

Our Lady of the Annunciation, Addiscombe
Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

Thursday 20th June 2024 at 8.00 pm in the Parish Resource Centre

Minutes

1. Opening Prayer: (Fr Keith)

2. Apologies: Marie Tross, Nike Arowobusoye

Present: Fr Keith, Terry Braim, Paul Donovan, Mary Ann McGuigan,
Peter McGuigan, Jenny Mitchener, Jessica Mills

3. Reports and updates:

Safeguarding: DBS certificates are steadily being delivered and registration with the update service is being encouraged. A spreadsheet has been set up to record applications and will be used for future update reminders. Joanna Murphy has scheduled another training session and is also encouraging the use of the online training. Recruitment of new volunteers is still temporarily suspended while the current batch of documentation is being processed. A deadline will be set for current volunteers who have not engaged with the process, after which their participation will need to be suspended.

Plant works:

Hall Roof: Architects have been engaged to assess photos and structural details to help decide the best solution. Similarly, in considering the repairs to the **Church Ceiling** architectural advice will be sought.

*Tim Rosario is liaising with engineers.

Windows in the Crying Chapel: These repairs are not particularly urgent. Gary Lally is still investigating and may consult a surveyor and refer to details of previous repairs.

Fire escape: No progress yet regarding the required pathway to allow smooth exit from the grounds.

External defibrillator: Tim Rosario has installed the cabinet, which is now fully operational and registered. Fr Keith will arrange for the access code to be displayed inside the hall.

Parish Group Contacts: Fr Keith has still not been able to confirm whether the diocese will be willing to provide role/group specific email addresses such as ucm.addiscombe@rcaos.org.uk or similar. Other missing or out of date information about groups continues to be pursued.

Site Security: Fr Keith has commissioned Noel & Aloysius to assess the fencing around the site and make recommendations.

Maintenance Group: The possibility of using one of the garages as a base for a maintenance group has been discussed. The structural integrity of the garages will need to be assessed. (They have asbestos roofs).

Parish Anniversaries:

Commemorative Calendar: The 'Calendar Girls' are now at the stage of selecting resources to include and planning the layout.

Altar frontal: Jenny Lucas is establishing a group to pursue the idea of producing a commemorative altar frontal. Fr Keith said he will search for items that were produced for previous anniversaries.

Grotto: Tessa Green is forming a group to look into the possibility of creating a grotto at the side of the church. We do not appear to have a suitable statue, so possible purchases are being considered.

Celebrations: Fr Keith has suggested that sacramental celebrations would be promoted for 8th Dec '24 (60yrs open) and 2nd Oct '25 (50yrs Consecrated), and an open parish celebration on 11th Oct '25 (100yrs Mass in the old church) which he will coordinate with the social club. He is meeting with the Bishop and will try to arrange a visit as part of these celebrations.

Welcome notices: Fr Keith plans to have discussions with readers in the near future. This will include correct use of the microphones and the possibility of scripted formal announcements before some services.

*Greeting people as they arrive for services is something we should all promote. Jennifer Da Silva intends to participate in this and encourage others to do likewise.

4. Mass books

The new lectionary comes into force on 1st Dec., making all our current Mass books redundant. Fr. Keith confirmed that the main set of large books have been purchased already in preparation.

Replacing the books used by the congregation would run to several thousands of pounds, so possible alternatives were discussed.

Ideally during services the congregation would listen intently to the readings, but this can be difficult when clarity is affected by poor diction, PA distortion, poor hearing etc..

Electronic approaches were deemed to provide only partial solutions at some expense. Projection onto screens presents difficulties for those in the side galleries, and the use of TV monitors were not considered visually pleasing. It was pointed out that some like to follow readings in the book to reinforce the meaning, and others re-read parts of the Mass - emphasising the need for a printed form. This could be provided by weekly leaflets - such as those produced by the Redemptorists, or replacing the books at some expense. Further consideration will be needed before a final decision is made.

5. AGM (Wed 26th June) planning:

The general format presented in the draft agenda was agreed.

It was noted that some parish groups had either submitted written reports or requested time for a verbal report, but some others had not responded at all. Some follow-up will be needed.

The Financial Statement for the year to Dec 2023 was then discussed. The final report on the audit had not yet been provided, but feedback was generally good especially regarding our local records and gift aid. The software used by the Diocese had still been causing problems and communication with them and their speed of corrections was still problematic. Fr Keith & Jessica intend to challenge their overall efficiency.

Overall, our 'bottom line' is generally healthy even though our attendance numbers have not fully returned to their pre-covid levels. It was suggested that we really ought to have more direct control over the investment of our assets - the Diocese is not reactive enough to rate changes. Gift Aid is currently going to the Diocese from which we can draw down. Some minor category heading errors were noted and will be corrected.

Thanks were expressed to Jessica Mills for her hard work during the year, and also for translating the output from the Diocesan accounting software into an intelligible format.

6. A.O.B. from Fr Keith

Fr Keith gave a report regarding the recent deanery meeting. Three representatives from the 'fund raising team' of the Diocesan finance group attended the meeting to promote a proposal to engage a new member of staff to assist in increasing income. They reported that income from gift aid was down by about £42k on average. They were suggesting the use of organised formal 'giving appeals'.

Our own parish gift aid and weekly collection income is recovering to a reasonably healthy level - especially since Jenny Mitchener's 'gentle encouragement' for parishioners to review their donations. Currently we have about 360 members in our gift aid scheme.

It was generally felt that there are far more cost effective ways to boost income locally than employing a new central staff member at considerable annual expense (estimated at about £35k + 'on costs').

It was suggested that we might find ways of promoting 'gifts in wills' within the parish, particularly bearing in mind the difference that the Norah Beck bequest has made to the financial security of our parish. There have been very few bequests of any size in recent years.

Fr Keith also pointed out the possibility of parish mergers and/or closures in the future, and that we are certainly not 'immune' from this. In many areas deaneries are becoming 'super parishes' services multiple churches. Pope Francis appears to want all churches to have a deacon.

7. Date of next meeting

This was set for Thursday 25th July at 8.00pm

8. Closing Prayer: (Fr Keith)