

Parish Gathering – Sunday 8th January 2023
Chaired by Nigel Anstead, notes by Barbara Kay
25 people present

1. Fr Nicholas opened in prayer. A one-minute silence was kept in memory of the late Angela McMullen.
2. **Social Committee Report**
There will be two events in January: the Vintage Tea on the 27th, for which Trisha reported she had two tea sets to donate, and the Quiz Night on the 28th. Help is needed with the quiz night. Raffle prizes welcome, help to set up and help to clear away needed.

It was proposed to hold an event to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. The ceremony itself is on Saturday 6th May and it was suggested that our community celebration would be on Monday 8th May. Rachel, Val and Trish offered to be on a committee to plan for this. The same format of a party in the car park was proposed with free entertainment for the children, which had made the Platinum Jubilee event so successful. Help will be needed with decorations as Pam Manley has now moved away, and help with refreshments will be important as this was very busy last time. The previous event was financed with a grant from the Mayor and Rachel will enquire if such funding will be available again.
3. **Minibus annual report 2022**
In 2022 the minibus had made 25 journeys covering a distance of 3947 miles. A surplus of around £200 had been made from donations, but this would be taken up by the costs of the MOT and also brake repairs which had arisen recently.
4. **First Holy Communion Report**
Hilary reported that the spreadsheet of Prayer Partners would be completed today.
Mass attendance continues to be good despite a lot of family illness at present. The children read the Bidding Prayers at Mass this morning. Nigel commented that it was difficult to hear them and suggested further practice so that they gained confidence. It was agreed with Fr N that the children coming forward for a blessing at the beginning of communion was a good feature of the Mass and should be continued.
5. **Confirmation Report**
No report.
6. **Cadets of Our Lady Report**
No report, but Suzy wished the meeting a Happy New Year on behalf of the Cadets.
7. **Synod Process**
Sr Dympna reported that 160 Advent leaflets had been printed and most of them had been taken. She will place a box at the back of church for feedback arising from them and action to be taken during Lent.
8. **Socially Distanced Mass**
In view of the current COVID and flu situation, it was agreed that the 6 pm Mass continue to be socially distanced.
9. **Church Calendar for the month ahead**
Nigel had compiled a list of all the second collections taken in 2022. There were three optional ones and it was agreed that they should be dropped in 2023, as we are already supporting other good causes such as SPUC, SVP and Chisen. Myriam organised an Easter raffle last year. Nigel will ask Myriam if she is planning another raffle this year or possibly move this to a Coronation raffle. Funds raised could pay for a community Coronation event.
10. **Altar Servers and Altar Curtain**
Trisha reported that all was running smoothly with the servers' vestments. A suitably sized cassock (44") had been ordered for Anthony Marsala.
The green curtain needs to be hung by Tuesday 10th January. Trisha and a team will do this on Monday 9th.
11. **Churches Together**
Rosemarie explained that there were 10 churches in the area – Baptist, Methodist, Anglican and Catholic – who meet together four times a year. They are organising the annual Ecumenical Lent Course at London Road Methodist Church on Tuesday evenings, this year based on C S Lewis's book "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe".
The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is coming up at the end of January and it was suggested that this be included in our Bidding Prayers.
Rosemarie also drew attention of the Act of Witness on Good Friday at 12 noon in Harpur Square.
12. **Safeguarding**
No report.

13. **Church flowers and extra storage space**
Work on converting part of the confessional is now complete. Teresa Lovell has the only key. She was thanked for the tremendous effort she put in at Christmas. Suzy reported that some of the Cadets were interested in learning flower arranging and Teresa would be approached about this.
14. **Church cleaning**
Nigel reported that two major cleans – for the Marsala family funeral and for Christmas – had been very successful, but that it was more difficult to find volunteers to do this regularly. A co-ordinator is needed to put together a rota of cleaning volunteers once a month. Rachel suggested that the Kerala community might like to get involved.
15. **Church Grounds and Gardening**
Joe Hottinger, an arborist from the Latin Mass community, had chipped and removed the branches which had been in the church grounds. He had done this free of charge and was thanked by the meeting. Otherwise this is an inactive time of the year for gardening.
16. **Church grounds safety and security**
Michael reported that the cones by the yellow lines by the presbytery continue to be moved, so permanent posts will be placed in this area. The flagstones leading from the car park will be laid this week if weather permits.
Sr Dympna reported that she had found the door by the church toilet left unbolted on a Tuesday evening and also the door by St Joseph's statue only secured on one bolt. She also reported finding a heater left on in the confessional. Fr Nicholas offered to check these matters and Nigel will supply him with a list of what needs to be checked.
Concerns were also raised about votive candles being alight too close to the flower arrangements. A group will be formed to discuss how to deal with this.
Nigel reported that two non-functioning heaters in the church hall had now been repaired, as had the joint in the pipe over the bar which had caused a leak.
17. **Parish Finances**
Chris had sent in a report saying that the church's budget for the financial year commencing April 2023 was being worked upon by himself and Christine and that it should be available at the next parish meeting in February. Christine reported that due to her health, she may not be available in the coming months and that anyone with bookkeeping experience would be welcome to assist, possibly with a view to taking over in the future.
18. **SVP and Christmas charities**
Ursula reported that more than 30 hampers had been distributed.
19. **Come and See**
No report.
20. **Liturgy Committee.**
Hilary proposed forming a Liturgy Committee to ensure the smooth running of events over the year and to plan in advance for them, e.g. Christmas, Lent and Pentecost. Nigel felt this would be useful to ensure "joined up thinking". He gave the example of it not being clear today which Sunday of the liturgical year it was ending up with a mix of Epiphany and Christ's Baptism. An article will be placed in the newsletter inviting people to take part in this committee.
21. **Future monthly meetings**
Attendance at these has been quite low lately and Hilary suggested publishing the agenda at least a week in advance so that people would know the importance of what is being discussed and have the opportunity to add an item to the agenda. The reason for low attendance was discussed; it was felt that the late start on Sundays meant that the meeting was running into lunchtime. Fr Nicholas was asked if his Sunday morning Mass at the prison could take place earlier than its current 9.15 am, but he said that was not possible at the moment. He was hoping to change this to a Saturday afternoon in the future with the approval of the prison Governor.
22. **Any Other Business**
Valerie raised concerns about the car park being dark on winter evenings and that the lighting should be improved. Nigel felt that to be effective, some kind of floodlighting was needed.

Date of next meeting

Sunday 5th February 2023 after the 11 am Mass.

Fr Nicholas ended the meeting with a prayer.

Chairman's postscript to discuss at next meeting. Its all very well coming up with suggestions but we need people to carry them out.