

Parish Gathering – Sunday 5th March 2023
Chaired by Nigel Anstead, notes by Barbara Kay
30 people present

1. Fr Nicholas opened in prayer.
2. **Social Committee Report**

Vintage Tea Friday 24th February 55 people had attended, the best so far.

Community Hub Thursday 2nd March Around 20 people had come, some of them for the first time. 8 organisations and the local councillor were present. Rosemarie and Val were thanked for helping with this in Rachel's absence. The next Community Hub will be on Thursday 6th April, but it will not take place on 4th May when the hall is being used as a polling station.

Coronation Event Sunday 7th May 12.15 – 5 pm Plans are coming together well. A marquee has been hired and deposit paid, likewise a children's entertainer and a musician. There will be a crown-making session for children in the Patrick Donegan Room led by Teresa Williams, and a cake making competition. There will be a bring and share lunch with free tea, coffee and soft drinks; anyone wishing to bring alcohol may bring their own. A Community Chest grant of £500 has been obtained and there will be a raffle run by Rachel on the day. Any surplus money will go to parish funds.

Myriam's Easter raffle, to be drawn on Easter Sunday 9th April Tickets are now on sale with the first prize being a children's wilderness climbing frame donated by Dunster House with a value of £500. The second prize is a large hamper, donated by Myriam. Teri offered a cake voucher as an additional prize, and offers of Easter eggs will be sought from the congregation. Katherine will be asked to advertise the raffle on the church Facebook page and tickets could be sold at the church door on tables.

Lent Frugal Lunch Friday 31st March 1 pm Home-made soup and bread, £5 per person, proceeds to CAFOD.
3. **First Holy Communion Report**

No report.
4. **Confirmation Report**

Barbara reported on behalf of Katherine. There are 10 candidates preparing and the date of Confirmation has been set for 27th June. The candidates are putting together baskets of food for the needy and are making prayer cards which will be available for parishioners to take around Easter.
5. **Cadets of Our Lady Report**

No report. The Cadets are unable to meet while Suzy awaits the completion of her DBS check.
6. **Do Something Special for Lent**

Extra Masses for Lent There was a discussion as to whether the Service of the Word and Holy Communion at 10 am on Wednesdays should continue now that there is a Mass at 7 pm on Wednesday evenings. It was agreed that this should be dropped after this coming Wednesday 8th March. The CAFÉ DVDs that were being shown on Wednesday mornings are available for groups such as the Catholic Grandparents.

Churches Together Study Course Rosemarie, who is leading this, encouraged people to attend.

Frugal Lunch Friday 31st March as under Social Committee.
7. **CAFOD report**

The Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal had raised a total of £633.13. Thank you to all who donated.

Hilary reported that she had met with the other 3 CAFOD reps who together with her cover the 7 Bedford parishes. They had agreed to advertise each other's events and to encourage others to become involved. They had also attended the Diocesan CAFOD meeting in Milton Keynes recently.
8. **Church Calendar for the month ahead**

CAFOD Family Fast Day this year was on 3rd March and donation envelopes can still be handed in over the next two weeks. The other upcoming mandatory collection is on Good Friday, 7th April, and is for Holy Places of Palestine. Further ahead, World Communications Day is on Sunday 21st May.
9. **Altar Servers and Altar Curtain**

Trisha reported that all was running smoothly with the servers' vestments and that they will be washed at a convenient time ready for Easter. There are two new girl servers at the 6 pm Mass and two more at the 11 am Mass. They will share the same vestments so as not to incur the expenses of extra ones.

The statues in church will need to be veiled for Passion Sunday, 26th March.
10. **Safeguarding**

There was no report, but Fr Nicholas on Dale's behalf once again stressed the vital importance of ensuring that all relevant volunteers are DBS checked.

The notice board on the right at the back of church will be enlarged to allow the display of safeguarding notices.

11. Church flowers and extra storage space

No report.

12. Church cleaning

Nigel reported that two people had volunteered to clean the church for Easter and Nathaniel agreed to join them. Nigel is looking at the various services around Easter in order to find a suitable day/time for cleaning.

13. Church Grounds and Gardening

Barbara reported that Martin has been trimming the inner hedges in the car park so as to allow cars to pull further forward. This will be an ongoing job over the next few weeks.

14. Church grounds safety and security

Chris updated the meeting on the proposed new lighting in the car park area. This was proving difficult, as sensor lights have a limited range and there is a large area to cover. Michael will continue to research this.

15. Parish Finances

No report.

16. SVP report

Ursula reported that the SVP was carrying on as usual.

17. Come and See

Three adults are currently attending these meetings.

18. Liturgy Committee

It was agreed that a Liturgy Committee is definitely needed to ensure that Masses, etc run smoothly. It was suggested that each group, i.e. catechists, readers, musicians, servers, flower arrangers should be represented by one person, and that the meetings could take place after a weekday evening Mass. Thursday was the preferred day.

Music Catriona suggested that a reserve organist would be helpful as she is not always available, and an appeal for volunteers for this and for additional choir members at the 11 am Mass will be put in the newsletter.

Sanctus There is some confusion about the wording of 'Holy, Holy, Holy' at Mass and it was agreed that the correct words should be included in the newsletter.

Carrying up the Missal This has recently been introduced at the start of the 11 am Mass. Either of the two readers could do this, with John Duah to assist if necessary.

Neck Crosses for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion These will be made available again and Fr Nicholas said that Ministers could wear them if they wished to do so.

19. Future monthly meetings

No report.

20. Any Other Business

Disabled/Parent and Child Parking A proposal has been put forward that the area in front of the main door should be reserved entirely for these two groups. A notice will be put in the newsletter giving parishioners the opportunity to give their views on this via email. Christine expressed concern that parking on Saturday evenings can be difficult due to the hall being used.

Rachel Kirkham Nigel gave an update on Rachel, who has been undergoing treatment in hospital in London for the past few weeks. This has been successful and Rachel will be coming home on Friday 10th March.

Church Banner Rosemarie put forward a proposal that a banner be hung from the existing scaffolding to the left of the car park entrance to draw attention to the presence of the church and welcoming people to it. She brought along some possible designs which were passed round. The banner would be made of cloth and a coffee morning held to raise funds for its production.

Catriona's fundraising Catriona is having her head shaved in May to raise funds for Alzheimer's disease. Her hair will be donated to the Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides real hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer.

Rosary leaflets Sr Dymna had a few of these from the Divine Mercy Apostolate and was happy to obtain more. Several people expressed an interest in this.

Stations of the Cross on the website Jon Foster will be asked to put the CAFOD Stations of the Cross on the church website.

21. Date of next meeting

To be arranged, possibly not on 2nd April as it is Palm Sunday.

Fr Nicholas ended the meeting with a prayer.