

St. Julie's Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

Minutes of the meeting held on on 23rd March 2023

Present: Father Michael Harwood Parochial Administrator (FM), Roger Mullin (RM), Clair Kernick (CK), John Leake (JL), John Lawrenson (JSL), Francis Sephton (FS), Paul Robbins (PR) Chairperson, Christine Sterry (CS) Parish Secretary, Sheila Lawrenson; Clare Blade

Apologies: Mike Melia

Opening Prayer

AOB – None.

Minutes of previous meeting - approved by JW and seconded by JL.

Matters Arising.

Finance Committee: The first meeting of the FC is to be held tomorrow, 24th March 2023.

Windows: Fr Michael confirmed that he had not as yet received the quotation for the repair of the concrete surrounding the windows.

Website: Fr Michael confirmed that work was underway, and this is an item later on in the agenda.

Exterior lights: Quotes had been received and the go ahead given for the replacements to be installed.

Finance: Christine Sterry showed the meeting the breakdown of costs for the last months. Utility bills are still stubbornly high, and the bank balance continues to decrease. The question of the Presbytery being used was raised. There had been interest in a priest occupying the accommodation, but he had chosen to go to another parish. The use of the downstairs by the parishioners was discounted particularly if we are looking to rent the building out. There was a discussion regarding the possible conversion to flats. Fr Michael stated that he doesn't understand why people want the downstairs space given that there is a Parish Hall. Roger Mullin stated that the history is that it was built for 2 priests and housekeeper, when Fr Tom lived alone alone, a kitchen was put upstairs so he could be self-contained so that parishioners could have access to the

facilities. It was well used, and the parish feel that Fr Carr took it back off them.

John Leake asked about the Parish Hall and related bank account balances. He stated that £200 being paid from the Hall to the Church seemed a small amount given these balances. Roger Mullin explained that the 200 club was money raised by the Laity and was not Church money.

John Lawrenson asked why the parish hall funds and church funds are separate when the Church is losing £4k a month and hall funds are about £50-£60k. It was felt that the Parish Hall is part of the Church but the other 2 accounts are laity accounts, linking them would mean the Church swallowing these balances up. Paul Robbins confirmed that all money belongs to the Parish in Canon Law, and we have kept them separately. Roger Mullin pointed out that the Parish Hall finances were also depleted.

Cost saving suggestions were discussed such as the Sub meter for gas supply to the hall which would enable us to know its costs. This would make the use of the hall more realistic. John Lawrenson said that at a run rate of £40k in the bank in 10 months we will have no money left.

We have previously discussed raising income from donations but need to get a hold on costs before asking the parishioners to donate more. John Lawrenson said that the Church could lose £4k per month, and in 10 months' time run out of money, yet we have a laity income that maybe could be transferred? Putting the money into the church account would just delay the inevitable of in 20 months' time we run out of money. Fr Michael stated that he has been trying to find a way through for 6 months, and the answer is that the gas bill is taking up the income from the plate.

We need to on paper understand the church and hall usage as the plate is subsidizing the hall, it has become more apparent since energy costs have increased. The model may have worked in the past, where the hall kept its income, and the church paid the expenses, but this is not a model that can work anymore.

The metering doesn't transfer the money over, but we can account for it, and if we do need to move things over then we can.

The other thing we haven't addressed is reducing costs – physical or offset i.e., hall users.

Fr Michael sees hall charges as a subsidy – some users get a 100% discount, others nothing i.e., the care club who are a business.

Claire Blade agreed with Roger Mullin to have separate accounts as they are separate entities.

Approx £12k has recently been spent on the hall. Changes to accounts is for us to decide in the future.

RM maybe 5 years ago Ray went on holiday RM stepped in and there was £250k in the current account in the Church. Paul Robbins asked should we appeal to the parishioners? Father Michael said he thinks not money as money is there, but not in the right place as the offertory has been subsidizing the hall and there would be no need to ask for more if the plate got its money back.

Roger Mullin says the hall needs to pay its way, and pay something to The Church Secretary's hours.

Fr Michaels items

Eucharistic Minister's meeting was very useful and was combined with Lenten recollection – thinking of Synod and implementation across all 3 parishes.

The focus was on ministry and several people hadn't realized that they have a ministry they think that it's just what they do.
Gas bills, we started monitoring the thermostat part way through last month, and the gas bill went down by £647.

Last month when we had a whole month the bill went down £1500.
Monitoring it is saving money, we are not heating empty spaces. There are problems with sensors etc. that we are having moved so that they always work, and people don't need to mess with the controllers.
We do have a price for a childproof timer – if needed.

Also, massive photocopying bills came out of the blue, because people had access to the office. 2 weeks ago, the locks were changed so that copying is done by Christine during office hours.

RISO machine contract –will be asking Finance Committee tomorrow if we can get out of contract as in the long run it will be cheaper.
£10k saving on not installing a new boiler.

Windows – nothing yet, still waiting.

Replacement of broken fans church heating – waiting quote.

Father Michael has 3 days retreat next week and week after Easter off.

Constitution.

Fr Michaels comments were that overall, it's very good, with the following suggested amendments. Page 2 para 2, could we insert "normally" as in the Parish Priest should "Normally" not make decisions.

Just before Sec 2 the word serious is subjective – what constitutes serious? Can we remove this?

On the back page use "incumbent" not current. Otherwise, all agreed.

The constitution needs to go into effect.

We are 9 members – revolving membership requiring 3 volunteers to resign for the September meeting, and we can have elections at the open meeting.

Suggestions were:

Year 1

F Sefton

R Mullin

C Kernick

Year 2

John Leake

John Lawrenson

Claire Blade

Year 3 PR

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Presentation of the proposed website by Fr Michael.

This was widely liked and accepted.

Roger Mullin suggested a "Day of Maintenance" for hall chairs, tables, large weeds growing around buildings . A group of people needed to have a maintenance day. The Council thought this was a great idea.

Closing prayer