

OUR LADY AND ST JOHN, GORING AND CHRIST THE KING, WOODCOTE

Minutes of Parish Meeting

Held on Wednesday, 28th October 2015 at 7.30pm

1. Opening Prayer

2. Apologies for Absence

There were approximately 38 attendees.

Apologies were received from Kate Johnstone, Sue and Keith Pacey and ???

Shortly after start of meeting, apologies were also received from Karen Brown, Accountant for the Parish.

3. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Attendees were invited to peruse the Minutes. The following matters were raised:

Parish Accounts and Financial Administration – Father Antony was asked whether any progress had been made on negotiations regarding the percentage of Offertory income payable to the Diocese. The response was ‘no’ and that there was very little we could do to change the current arrangement. It was then suggested by Kerry Harding that perhaps the administration costs of the Diocese should be reviewed with regard to making savings. Father Antony said that as Bishop William Kenney was due to visit the Parish at the end of the year, perhaps we could bring the matter up with him. However, when Kerry Harding asked what authority Bishop Kenney had, the answer was ‘very little’.

Woodcote Church – No progress had been made in this respect. The whole question of either improving or rebuilding the church was a major project financially and would need to be discussed with the Diocese.

ACTION: Father A

Installation of PA/Loop System – Father Antony had been in touch with someone regarding this and was waiting for an estimate.

ACTION: Father A

Music at Mass -

Father Antony said that he felt the “choir” was still struggling and that he had hoped to find someone with the right expertise to lead them. So far this had not materialised. However, he felt that everyone had adapted well to the new hymn book and that we were now learning to sing some new hymns.

Relations with Other Churches – Father Antony mentioned that the Ecumenical Prayer Weekend had been a great success. He also mentioned the continuing success of the joint Advent/Lent groups and his involvement with St Leonards Church in Woodcote. Richard Knollys was concerned that the Christian Unity Service appeared to have been dropped and expressed his hope that this could be resurrected now that Father Antony and the Reverend Paul Boughton were established in their posts.

ACTION: Father A/RK

Any Other Business – Remembrance Sunday Service – this year Father Antony proposed to start the Mass at 9.45am to enable him to get to the Village Memorial in time. There was some concern about how to inform people of the change. Ann-Marie Hupé requested that Father Antony let her know any changes to Mass times well in advance so she could get them published in the Woodcote Correspondent and GGN. It was also suggested that such information should be put on the Parish website. Gloria McAdden apologised for not having pursued the updating of the website as offered last year and promised to do so shortly.

ACTION: GMc

4. Parish Finances

Father Antony apologised for the fact that Karen Brown was at the last minute unable to attend the meeting. He circulated the accounts but admitted that finances were not his strong point. He therefore asked Greg Dean if he could explain a little about the Gift Aid etc. Greg explained about the new system he had set up and that Gift Aid had been claimed on £23,000 in the last financial year which amounted to £6,500. David Browne had a few questions about the Accounts and Gift Aid variance which Greg Dean answered. Richard Knollys pointed out that there was a third page of the Accounts which showed this year's figures from January to June.

Mary Ann Harding asked whether the money given to the church by standing order/direct debit could be published in the newsletter, along with the donations given in cash or envelopes. Father Antony responded that this would involve too much paperwork.

5. Parish Survey Results

Father Antony reported that Kim Walker had put together a file with all the hard copy responses that had been received and it was hoped that she would put this information on a computerised database. Different people had volunteered their services in different ways and this information would be very useful. There are still a number of people who have not filled out the forms, particularly amongst those parishioners who do not attend church regularly. It was suggested that we should try to encourage more people to complete the forms (including lapsed Catholics) and that perhaps we should put some forms in the benches with a pencil. Father Antony mentioned that though people in Streatley were not officially in the Parish, he very much welcomed them and wished them to continue coming to our church.

Pauline Knollys asked whether there were any new volunteers to help with the cleaning as many of those on the Cleaning Rota had been doing it for 30 years or more and were anxious to retire. Father Antony responded that unfortunately there were no new names on the list. However, he hoped that Frances Mackintosh would shortly find time to recruit new members.

Father Antony mentioned that many people visiting the church have commented on its friendly atmosphere and he thanked parishioners for their efforts in this regard.

6. Church Facilities Extension

Father Antony explained that he had been in touch with an architect experienced in Church buildings and asked him to produce a basic sketch of what we required – this had been emailed to some parishioners ahead of the meeting. David Browne asked whether he had entered into a contract with the architect but Father Antony said he had not. He also mentioned that Richard Knollys had shown him the plans drawn up by John Bicknell but that these could not be used since John had died. There was some discussion about the layout, where the entrance should be, whether one disabled toilet was sufficient etc. Father Antony then continued to explain that once more detailed plans had been drawn up, these would be submitted to SODC for planning permission which he had been told was unlikely to be a

problem. At this stage, he had no idea of costs or how much fundraising would be involved. We would probably be able to get a small grant and there was also £200,000 held in trust which could be used towards this project. However, this money is for Goring and Woodcote and some may need to be set aside for the latter.

Richard Knollys asked what the 'brief' for this extension was? Mike Todd then explained about the need for a written brief, approved by the Parish as a whole, to be given to the architect with the request that he draw up plans, showing different options and costs. Mike Lewis also supported the principle of having a steering group to progress this forward. It was therefore agreed that Richard Knollys, Mike Todd and Mike Lewis should form a sub-committee to discuss this project and then perhaps invite one or two other parishioners (preferably ladies) to join them in preparing the final 'brief'.

ACTION: RK/MT/ML

7. Christmas Services

Philippa Seymour mentioned that the Christmas services are always very well attended, often by families who do not normally go to church. Since many of these were not familiar with Latin, she felt it inappropriate to include it in the service or if it was, that everyone should have printed copies of the prayers/chants available. Father Antony agreed that he would not include a Latin Credo in this year's Mass. This led on to a general discussion about the pros and cons of including Latin in the services overall.

With regard to the timing of Christmas services, Father Antony said he was proposing to have two Masses on Christmas Eve – one at 5pm and one later in the evening. Again, Ann-Marie Hupé requested he give her exact times within the next two weeks so that she could get them published in the local magazines.

ACTION: Father A.

8. Any Other Business

Fran asked about the grotto and Father Antony reported that the weeds had been removed and replaced with gravel and that he was now looking into the question of whether to renovate the statue of Our Lady or to purchase a new one.

Kerry Harding commented favourably on the improved new lighting, especially above the Sacred Heart and Our Lady.

The meeting closed at 9pm.