

ST MARY'S WOOLHAMPTON PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting 25th June 2008

Present: Niki Bhamra, Sandra Brewester, Kate Burke, Joanna Harrison (chair), Tom Huelin, Barbara Jones, Sean Murphy, Paul Paniccia, Annalisa Webb.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Fr Benedict, Paul Barras, GERALYN COLLINS

2. The meeting opened with prayer

3. **The minutes of the previous** meeting were approved as a true account of the proceedings.

4. Matters Arising

i) There was discussion on clarifying the item under 6.3 in the minutes of the 21st May 2008 meeting. The reading out of all the names of the deceased on their anniversary of death, as listed in the parish bulletin, in the bidding prayers had not been implemented in full across the parish. There was a consensus that the implementation of agreed changes to liturgical practices needed to be overseen by the church committees. It was agreed that the church committees should consider this particular issue, along with presentation of the names of the deceased at the offertory during Masses in November, by September. **Action: Church committees**

It was reported that the parish bereavement support group had found the diocesan day on bereavement support at Basingstoke very worthwhile both in confirming parish practice and providing additional points for consideration. The support group planned to issue literature in the autumn.

The Council's attention was drawn to literature published by the Archdiocese of Birmingham on funeral preparation. It was considered that this subject could be the main agenda item for a future PPC meeting.

ii) It was observed that Council meetings quite often exceeded the finishing time of 9.00 p.m. because a number of items were tabled under Any Other Business without any advanced notice. After some discussion it was agreed that the Chair would terminate the discussion of the main agenda item at 8.45 so that any other business could be dealt with and ensure that Council meetings ended at 9.00 p.m.

5. Formulation of Verbal Communication to the Church Communities

There was no substantive general communication to be made.

6. Review of Actions from the last meeting

6.1 Pastoral Area Celebration: Arrangements as agreed at the last meeting are in hand. Help is required to erect the gazebo on the Sunday morning.

7. Mission in the Parish

Questions were posed about understanding of mission, whether there is a need for it, how it would work, what are its aims and reasons behind it, what would be its structure. After discussion and reflection it was felt that all aspects of pastoral life of the parish had a mission dimension.

The Council was reminded of the last organised parish mission in May 1993 operated by the CMS. Contemporary accounts reported that the events in an extensive programme with venues at all four churches in the parish were poorly attended. Less than 10% of the mass going attendance participated in the parish mission events (the CMS missionaries normally encountered a 25% participation). A report by the missionaries highlighted the separateness of the parish's component church communities and stressed the need to emphasise that it was one parish. One outcome was the formation of a pastoral council for the whole parish. Another was the publication of a magazine for the whole parish, *Quartet*, which proved to be short-lived as only three issues were published. The pastoral council for the whole parish was disbanded around 1998 and reinstated in early 2006.

It was considered that the cultural climate 15 years on is considerably different. A concentrated programme of events similar to the 1993 mission would not be appropriate or sustainable today, it was perceived there was now widespread lack of commitment to any initiative involving multiple periods of time. For example, the RCIA Journey in Faith programme suitable for Catholics wishing to renew the knowledge of their faith was considered too onerous a commitment for many. Single mission-orientated events targeted to specific groups, such as mothers or young people, and of an informal nature might be attractive and sustainable.

Mission for the Catholic youth was considered very important given the extremely high percentage of young people who left the life of the Church. The Council was advised that any attempt to engage the parish youth group with only matters of Catholic faith would not be well received and prove to be counter-productive. Young people would only be attracted by social events and this was the principal way to maintain contact with young Catholics. Council members shared their experiences as young people living in the Church where some had been members in the youth sections of Legion of Mary or SVP. Social activity, such as visiting the elderly, or justice & peace work as part of the confirmation preparation programme might be a good introduction to the mission of the Church with appeal to the young.

There was a feeling that advantage was not being taken when certain situations arose and opportunities presented themselves. A recent example was the debate surrounding the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. Very little was offered in the parish by way of informing the faithful of a Catholic perspective relating to the issues and moral implications of this important legislation. Most members of the parish would have

received information solely through the secular media which was considered to have an anti-Catholic bias. A meeting which had taken place in the pastoral area at Wash Common involving the local MP was considered to have been too remote a location and had taken place too early in the evening. Expertise within the monastic community could have been utilised at an open meeting in the parish.

The need for spiritual development was highlighted. It was suggested that the postponed session on *lectio divina* should be reinstated at a future date and that it should extend to members of the four church committees.

8. Any Other Business

None

The Next Meeting will be on Wednesday 30th July 2008 at Douai Abbey when the main item for consideration will be a Review of the Work of the PPC.

Future date for meeting, subject to confirmation:

Wednesday 17th September 2008

The meeting closed with prayer.

Chair.....

Secretary.....

Date.....