

**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Minutes
Monday 22nd July 2024**

Attendees : Fr Michael Copps , Matthew Ives, Andrew Dodd, Bernard Hunter, Donna Patros, Sarah Dodd, Lorna Spears, Patricia Jolly, Peter Robson, Robin Shearmur, Martin Sharkey, Cynthia Oji & Geraldine Mansbridge.

Fr Michael welcomed all to the meeting and opened it with a prayer. Members then introduced themselves.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

As only one member wished to be nominated to be Chair, he was duly elected.

Bernard Hunter Chair

The Chair emphasised the importance of working together and sharing ideas for discussion and comments as we move forward as a parish council.

For us to work effectively, he stressed the need for members to read papers carefully, to ask questions and contribute. Some business can be carried out between meetings, but that requires everyone to respond to email requests when asked.

The election of a vice chair was deferred to a future meeting

Minutes

The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising raised.

AGM

The draft AGM minutes were circulated after the meeting and agreed by email correspondence.

Membership Co - Option

In accordance with the constitution, it was agreed to invite Cynthia Oji to become a co-opted member of the Council.

Chigwell

The Chair referred to the letter from Chigwell representatives which had been circulated with the agenda. This was seen as a positive step in working with the Chigwell community as it was not clear how long the Sisters would remain in the

Covent and if they were to move how that parish community would be supported thereafter. This could include finding another mass centre. The representatives had been invited to join the PPC or attend some meetings in future. A response was awaited.

What is a Parish for?

This was an open discussion item for brainstorming purposes

Fr Michael set the scene by describing two aspects one being about the internal life of the Parish and Christian formation and the other was the outreach potential. Discussion led to the description of the individual experience and then the body of people such as those who get involved with organisations such as Telco, SVP or indeed EM who visit the sick. Other examples provided included behaving as a catholic and being an example to those around you, whether this is in the workplace, or your community. A brief look at parents role in leading by example particularly demonstrated in the holy communion programme showed that there were some way to go with engaging and commitment from some, it was thought that this could show young people the way of the catholic life and to give them confidence in being a catholic.

The potential for Cell Groups to attract new people to us was discussed. It represents 'soft evangelisation', which was felt to be the most effective path for our community to share the Word.

We should consider how others perceive us as a Parish – we may be perceived as being closed and inward-looking.

We should consider how to help those who have difficulty in getting to mass.

The PPC agreed to reflect on the discussion and to look at the way forward for our parish. In doing this to bear in mind that there is no quick fix and careful planning and communication was essential. This should include looking at what makes other parishes successful and finding out how they did it

Parish Committees

A proposal to invite groups and committees associated with the Parish to a PPC meeting so that they not only feel our support but are able to raise issues was agreed.

In the past Committee such as the Finance, Becket Centre Committee and Fabric team had direct links through the membership of the PPC. With the change in membership the links had retired. Options were discussed and it was agreed in the first instance to invite the Finance Committee to provide regular reports of our income and expenditure. Clarification about the requirements of Canon Law for the Parish Priest to have a Finance Committee was provided. The chair agreed to

speak to the Finance Committee to discuss a way forward for sharing information that would assist the PPC in making decisions about any projects/works.

A brief update about the history of the plans and progress to address the improvements to the Henrietta Suite was provided. It was noted that the BCC had asked the PPC to now make the decisions about next steps. In light of this the next meeting would focus on what action would be taken to refurbish the Henrietta Suite including, seating, storage, flooring, lighting, decoration, sound system, safety in the kitchen and bar area

Parish Partnership

Following the decision by the Diocese to remove St Thomas' from the parish partnership scheme the chair of the PPC wrote to the Bishop to establish the reasoning behind the change of heart. A response was received which stated that as a Franciscan Order it was for them to determine the future of the parish and not the Diocese. The chair would respond to the Bishop to express disappointment that as a parish in the Diocese we were not been given the same duty of care as other parishes.

Meetings

It was agreed to meet on the second Monday of each month subject to there being business to conduct.

The next meeting will be held on **9th September at 7.30pm**

Further dates are as follows:

- 14th October
- 11th November
- 9th December
- 13th January
- 10th February
- 10th March
- 14th April (Holy Week)
- 12th May
- 9th June
- AGM usually held in July with election of PPC