

**Parish Gathering – Sunday 4th November 2022**  
**Chaired by Nigel Anstead, notes by Barbara Kay**  
**26 people present**

1. Fr Nicholas opened in prayer.

2. **Social Committee**

- The Community Hub Drop-In Centre ran on 6th October with 14 people attending. The Mayor of Bedford also came and has agreed to advertise the community hub on social media. The next session is on 1st December.
- 42 people had attended the Vintage Tea on 28th October and £169 profit had been made. The last Tea of this year will be on 25th November; none in December as too close to Christmas.
- The Christmas Fayre will take place on Saturday 26th November. All previous parish stallholders have been contacted and agreed to take part again. Two stalls for outside organisations have been sold. Posters and raffle tickets were now available. There is a box at the back of church for donations of bottles, chocolates and toiletries. Help setting needed on the Friday evening from 5.30 to 7pm.
- The minibus had been booked for three or four trips between now and December. Sue advertised a trip to the Christmas Craft Fayre at Ely Cathedral on Saturday 19th November, for which there are 9 places left at a cost of £15 each including entry into the Cathedral.
- A local basketball team had block-booked the minibus on 15 occasions. On each of these they will supply the fuel and also make a donation of £40 each time. This will greatly help towards the running costs of the minibus for the year.
- There had been a problem with one of the windows in the minibus which has been sorted out by Autoglass.

3. **Bishop's Visit on 17th/18th November**

Bishop David will visit the parish on the weekend of 17th/18th December to mark Fr Nicholas's 15th anniversary of ordination. Emma Ndifor is organising the offertory procession at the 10.30 am Mass. There will be tea, coffee and cakes after the 6 pm Mass and a bring and share lunch after the 10.30 am Mass. People from all our communities are welcome to join in refreshments on either occasion. Helpers welcome for both days.

4. **First Holy Communion**

- Liz asked for volunteers to be Prayer Partners for the children. Barbara agreed to send the list of last year's Prayer Partners to Hilary.
- Liz reported that as one class had been lost because of the hall closure on 16th October, she would need to book an extra session on Sunday 27th November in order that the children were properly prepared for their First Confessions on Thursday 8th December. She apologised for the inconvenience caused to the Latin Mass community. Barbara said Liz would need to contact Fr Goddard about this arrangement. Liz will do so.

5. **Confirmation**

No report.

6. **Cadets of Our Lady**

Suzy reported a project to blanch and freeze spinach for the use of those in need. She asked for any disused ice cube trays to be given to her for this purpose.

7. **Synod Process**

Sister Dympna reported that a rosary had been donated by a parishioner and hung round the statue of Our Lady in the church grounds.

She and a small group will prepare material on the theme of Creation for Advent.

8. **Second Collections for October**

Bishops' Maintenance Fund collection had taken place this weekend. Sick and Retired Clergy 12th/13th November, Church Flowers for Christmas 19th/20th November. It had been agreed in the light of the prevailing financial situation not to have a second collection for the Bottle Stall at the Christmas Fayre this year.

Thanks had been received from Hilary for the CAFOD collection this month and from John Grogan for Missio.

9. **Church Calendar**

No report.

#### **10. Altar Servers and Altar Curtain**

Trisha reported that all was running smoothly. Two girls had served at the 6 pm Mass recently. One 10.30 server (Anthony Marsala) had requested a new cassock as his is now too tight. Trisha will sort this out.

The purple altar curtain will need to be hung ready for Advent on Friday 25th November. As this is the day before the Christmas Fayre, there will be several people around in the evening setting up the hall who can help with this.

#### **11. Safeguarding**

No report.

#### **12. Church and Hall PA System**

A date has been set to install this in the church – likely 17th/18th November. This may mean that the Mass on one of those days may have to be cancelled – Marguerita will liaise with Fr N and Nigel about this. The instalment of the PA system in the hall will then follow.

#### **13. Church flowers and extra storage space**

It had been noted that a lot of flower arranging equipment was stored in the cupboard under the stairs by the confessional. This was a concern due to access to heating controls, metre reading etc. It is therefore proposed that the left-hand side of the confessional be divided off and used as storage space for this equipment. Fr N has agreed to this and as the Latin Mass priests are the main users of the confessional, Fr Goddard had been consulted and he is also in agreement with the proposal.

Someone pointed out that the switch on the heating panel allowing for one hour's heating had been taped over. Chris and Jim will look into this.

#### **14. Church cleaning**

No report.

#### **15. Church Grounds and Gardening**

Since the last parish meeting Jomex, a member of the Kerala community, had pollarded the horse chestnut trees by the perimeter fence and trimmed the lilacs on the path leading to the church. Several people thought this was an improvement, as the church was now more visible. Jomex had also created a more solid foundation to the flagpole. Martin continues with his hedge trimming and lawn mowing. Both Jomex and Martin were thanked for their ongoing work.

#### **16. Church grounds safety**

- Chris explained the reason behind the decision to block off the gaps in the car park hedge: there had been two near misses involving children. The work to close the gaps has been carried out and it is felt that no planting is necessary, as the hedge will grow over the gaps with time. Michael has also marked out a zebra crossing, double yellow lines by the hedge and a path of footprints leading to the church.
- Sr Dympna felt that the light outside the parish room goes off too quickly. Chris and Jim will look into the timing of this, and also into a light on the presbytery to illuminate the dark area between there and the church.
- Rachel requested that grab rails be fitted by the side door by St Joseph's statue. This was agreed and these will also be fitted by the parish room door. It was also reported that the parish room door is hard to lock, particularly the bottom lock. Chris and Jim will look into all these matters and liaise with Michael about any necessary work.

#### **17. Parish Finances**

Chris reported that there was a very thorough audit by the Diocese a month ago and the report is awaited. No serious concerns were raised during the audit so it seems that it was satisfactory. Chris, Christine and Celia were thanked for their work with the parish finances.

Chris also reported that following an accident involving a hall user, all the ceiling light fittings had been replaced at a cost of £3000.

**18. SVP and Christmas charities**

- Ursula reported that the usual Christmas hampers were being put together and that names of needy recipients should be given to her.
- Rachel asked about the Giving Tree. Teresa Lovell will organise this for the beginning of Advent.
- Samaritans Purse Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Sue asked for filled shoeboxes, deadline Sunday 20th November.

**19. Come and See**

This has started again with two definite candidates along with one spouse. They will be received into the Church at the Easter vigil next year.

**20. Socially Distanced Masses**

It was agreed to leave these as they are at present.

**21. Fr Nicholas's new chaplaincy role**

Fr Nicholas reported that Bishop David has asked him to take on the work of Chaplain at Milton Keynes Prison following the reassignment of the previous RC chaplain and the post currently vacant. This would be for four days a week. Fr Nicholas had agreed and explained that this would necessitate changes to the current Mass arrangements at Christ the King. There was a discussion about how this would work out and the following timetable was proposed:

Monday – Mass at 7 pm

Tuesday – No Mass (possible service of the Word and Holy Communion)

Wednesday – 7 pm

Thursday – No Mass (Father Nicholas's new day off instead of Monday)

Friday – 12 noon Mass as at present.

Fr Nicholas will also hear confessions at a mutually convenient time on request in addition to those offered on Saturday afternoons.

Barbara pointed out that occasionally on a Holyday of Obligation there would be a clash between the English and Latin Masses. She was assured that there would be some flexibility. She also suggested that the above arrangements be trialled for six months to gauge the amount of interest in evening Masses and this was agreed.

**22. AOB**

- There is some confusion at the 10.30 Mass as to when to go up for Holy Communion. This is because some of the First Holy Communion families are unfamiliar with what to do and the usual 'pew by pew' arrangement does not always work. It was suggested that an announcement be made before mass to remain seated until called up, along with a reminder about switching off mobile phones when entering the church.
- Kevin asked whether it would be possible for people who are unable to come up for Communion to receive last, but it was decided that they should receive first as at present.
- Chris pointed out that there is a large plant in the right-hand side aisle which is so large that it is proving hazardous to people's eyes and it should either be trimmed back or repositioned. He and Jim will look into this.
- Rachel reported that plans for the Quiz Night/Fish and Chip supper at the end of January were well in hand and that tickets were available.
- Mary drew attention to the fact that the hall radiators become hot and could represent a hazard to children. Covering them has been looked into before and felt not to be necessary, but Chris and Jim will review this.

**Date of next meeting**

Sunday 4th December after the 10.30am Mass.

Fr Nicholas ended the meeting with a prayer.