

Holy Family Catholic Church

(Freckleton and Warton)

1 Lytham Road, Warton, Preston, PR4 1AD

Parish Council Meeting 001

18th April 2008 7.45pm

Agenda:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Opening Prayer | Father Peter |
| 2. Opening Address | Bernard |
| 3. Constitution of the Parish Council | Bernard |
| 4. Report from Fit for Mission Update | Father Peter/David |
| 5. Finance and Administration Report | John F |
| 6. Pastoral Report | Carmel |
| 7. Property Management Report | John C |
| 8. Social Report | David |
| 9. AOB | |
| a. Item 1(separate page) | |
| b. Item 2(separate page) | |
| 10. Next Meeting | |
| 11. Closing Remarks | Father Peter |
| 12. Closing Prayer | Father Peter |

Present:

Rev Peter Burns, Priest-in-Charge
David Allman, Chairperson, Parish Social Team
John Catterall, Chairperson, Property Management Team
Jan Courtney-Whiteside,
John Forster, Chairperson, Parish Finance Team
Linda Forster (minutes),
Michelle Holden,
Denise King,
Peter McGuinness,
Sally Sutton,
Carmel Thomas, Chairperson, Parish Pastoral Team
Bernard Whittle, Chairperson, Parish Council

Apologies:

Kerrie Fenton,
Helen McDowell,
Colin Reed,
Rosa Trelfa,
Sarah Truscott,

1. Opening Prayer

Father Peter opened the meeting by inviting those present to join him in the 'Fit for Mission' prayer.

2. Opening Address

Bernard welcomed everyone to the meeting. We had come a long way since the first parish meeting about the parish council. The working groups had considered the requirements of the *Fit for Mission Review* and had looked for best practice which could be tailored for Holy Family. Future steps would include the *Fit for Mission Schools Review*.

The draft Constitution had been circulated before the meeting and this recommended four parish teams:
Finance and Administration
Pastoral
Property Management
Social

These teams would be formalised once the parish Council Constitution was approved.

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3. Constitution of the Parish Council

The Constitution had been developed from examples within the diocese and from other dioceses. Bernard thanked John Catterall for drafting the Constitution. Questions were invited. It was emphasised that the last page, which details the responsibilities of each team, is a living document and can be updated as required.

Bernard recommended that the Constitution was approved and any issues/changes can be raised at the Annual General Meeting in the Autumn. Once the Constitution is approved it will be pinned to the Noticeboard in the church porch.

Decision: The Parish Council Constitution was approved.

4. Fit for Mission

The revised *Fit for Mission* proposals have been published and are now available on the Diocesan webpage. Father has put the pages relevant to Holy Family on the Noticeboard. There will be no changes before 2015. The parish will be linked with St Peter's, Lytham. In the light of the changes to the *Fit for Mission* proposals, parishes, deaneries and individuals are invited to respond by the 1st May. Father had copies of some questions people might like to address in formulating their responses. No-one in the parish seemed too horrified by the prospect of being linked with Lytham.

Father had also attended the *Fit for Mission Schools* presentation by Father Luiz Ruscillo. The original document contained a timetable which Father Luiz thought was too tight. He is proposing two-three years and has produced a model for the development plan. Father Peter, as RE Governor, is progressing it.

In the spirit of the *Fit for Mission* review Carmel, Michelle and Jane (Ireland) looking at ways of smoothing the transition of children from Holy Family school to St Bede's, whilst ensuring that the Parish kept in touch with the children.

The last Deanery Pastoral Council discussed the changes at some length. (The draft response was available at the parish council meeting.) It was a very general meeting with the two parishes most affected showing their concern. The next Deanery Pastoral Council will discuss the role of the Deanery Pastoral Council. It was also pointed out that when a parish closed, the community breaks up and those parishioners do not necessarily go to another parish. Someone at the Deanery Pastoral Council had remarked that the Bishop can tell the clergy what to do, but he cannot tell the people. Two parishes in the deanery had reported that their congregations had not recovered after their churches had been closed for renovation.

The Deanery is looking at employing a Youth Officer. This is ongoing and nothing has been decided yet.

5. Parish Finance and Administration Report

Currently, there is £16727 in the parish account. A legacy of £3500 and a donation of £1800 have been received. The Ecclesiastical Education Fund, Holy Places, Easter Flowers and Father's Easter offerings still need to be paid.

The administrators of the Gift Aid Donation scheme decided that they no longer wanted to be involved. This led to some problems, but these have now been resolved. The repaid tax will be late arriving in the bank account – this will be in the following financial year. The tax threshold for pensioners has been increased and this could mean that some of our contributors will not be paying tax.

The figures were not to hand, but the parish also had a healthy balance in the Diocesan pooled investment fund, as well as a bond for £14000, which the Diocese had 'borrowed' at the time of the financial crisis. Many years ago all the diocesan parish priests agreed to the present diocesan banking system, which was set up so that the poorer parishes could receive loans at a reasonable interest rate.

The diocesan levy is set in April based on the offertory income shown on the latest Financial returns to the diocese. In theory, if the offertory collection decreased in the following year, the parish would have to draw on its other resources. In practice, this is not likely to happen, because the parish income meets its current needs.

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The Diocesan levy has been reduced from £25% to 23% and will be reviewed again on completion of the *Fit For Mission* review.

The moratorium has been relaxed and the parish can spend up to £5000 on single items without permission.

Post Meeting Note: In a letter dated 11 April 2008, The Diocesan Finance Manager states that 'in light of the improved financial performance of the Diocese the Council of Priests have recommended and the Bishop and Trustees have agreed that the Diocesan levy for 2008/9 be reduced from 25% to 23% of offertory income for the year to April 2007.' The parish accounts are prepared in the April of each year and submitted to the Parish Auditor, who audits them, and after reporting to the Priest, submits them to the Diocese, ideally by the end of May. In April 2008, the latest accounts available to the Diocese would be those prepared in April 2007. The letter then refers to parish expenditure 'The Trustees have also agreed that the limit on the level of single items of Parish Expenditure without reference to the Trustees be increased from £4000 to £5000.'

The parish put forward a plan to the Trustees and were told that some items would not be allowed. Two of the Trustees visited the church and said that the changes should be approached with care. Even if there were special collections or money left to the parish, the Trustees would only allow 5000 on each item. This is to ensure that all parishes in the diocese are treated fairly and that all work fits in with the recommendations of the *Fit for Mission* review. There was some discussion about setting up a fund totally separate from the diocese (e.g. Friends). Bernard advised that the parish should try and work within the channels defined by the Trustees. The parish should make every effort to follow the rules and, if there were difficulties, both Father Peter and Bernard were prepared to appeal to the Bishop and others, as defined within Canon Law. All monies raised or donated for the maintenance of the church and other parish assets are being ring-fenced. – see Property Management Report for more details.

6. Parish Pastoral Report

Sally and Margaret (Moony) have volunteered to help Carmel with the Pastoral Team.

Most of the activities defined for the Pastoral Team are going very well. Some areas need more manpower. Other activities need a lot more support and thought about what is required. The Playgroup is well established and the majority of children are Catholic. They are well behaved and polite to visitors. The religious element is covered appropriately for their age-group.

The interface to the parish school and church works well. The monthly Sunday Mass for Children is well attended. There is no children's liturgy at this Mass and so non regular church goers have no idea what usually happens.

Action PC001.01:

Consider whether some element of the Children's Liturgy could be included at some of the Children's Masses.
Father Peter

The Parish Council needs to consider

- Making the parish more welcoming
- Being more aware of the needs of young families
- Encouraging young families to attend Mass regularly.

The new religious curriculum is far better than the old one. It recognises that children have different levels and that family involvement differs.

The school does not have a big involvement in the preparation for the sacraments, but this dates back some years to a decision made by the Bishops. They decided that the preparation was the responsibility of the Parish and the family. Over the years, the clergy have become more involved in the school and the parish should plan for the school, playgroup, parish and parents working together to ensure that our children are supported within the parish – this should include the secondary school. This would also need the involvement of the Youth Team and Sally's Angels. The parish also need to find a way of communicating with the wider (non-attending) Catholic community. This may mean encouraging the children to attend activities and persuading their parents to accompanying them.

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Action PC001.02:

Investigate the possibilities of including the school in preparing the children for the sacraments.

Father Peter/Pastoral Team

7. Parish Property Management Report

In November 2007, John C and Peter did an inspection of the parish buildings and compiled a list of jobs that needed to be completed. Over fifty of these jobs have been completed at a cost of just over £1400. The remaining jobs include the porch roof, which is leaking and the fixing of some slates. The total cost will be in the region of £2000. Next year there is another £2000 of work on the gulleys, fascia and some outdoor decorating.

Virgin media is being installed and, once that is in place, the parish webpage can be designed.

As mentioned early in the Finance section, the Property Management Team wrote to the Diocese and asked for permission to spend £31000, with a request to borrow £20000. It was refused, except for urgent work or that required for Health and Safety reasons. It was pointed out that permission was not required if less than £5000 on one item.

The total cost of the work considered was £71000 and that uses the most expensive quotes. One of the more expensive items is the wiring and proof would be needed that it was faulty. The last report in 2003 indicated that the wiring was satisfactory and the Trustees did not believe the wiring would deteriorate so quickly. The next report is due this year. It may, however, be possible to obtain a wiring package that is less than £5000.

The parish would prefer to behave ethically and go through all the proper channels, so a plan for the next two years would be produced with each piece of work within the £5000. The parish raises about £6000 above its expenditure. This means £30000 will be available over the next two years consisting:

- Excess of income over expenditure
- Possible donations to asset maintenance (Fabric Fund)
- Current balance in the account
- Possible legacies and donations from other sources.

Appealing for volunteers to do some of the work had been considered, but it would be better to use professionals, especially for the complicated work.

The Trustees are aware of the parish plans, so it is intended to work within the rules that they have established. It is parish's wish – and the Trustees' – that the parish buildings are fit for purpose and properly maintained to enable the parish to fulfil its role identified in the *Fit for Mission* review.

8. Parish Social Report

A meeting was arranged to find out exactly what social activity was happening in the parish. From 2009, the Parish half yearly newsletter would not be distributed, but copies left in the porch and posted on the webpage. There was a discussion about a large outdoor event in September, but no decision. The recent bingo evening had made £253, but it was a disappointing attendance. It was the school holidays, but there were always so many other events for people to attend. Some people are quite happy to give money, but that is not the purpose. The intention is for the parish to socialise.

Social activity for younger parishioners is primarily through the Youth Team, but perhaps the parish needs to look at other ways of involving them. The children could perhaps help with refreshments after the Children's Mass.

9. Any other Business

a. Item 1

Father Peter was asked to leave the meeting, which he did
Father Peter is only here as Priest-in-Charge. The parish council was asked to support the proposal that parish approach the Bishop with the request to appoint Father Peter as Parish Priest of Holy Family, Freckleton and Warton.

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Father Peter was invited to return to the meeting and Bernard explained why he had been asked to leave the meeting.

ActionPC001.03:

Write to the Bishop and ask him to appoint Father Peter as Parish Priest.

Linda

b. Item 2

Many people in the parish give loyal service over many years. It is important that this service is recognised. Father was asked to investigate the process for obtaining a *Bene Merente* for someone who had given faithful and loyal service to the parish and to the church.

ActionPC001.04:

Investigate process for awarding Bene Merente.

Father Peter

c. Item 3

The Parish Playgroup would like a year planner on the wall in the Parish Hall so that they know when the Parish Hall is needed and they can tidy the room. This would be useful for enable other groups to use the Parish Hall.

ActionPC001.05:

Explore possibilities for a year planner in Parish Hall.

Property Management Team

Over the past few months there has been some discussion about the Playgroup. It belongs to the Parish; the Diocesan Trustees are the Registered Body for OFSTED. The parish should support the Playgroup and promote it. Our children start their path here at the age of 3. The playgroup gives the parish the chance to support Catholic families. When children are baptised the parish should try and maintain contact and ensure they know about the playgroup. The Trustees have responsibility for the playgroup and they would see it as an integral part of the *Fit for Mission* process. Father would be willing to keep in touch with the parents of baptised children and send them invitations to parish events.

There should be a link from the playgroup to the Parish Finance Team and Pastoral Team. The Parish Finance Team should ensure that the Playgroup finances are under control. The Parish Pastoral team should ensure that the playgroup has a clear RE curriculum suitable for the age of the children. The parish is are grateful that the children do receive a good grounding, but some help should be offered. There are national bodies for other subjects at the playgroup, but not RE. The aunties do explain to the children about being kind to each other and grace is said at mealtimes. A Playgroup Management Committee is being formed consisting of Father Peter, Carmel and Christine (Rigby), plus a staff member from the school.

Action PC001.06:

Invite Michelle to join the Playgroup Management Committee to provide a link with the school. Father Peter

10. Next meeting is arranged for 11th July at 7.45pm.... and tables will be arranged for everyone.

11. Closing Remarks

Father thanked everyone for attending and also for all the work that had been done over the past few months. He reminded everyone that prayer should underpin everything all the work that we do,

12. Closing Prayer

He closed the meeting by inviting everyone to join him in the *Our Father*.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm