

Parish Pastoral Council Surgery feedback

If you have any comments or contributions, please email them to parishcouncil@stthomaswoodford.org

Date/ REF#	Point raised	Response	Followup
	<i>11:30, 3rd December; Mike, Donna</i>		
31	Can the ushers be more identifiable	Sashes will be purchased for ushers, and also for parish council members when they are present for feedback. Silly hats to follow if that's not enough ☺ Update Jan25: sashes have been obtained, but have not been used – it is usually obvious who the ushers are. But we plan for them to be used for crowded services in future.	PPC
	<i>10:00, 3rd December;</i>	No feedback	
	<i>08:30, 3rd December; Michelle, Rob</i>	No feedback	
	<i>6pm, 2nd December;</i>		
30	Church temperature is just about acceptable	We are still getting used to managing our heating system; it is continually monitored and adjusted, but do please continue to comment. Update Jan25: cutoff times in church and the Henrietta Suite were recently extended. FEEDBACK NEEDED if you are still too cold please.	YOU
	<i>11:30, 19th November; Lorna</i>	No feedback	
	<i>10:00, 19th November; Peter</i>		
29	We have done very little on the Synodal process	True. And in addition to other synodal activity, from Pope Francis we have the Year of Prayer in 2024 in preparation for the Jubilee Year (The Year of Hope) in 2025. If anyone would like to be involved or merely participate, do please get in touch.	PPC YOU
28	The habitual beggar should not be allowed outside the church; he has declined SVP help	A tricky question. It is good to be reminded of people in need, but there is a risk that he is actually being exploited by others. Even if not, there may be reasons for his declining SVP support. He might also be being exploited by others. We will consult about this and update this entry.	PPC

		Update Jan25: he was interviewed and we found no good reason to bar him. He has recently been told that he may shelter in the porch, but must not beg there. This will be revisited if there are any specific complaints from parishioners.	
27	The new sound system should be tested by people with hearing problems	The system is now in place, and being refined/tuned week by week. We will seek feedback from all once it is stable, and have it adjusted or enhanced if problems remain. Update Jan25:Electricity supply cutoff problems have been fixed by upgrading our distribution board and adjusting the startup process. An earlier problem occurred when the front left speakers became disconnected, also fixed. Problems hearing at the packed Easter services may have been because the normal settings were inadequate in a packed church. Apart from that, the system seems well tuned and able to deliver good sound throughout the church. Where problems occur, they are normally to do with the user rather than the system, and we continue to seek ways to improve that. So, PLEASE REPORT ANY SHORTCOMINGS, otherwise we don't know about them.	Sound team, YOU
<i>08:30, 19th November; Michelle, Mike</i>			
26	Can we have more in-depth knowledge of parish organisations in newsletter, explaining what help is needed and why	Newsletter space is in great demand and does not lend itself readily to the sort of descriptions and explanations suggested. Nonetheless, we might be able to do more (all organisers please note). A lot of effort is going into beefing up our website, and we have free rein there to go into detail. We will increasingly promote that among organisers (to feed the beast) and parishioners (for information)	PPC, Organisers
25	Hoover for church cleaning not working properly	The cleaning team know to report such matters to the parish office. They in turn get help from the fabric team to repair where possible, and if not they purchase a replacement (which is what has happened in this case. This system seems to work well.	None
24	Can we be told who mass is being said for at the start	Practice varies between parishes on this. The suggestion should be addressed by our Liturgy committee – except that we don't have one. That is a major shortcoming – we need a group of interested people to think about and plan all aspects of our liturgy – please shout if you would like to be involved.	YOU

		In the meantime, the Friars' view is that to do so would be undesirable, being a distraction in our preparation for the mass.	
23	New sound system only 1 lock on the door	No sure what this means – can the contributor please let us know.	YOU
<i>6pm, 18th Nov; Rob</i>			
22	No Repository opened for the last three weeks (made by 3 people)	There is a rota, but sometimes the person 'on duty' cannot attend. 3 weeks is unfortunate though, caused this time by the actual rota being wrong. Sorry. More people on the rota would help (hint hint!!). We will also try to keep better track of 'missed sessions' and spot problems	
21	What is done about the lack of youth attending services?	A lot of effort by many volunteers goes into the sacramental programmes (Communion, Confirmation). But, beyond that, nothing. And apart from 'bums on seats', we should be focussing on helping our young people in their personal development at the crucial point in their lives. Again, sorry to harp on, we badly need someone with the time and ability to lead in this area. <i>Update Jan25: a PPC member has taken on a coordinating and prompting role, and a small team is being formed to help with that. The Young Vinnies is an excellent recent initiative.</i>	PPC YOU
<i>11:30, 12th November; Bernard, Donna</i>			
20	Bible study group wanted	A parishioner asked to be put in touch with anyone who runs such a group; contacted by the prayer group leader.	none
19	Could the priest swap sides at communion occasionally	Most understand that it is the Eucharist that matters, not the person distributing it. Nonetheless, there are some who welcome that small contact with the priest, and others who are very conservative. A better solution if this is important to you is to arrange to be in the priest's queue.	none

18	Can we do more to attract people to our community	Parishioner suggested coffee mornings (maybe with guitar music or some other feature). YES. ABSOLUTELY. But (recurring theme here) it is up to parishioners to make these things happen, and the PPC will offer every support including money if needed. <i>Update Jan25: a PPC member has taken responsibility for prompting new initiatives, especially a regular weekly slot for older or lonely parishioners, but volunteers to help run and manage such initiatives are needed.</i> <i>We will also seek to improve our 'welcoming' at weekend masses, and to encourage more to come for coffee after the 10am and 11:30 masses.</i>	PPC
17	Can we have a listening and guiding service for those who need someone to talk to, maybe with trained volunteers.	This sounds like an excellent idea. PPC will consider it, but it would require volunteers to make it work.	PPC, YOU
	<i>11:30, 5th November; Bernard, Donna</i>	No feedback	
	<i>10:00, 5th November; Bernard</i>		
16	Son doing DofE would like to help in the Parish as part of his 'work in society' element – any ideas?	Suggestions provided (ushering, assistance with Brownies)	none
	<i>08:30, 5th November; Mike</i>		
15	What is the 1yr, 5yr, 10yr plan for the parish?	What a good question. Right now, these do not exist, and they should. Having said that, very many people are active in the parish in ways small and large. But more volunteers are ALWAYS required. Otherwise, nothing gets done. The PPC will first produce a statement of what we consider our parish is for (that might seem obvious, but isn't!). We can then move to a parish 'vision' or 'mission statement' or 'strategy' and develop plans from there. All of this will be done openly and with full consultation.	PPC YOU

		<p>But nothing will happen without more volunteers! It is not just the PPC's parish, it is your parish.</p> <p>Key elements that have to be recognised are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of priests. - How poorly we provide for many of our young people, and indeed other groups. - The general reduction in numbers attending and active in the parish, and their increasing age! <p>There is an outline diocesan plan involving ourselves, St Anne Line and Our Lady of Lourdes working much more closely together and sharing resources, but it is up to us to make that happen and little progress has been made to date. In the next few months, we will try to reinvigorate that initiative.</p>	PPC
14	The church belongs to the Friars. If they leave, what will happen	<p>It has been the Franciscans' practice to GIVE a Church to the diocese when they can no longer serve it.</p> <p>Also, the Church and grounds are held in trust by the Friars (OFM – Order of Friars Minor), having been given by Henrietta, Dowager Duchess of Newcastle in 1894 for the support of the local catholic community. Whatever happens would have to continue to support that objective.</p>	none
13	We get few and infrequent updates on projects	<p>Minutes of PPC meetings are published on the website, but we could do far better.</p> <p>We will maintain a list of projects and plans on the PPC page of the website and tell you when that is available.</p>	PPC
n/a	Heating needs to be on earlier	See ref.11 below	
12	Church organisation do not publish enough on what they do	<p>There is information on the parish website about many of our organisations, but it could be far better.</p> <p>We currently have someone working on improving the website (suggestions welcome!)</p> <p>And as part of that we will chase for contributions to meet the need you have identified.</p>	Organisers, PPC

		Update Jan25: website is much improved, but we need the different groups to feed it and keep it up to date, and will press for that.	
	<i>6pm, 4th Nov; Sarah, Andrew and Peter</i>		
11	Heating on earlier to warm the church	Currently, the heating is programmed to come on in time to have the church properly heated before each mass. Settings are being reviewed now. Please keep feeding back to help us fine tune the system.	Parish Office
10	Padded kneelers	The kneelers in the main body of the church are padded. Those in the side aisles merely have a cloth covering. Since those who need some support can sit in the main part of the nave, the expense of padding the side aisle benches would seem not to be worthwhile. However, if there is a demand, we will revisit this issue. Over to you! Update Jan25: a straw poll indicated mixed views about this (some preferred the gard kneelers!). We have refurbished 2 kneelers on each side and the front central ones.	YOU
9	Evenly spaced pews	We will measure distances and try to adjust. Constrained somewhat by the pillars and necessary location of the shorter pews. We will report back here once investigated. Update Jan25: little scope for improvement, given pew lengths and pillar positions.	Fabric team
8	Clean high cobwebs	Someone has eagle eyes! We'll look for them and see what can be done. Update Jan25: a telescopic duster (9m tall!) has been bought and all cobwebs removed.	Fabric team
7	Would like communion under both kinds	This is up to individual parishes, and some do offer it. For now, our Parish Health and Safety team still consider this to be an unsafe practice, not least for the celebrant who has to clean the chalice at the end. But they are keeping the issue under review. Update Jan25: our H&S team still considers it best to remain as we are.	H&S cttee
6	Would like a Latin mass – think about a range of masses to suit all	Pope Francis is against this request for Latin Masses as damaging the unity of the church. In this matter, unity of worship is a vital characteristic of the Catholic	PPC

		<p>community. The reception of the Eucharist at a common celebration is one of the traditional marks of the Church i.e. One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. For that reason, any new Latin mass requires the permission of the bishop, and a priest who is able to lead it of course.</p> <p>Latin mass is authorised elsewhere and we will consider advertising where and when on our website; we will inform you if that happens.</p> <p>Having said all that, we agree that we should seek to cater for different preferences regarding the 'style' of our services. That is evident in the different characteristics of our masses, but we are open to new ideas too, subject to the capacity of our priests.</p>	
5	Artwork in the church – multicultural	An interesting suggestion. It would require someone to drive it forward and manage it, identifying and agreeing what sort of artwork and where to put it, sourcing material etc - any volunteers?	YOU
<i>6pm, 28th Oct; Sarah</i>			
4	Question about the sound system; not always audible	<p>After many delays caused by a previously selected contractor, a completely new system is due to be in place by 2nd December (this year ☺)</p> <p><i>Update Jan25: see item 27 above</i></p>	PPC
3	Can we have a suggestion box?	<p>We are trialling surgeries to make parish council members available and solicit views and questions.</p> <p>This sounds like a good extension of that and is being considered.</p> <p><i>Update Jan25: we will repeat the 'surgery' of identifiable PPC members in attendance to collect views after all masses one weekend soon.</i></p> <p><i>It is easy for practically everyone to use email now (or the phone), so we prefer that to administering a suggestion box, and will encourage such feedback periodically in the newsletter</i></p>	PPC
2	"I'm happy with what you are doing"	Thank you – but as a parish we feel we should be doing far more.	
1	We need better buildings – they can be a little tired.	Something more specific would be helpful. Driven by maintenance and repair needs we already do a lot, and the scout hut and Henrietta Suite are on the list for urgent attention.	YOU

		Update Jan25: the rooms upstairs are in very good condition, having been refurbished 3 years ago; the scout hut was repaired and refurbished last year, and the Henrietta Suite is being done this year (see updates on the web site).	
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