish Choir- Director of Music

Mike Hoy and Liz Hammond attended for this item, representing the parish choir.

Mike initiated the discussion, referencing his email dated 14th November 2023, which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting and which set out the case for a requested honorarium for a new parish choir leader, if that proved necessary in order to recruit someone to replace Robert O'Farrell.

The following additional points were made in the discussion which followed:

- It was confirmed that Robert O'Farrell's resignation takes effect immediately after the choir's performance at Midnight Mass this year.
- To date, it has not been possible to recruit a volunteer replacement, despite publicising the vacancy in editions of the parish newsletter and through the diocesan "RoundUp" publication.
- Although Liz has acted temporarily as choir leader in the past, she is not able to cover the post now as she does not feel she has the relevant liturgical knowledge or skills to lead and develop the choir in the way that Robert has done since he took up the role 6-7 years ago at Canon Philipp's instigation.
- The choir will therefore cease to function if there is not a replacement leader in post immediately after Christmas. It might be possible however to reform it, if a new leader was appointed reasonably soon afterwards.
- A member of the choir has carried out some research and has identified that payments are often made to the directors of secular choirs, ranging up to approximately £3,000 pa at the higher end of the scale.
- With that in mind, the choir are hoping that an honorarium of £1,900 pa could be approved by the parish as an inducement, if need be, to recruit a replacement choir leader. The current choir members are prepared to contribute £400

towards that from their existing subscription payments and are hoping that the parish will contribute the balance of £1,500.

- It was confirmed that the choir currently performs at the 9.45am Sunday Mass once every month and also at other times of the year (eg Easter, Christmas and holy days). Rehearsals take place for most weeks in the year, each typically lasting for one and half hours from 7-8.30pm.
- The choir leader has additional responsibilities in terms of researching and preparing the music programme in advance of the rehearsals. A new piece of music may require extensive rehearsal before it is performed at Mass.
- The choir membership has been relatively static over the last few years, with most but not all of the current membership being practising Catholics.
- Mike and Liz would be prepared to ask the choir whether they would be able to perform more regularly at Mass if requested by the parish in return for an honorarium being approved. They also asked if it would be possible to publicise the vacant leader post more widely than hitherto.

It was explained that the finance committee would consider their request and advise Canon Philipp who has the final decision making powers in accordance with the finance committee's constitution. Mike and Liz withdrew from the meeting at that point.

Consideration of the request by the committee then took place. Philip advised that the think tank had, at Canon Philipp's request, also considered the issue at its meeting on 18th November 2023. They had been unanimously of the view that the honorarium request be refused on the grounds that there were many equally worthy ministries in the parish where parishioners' time is freely given and it was felt that it would create an unhelpful precedent if this request were to be supported.

In considering the issue, the committee acknowledged the role played by the choir in supporting and enhancing the liturgy at Holy Mass. The committee was however mindful that to the best of its knowledge there were no precedents for such payments in other parishes within our diocese. It was felt that ministries in the parish should normally be carried out freely on a voluntary basis and it would create a potentially unhelpful precedent to make an exception in this case. The parish will however renew its efforts to recruit a replacement leader at the earliest opportunity.

ACTION 43/23: Canon Philipp to discuss subsequently with Philip and agree how best to convey this decision to the choir.

4. Minutes of the meeting on 21st September 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will be posted on the parish noticeboard and website. **ACTION 44/23: Philip** to action accordingly.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

a) Parish database support- It was confirmed that the new parish database had now been installed and that Oliver (Wastell) has provided a related seminar for Canon Philipp and the parish administrative staff.

b) Provision of a defibrillator- Philip explained that this was still under investigation. The purchase of a defibrillator had been agreed in principle by Canon Philipp and

although Rebecca O'Connor had identified a suitable model that could be purchased from the British Heart Foundation, she had now been asked to advise on the cost/suitability of an alternative model from the St. John Ambulance Service which might be less expensive. Phil mentioned that he had picked up some concerns in the parish about the length of time that had elapsed since it had been agreed that the parish would provide the equipment and it was agreed that we should try to move this matter on as quickly as possible. **ACTION 45/23: Philip** to pursue this with Rebecca.

- c) ***Review of parish staff salaries-*** It was noted that it had recently been announced that the Real Living Wage (RLW), promoted by the Living Wage Foundation, would rise by 10.1%- from £10.90 to £12.00 per hour. Organisations that are signed up to pay the RLW have until 1st May 2024 to implement the increase. It was noted that as the diocese technically employs our parish staff we must await notification from them as to when the increase is to be paid and then should ask them to apply the same percentage increase from the same date to the salary for the parish office manager post. **ACTION 46/23: Canon Philipp** to action this at the appropriate time.
- d) ***Proposed coffee machine-*** Philip reported in Francesca's absence that she had requested a three month trial period from Cema Vending for the proposed new vending machine to be located in the parish centre and that the company's response was currently awaited. **ACTION 47/23: Francesca** to follow this up as appropriate.
- e) ***Agenda and minutes-*** Philip advised that he had not yet had time to provide Francesca with copies of the agenda and minutes of the committee's meetings over that last two years but would do so at the earliest opportunity. **ACTION 48/23: Philip** to pursue.

6. Proposed amalgamation with St. Anthony's, Calverton

Canon Philipp provided an update on the proposed disestablishment of the parish of Our Lady of Victories, Southwell with St Anthony's, Calverton. It is hoped that as part of this reorganisation the Good Shepherd parish's amalgamation with St Anthony's will be approved by the Bishop by the end of March 2024. Various financial issues will need to be resolved, including the disposal of the current parish's financial assets which current indications suggest may be apportioned between the two new parishes on a 50/50 basis.

The committee agreed that the amalgamation should be pursued as soon as possible and that it was not necessary to have any further consultations in the Good Shepherd parish, notwithstanding the time that has elapsed since the earlier round of consultation. It was suggested that the detail of the financial issues could be resolved after a formal decision on the amalgamation had been made and from a purely financial perspective it would be best if the amalgamation took place from 1st April 2024.

Ahead of this it was agreed that it might be helpful if St Anthony's were to be represented on the Good Shepherd finance committee. With that in mind, Canon Philipp will provide Philip with contact details for Martin Foulds, who is St Anthony's representative on the finance committee for their existing parish, with a view to him being invited to join our committee. **ACTION 49/23: Canon Philipp** to provide Philip with Martin's contact details.

7. Parish finances- update

Philip provided an update on the parish's current finances in Francesca's absence:

- there is a credit balance of £26,118 in the parish's current bank account as at today's date. However, it is understood that the proceeds from several mandatory second collections have yet to be passported to the diocese and so the credit balance will be reduced to reflect that.
- the parish's separate set-off account (held with the diocese) is currently in credit to the sum of £237,434.93. This account is being built up to help with the cost of repairing the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the church building and will limit the amount of money we subsequently have to borrow. To that end the account is topped up by regular monthly transfers of £3,950 from the parish bank account.

8. Analysis of income 2023/24

Philip took the Committee through his report projecting the income in 2023/24 from the parish's "measurable" income sources (weekly offertory donations, bank standing orders, parish debt collections, Gift Aid, the Dona contactless donation point and donations made through the "Donate" facility).

Despite a 14% increase in Mass attendance, the parish's total income from these sources in 2023/24 is now projected to show a decrease of 0.96% on 2022/23 levels. When inflation is factored in, the real terms reduction is around 5.5%. It was recognised that in normal circumstances the committee would look to address this trend by having a finance committee led appeal from the pulpit. It was recognised, however, that many parishioners are likely to be struggling with their household bills (including energy costs) given the current levels of inflation and it would be difficult to justify an appeal when the parish's accounts for 2022/23 showed a significant net "surplus" of income over expenditure.

Canon Philipp also mentioned that the Good Shepherd been selected as one of four parishes in the diocese which are to be asked to pilot a new campaign for finance with the overall aim of raising £8 million to be allocated over three priority areas of spending. The target for the pilot scheme is for each of the participating parishes to raise £100,000, 40% of which would be retained by the parish, with the balance to be spent on the other diocesan priority areas.

It was agreed therefore that it would be inappropriate to hold a parish specific financial appeal at the present time. Instead, we should try to persuade more parishioners to join our parish planned giving and Gift Aid arrangements through a supplement to the parish newsletter. Phil offered to draft this and to assist him Philip will provide some financial data about parishioners' current levels of giving, including those that attract Gift Aid.

ACTION 50/23: (1) Philip to continue to bring quarterly income reports to the committee;(2) Phil to draft the supplement on planned giving and Gift Aid for the parish newsletter when the data from Philip is to hand.

9. Parish Christmas Fair 2023

Philip reported that an overall profit of £10,360.82 had been made on the Parish Christmas Fair 2023, which was a record amount.

The committee recognised the work of Sarah Benedek in organising the Fair so successfully and Canon Philipp advised that a suitable token of the parish's appreciation would be made to Sarah in due course.

10. New parish website- update

Phil advised that he and Canon Philipp had met recently with the managing director of Coda Education and had agreed a reworked design for the website. Phil is now to produce a site map with a list of pages and over Christmas he hopes to write the contents of the website. It was confirmed that the current target date for the new website to go live is Easter 2024.

ACTION 51/23: Phil to follow up and keep the committee informed of progress.

11. Any other business

a) *Deanery youth worker post-* Canon Philipp mentioned that five parishes in the deanery (including Good Shepherd) had expressed an interest in jointly funding the creation of a deanery youth worker post at an annual salary of c£29,000. The initial cost to each parish will be £7,142 which includes some one-off setting up expenditure. The post will be advertised and recruited for in accordance with diocesan procedures and the appointee will be expected to support youth and catechesis work over the five parishes.

The committee expressed its support in principle for this initiative, recognising that catechesis and the development of the Faith in young people is a major priority for the church. **ACTION 52/23:** Canon Philipp to provide the committee with further details of the proposals and keep them informed as the initiative develops.

b) *Uniformed groups' use of the parish centre-* Canon Philipp advised that Catherine Moore, who is one of our parishioners and who leads the girls' uniformed groups in the parish, is being forced to relinquish her role owing to personal circumstances. The uniformed groups' connection to the parish and the Catholic Faith are becoming increasingly tenuous. It might in those circumstances be necessary to revisit the arrangement whereby the groups are not currently charged for the use of parish centre facilities in that they are deemed to be "parish groups" and as such allowed free use of the centre (albeit they do currently make occasional voluntary donations to parish funds). It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the committee's next meeting and that the views of the parish think tank should also be canvassed. **ACTION 53/23:** Philip to agenda for the next meetings of the parish finance committee and the parish think tank.

12. Dates of the meetings in 2024

It was confirmed that the committee's meetings in the 2024 calendar year would continue to be held in the parish centre from 6.30-8.00pm on the following dates:

7th March 2024

13th June 2024 (but this date needs to link with the annual return deadline)

19th September 2024

5th December 2024

ACTION 54/23: (1) All to note in their diaries. (2) Philip to book the Gilbert Room accordingly.

13. Closing Prayer

Canon Philipp closed the meeting with a prayer.