

St Werburgh's Parish Council Meeting 14th November 2024

Present:

Parish Priest:	Father Paul Shaw
Finance:	Denise Jones
Housekeeping and Hospitality:	Cristina Jones & Rufus
Liturgy:	Lyn Williams & Stephen Tierney
Outreach:	Lal Cook & Tina Bainbridge
Social:	Bernice Meredith & Pat Floate
Altar Servers:	Gerry Tighe
Buildings and Maintenance	Marian McCarthy.
Admin Assistant to PP	Stephen Hutchinson

1 – Opening Prayer by Father Paul.

Father Paul had a call out and explained that he would open the meeting and then hand over to Lyn to chair the meeting. Father Paul opened the meeting with a prayer, and updated the council on urgent news. We kept Evan and his family, and Anne Massey in our prayers.

Lyn read out a thank you email from Cardinal Fitzgerald:

“Dear Father, Paul, thank you for collecting me at the station yesterday, for looking after me so well, and for allowing me to speak to the gathering in the evening, and also for your generous offering. Stephen, the Secretary accompanied me to the station, looking after my bag and seeing me on the train going to Euston, so I didn't have to change in Crew. I attached the text of the talk as promised. I told Stephen the Secretary that I would be appended to the Anglican parish newsletter. He told me that it had been advertised there. There was one Anglican clergywoman Jill, whom I had known in Liverpool, who came and greeted me at the end, I hope your meeting in Manchester went well.

with best wishes for your Parish Ministry,

Michael”.

2 – Welcome and Apologies.

There were no apologies for absence.

3 - Minutes of the 10/10/24 meeting.

Corrections - Third Paragraph, page 5.

Previous minutes read “Canon Welch, not just a Moses, but a Joshua to his people”. That should have read “Canon Chambers”, not “Canon Welch”.

Also, the sentence “the last information we had about the family was that they lived in Maidenhead” should have read, “the last information we had about the family was that they lived in Henly-on-Thames”. Thank you to Gerry for spotting these mistakes.

The minutes were approved by *Marian* and seconded by *Denise*.

4 - Review of Recent Events.

4.1 - Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald's Visit and talk (organised by Stephen Tierney)

Cardinal Fitzgerald's talk was very well attended. There were 120 plus those attending via live streaming. Lyn did an excellent job publicizing this event (we would not have had those attendance figures without the publicity). The church is extremely grateful to Cardinal Fitzgerald for visiting us and giving such an interesting talk. A tremendous job by all, especially Father Paul and Stephen Tierney in arranging for the Cardinal to visit and for organizing this event so well. Stephen H asked Cardinal Fitzgerald the next day if he had to sum up his talk in one sentence, what would this be. With absolutely no hesitation he said “Make friends”.

Action 4.1: Stephen H to share the transcript of Cardinal Fitzgerald's talk

(see links below)

stwerburghchester.co.uk/about-st-werburghs/essays-and-lectures/cardinal-fitzgerald-talk-and-vatican-document/

4.2 - Mass for the recently bereaved

We have had lots of thanks for this Bereavement Mass by email and in person, for example, a lady who lost her very special brother sent a lovely email thanking the bereavement group and all those involved for this beautiful Mass.

Thank you to Lyn for producing the bereavement cards which are a great introduction to the newly formed bereavement group. 100 cards were printed, and between 80 and 90 have already been given out. More will be printed for the Holy Souls. The bereavement Mass was very well attended, and is growing every year. Welcoming was seen as really important for this Mass, as many of the attendees will not be regular Churchgoers or members of our parish.

Action 4.2: Lyn to print more bereavement cards (for the Holy Souls Mass)

4.3 - Welcome Back Celebration for those recently married

Couples who were married within the last five years were all emailed and invited to this special celebration Mass. Nine couples attended. One couple could not come on the day. One couple came all the way from Milton-Keynes and another from Leicester. We had many replies from couples who regretfully could not attend, but were delighted to have been invited. From feedback we agreed that although the numbers were small, it was so worthwhile. We discussed whether next time, we should encourage parishioners to join the Welcome Back Celebration, however Cristina and Andrew came to the Celebration and said what was important to them, was that the Celebration felt special, intimate and personal. The couples stayed for refreshments and chat after the celebration. Each couple had a lovely candle to take away which Father Paul suggested could be lit every anniversary. This was greatly appreciated. Stephen Tierney thought that the celebration emphasized once again how important a warm welcome is to any Mass. Tina related how much she loved being a welcomer at the 6pm Mass on a Sunday. Lal quoted Father Paul "Once you are married at St Werburgh's you are part of our family".

Action 4.3 Father Paul and Liturgy to agree on the frequency of these.

4.4 – Remembrance Day Service

This was a beautiful service, appreciated by the whole parish. As always, the music was exceptional, we thanked Will from Kings who played the trumpet for the third year. Feedback (received by Gillian Rowe) from one old gentleman who had just started coming to the 10.45 am Mass on a Sunday, was that he was absolutely blown away by the Remembrance Day service. Because of this, he came to the Welcome Wednesday. He also wants to be a reader.

It was discussed if these special Masses could be recorded for posterity i.e. Midnight Mass, Easter Sundays, Big Feast Days (plus Masses that include some of Father Paul's best jokes). It was acknowledged by all how much dedication and care Tom Rozario puts into each service, organizing the music.

4.4 Action: Marian (Lead for Readers) to meet with Father Paul and Liturgy group to discuss. Lyn check License with Steve H

4.5 – Drop in Social

Our 2nd quarterly drop in social was a lovely gathering in the day chapel. There were people from all countries here. The event was seen as very successful and a great way to introduce people to the St

Werburgh's family. Collectively there were people fluent in 8 languages. A very interesting mix of people.

4.6 – Welcome Wednesdays – Trip to Bents' Garden Centre

Suggested by Joan and David, we had a coach trip with 28 people from Welcome Wednesday and their friends. Feedback received was that it was an enjoyable experience and great companionship. Shrewsbury (Gerry's homeland) was suggested as a possible venue for the next group outing in the spring. Pat was congratulated for her work in organizing the visit to Bents, and Bernice for planning the Hospice fund raising at Welcome Wednesday.

4.7 – Liturgy

There has been an internal music review within the choir and music. Parish feedback was invited and reviewed at the Liturgy meeting. Grateful thanks to the progress of the music ministry within the parish led by Tom. There had been a lot of lovely feedback from the review, especially the Sung Psalms. Lal commented that one or two people had passed an opinion that Sung Psalms will make the Mass longer. That does not appear to be the case.

The Liturgy notes are on the website and noticeboard. Following comments from several parishioners, a copy of the Liturgy notes will also be available in the left-hand drawer in the porch for reading in the church (not to be taken away).

Action 4.7 Stephen H to make sure the Liturgy Notes are in the left-hand drawer in the porch.

4.8 - Bereavement Group

Our newly formed Bereavement Group have had their first meeting supported by Pat, Lal and Lyn. Elizabeth Hoey and Maureen McCabe agreed to lead this group. The month of November being an appropriate month to begin, the group welcomed at the recently bereaved Mass. The lovely bereavement cards were well received. The new group were already seen as being supportive by making themselves known to the rest of the congregation, and gathering a few new members. They now have at least one man within the group.

There was much discussion about the logistics of managing such a group, i.e. many bereaved people had work commitments so could not attend meetings during the day. Pat felt it was great that so much had been already done, especially by Father Paul whose care for the recently bereaved was seen by all as something worthy of praise, and an example to follow. Stephen Tierney raised an interesting point in that bereavement is seen as one of the top three factors in bringing someone back to faith.

5 Forthcoming Events

5.1 – 150th Year Anniversary of St Werburgh's Church

The coming year is the 150th Anniversary of St Werburgh's Church and there is much to be discussed and arranged. There was a healthy and lively discussion about how the 150th anniversary can be celebrated within the parish. Pat shared how much work the history group have already done. Lyn commented that Tom and FP are putting in a bid for Songs of Praise to be held at St Werburgh's and planning to begin in January. Lyn commented that the Feast Day of St Werburgh's is the 3rd February, and a Healing Mass of Hope will be led by SVP and the parish, and celebrated on the 2nd February. This was agreed by the Liturgy group and Father Paul. There was some concern that the first event of the 150th anniversary would be a Healing Mass of Hope. Tina suggested a Youth Mass with lots of lively music. Gerry pointed out that we need to invite all clergy including Fr Standish and Fr Claridge. It needs to be a celebration as well as a Liturgical event, and something we will look back on for many years to come. We are very conscious that we have many willing volunteers through our renewal programme and both Pat and Lyn shared a concern that we don't over extend ourselves and damage the work being done.

It was agreed we should have a small working group to take things forward. Tina would like to be involved. Gerry will also be involved with regards to restoration of the graves and the history of the Parish Priests at St Werburgh's over the past 150 years. We had a discussion about who else could be involved in the group. Lyn said it was important that we involve parishioners, once a small group had set been set up. One possibility would be to approach others that were nominated for parish council. This will be discussed with Father Paul.

Cristina said she was happy to be an executioner but not a planner. We also discussed the fact that many groups in existence e.g. gardening, could come up with ideas for their own group to celebrate 150 years (e.g. 150 bulbs or roses planted, nativity scene in the garden)

Action 5.1: Lyn to discuss this 150th celebration working group idea with Father Paul before the end of the month.

6 - Any Other Business

6.1 Porch Redecoration

The porch decoration planning is well under way with a plan to execute in January. The Day Chapel update still has to go to 2nd stage approval with the Historic Churches in April. We hope to complete the work in 2025 for the opening of the Celia Murphy Room.

6.2 - Involvement Survey

We were delighted with the twenty-five expressions of interest for the different groups. All these people have been sent an email from Lyn, and Lyn has passed these contact details on to relevant council leads.

Lyn suggested that a "getting involved page" be included in next year's diary and on the Church Website.

Action 6.2: Parish Council Leads to ensure all these people have been contacted by 23rd November.

6.3 Researching Canon Chambers and Canon Welch

Gerry added that he is continuing in his research of former PPs at St Werburgh. Canon Chambers (PP at St Werburgh's 1903 to 1924) died on the 30th November. Gerry wrote to people who might have known Canon Chambers in Henley upon Thames. He wrote to Canon Paul Fitzpatrick who replied but was not able to shed much light on Canon Chambers. Canon Welch was PP from 1944 to 1949

Action 6.3: Gerry to continue to research history of Canon Chambers and Canon Welch as PP at St Werburgh.

6.4 Garden at St Werburgh.

Cristina has had contact from "getting involved", and Mary will be joining on Saturday to help with the gardening. Trees are on track to be cut back in December, pending approval from Council. Regular hedge cutting is in place. It is the last week of Green Bin collection, so the team needs to agree on a plan for going forward. Possibly work on a less frequent rota.

Action 6.4: Christine to monitor council's response to the Church's plan for tree cutting.

6.5 "Spend, Spend, Spend"

Tina has booked "Spend, Spend, spend" the musical as a matinee 2.30 pm outing for a social. She has booked 24 tickets and recommend people travel by train. This is for the 2nd January at the Royal Exchange in Manchester. A risk assessment will be necessary. This will be advertised in the newsletter.

Action 6.5: Tina to complete a risk assessment for the ‘Spend, Spend, Spend’ matinee attendance.

6.6 Availability of PCM minutes

Lal mentioned that some parishioners have asked if the PCM minutes could be accessible in the porch office drawers to read. (See **Action item 4.7**).

6.7 Bookmark and Church Clock

Bernice proposed a 150-anniversary bookmark as a nice memento of the event. Maybe charge 50p for a laminated bookmark? (As per the notelets). She also mentioned that the clock in the entrance porch needs correcting.

Action 6.7: Stephen+1 other to change batteries in clock in entrance to church.

6.8 Suicide Bill Meeting

There is a meeting next Tuesday 19th November to discuss the proposed changes to the assisted suicide bill. Father Paul will lead the meeting. This should be advertised in the newsletter. Pat also mentioned that we need a date for the next Synod.

Action 6.8: FP to agree a date for the Synod meeting in the new year.

6.9 Old Gas Heater needs removing.

Marian suggested that the company that delivered the redundant old gas heater part should collect it, as it is taking up space in the Sacristy.

Action 6.9: Stephen H to phone RJW (<https://rjweng.com> 0151 207 2074) to arrange collection of this on Tuesday / Thursday morning.

6.10 QR Code that points to the church.

Cristina asked if it would be possible to add a QR code to the newsletter, that would direct people to the church website for service times.

Action 6.10 Chris Proudfoot / Web team to look into this in February.

6.11 Petty Cash Float for working groups.

Lyn has had some feedback asking the finance group to look into petty cash claims.

Action 6.11.1: To be discussed with Father Paul at next finance meeting.

Once risk assessments have been done, (providing FP agrees) a small petty cash float (e.g. £50) could be held by each of the working groups.

Lyn reminded everyone that we had a coffee and mince pie event for the volunteers last year as a thank you and a review of how things were going.

Action 6.11.2: Parish Council Leads to decide if they want to do this again this year.

6.12 Date and Time of Next PCM

Action 6.12: Lyn to confirm whether this will be 9th Jan (as per diary) or 9th Feb (as per agenda)