

**THE PARISH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF THE HOLY SPIRITY GREAT BARDFIELD AND
THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, THAXTED**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21 APRIL 2016

Present: Patrick O'Brien – Chairman; Mick Hughes – Treasurer;
Robina Debnam,, Damian Walsh, Fiona Walsh, Matthew FostgerKate Fox – Clerk

1. The Meeting Opened with Prayers

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were recorded for Father Rowe, Shirley Foster, Pheobe Walsh and John Yates.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 21 April 2016

Following corrections: Item 6 “there was general but not universal agreement”; Item 7 i. it was agreed that mass would be at Great Bardfield not Thaxted as stated ; ii Stations of the Cross were not proposed for the 5th March only the Lenten Service; ii for 17 September should read Family Day of Recollection not Reconciliation the Minutes of were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

4. Treasurer's Report

Mick Hughes presented his report for the year end 2015/16 and ran through the items on the spreadsheet. Receipts for January, February and March were £3435.01; £3587.58 and £4832.46 respectively. The total receipts for the year were £47,373.98 and total payments were £24,263.58. Excess of receipts over payments was £23,110.40 which together with accumulated funds brought forward of £18,921.45 and adding in restricted funds, total funds amounted to £42,053.85. Expenditure included the two new notice boards, the boiler service and Father's iPad which was partly offset with donations towards the iPad and the notice boards. Second Collections:- The 2016/17 schedule of 2nd collections which included three new ones had been received. Mick will discuss with Fr Richard which of these will be taken and how, on the remainder, to avoid small mounts being received in envelopes. HMR&C wanted mass numbers recorded weekly in groups 10-25, 26-50, 50+. It was agreed Mick will be notified if the numbers at Bardfield are not 50-75. The Diocese has asked for regular meter readings and Matt said he will take quarterly readings at Bardfield the next one by about 25 June. There was an increased gift aid allowance in regard to loose change up to a maximum of £8000 per location. Council Tax:- A 50% property surcharge had been applied to Our Lady's House bringing the total to £2093 and Mick has appealed to the Valuations Office to see if he can get change of use which would result in a zero surcharge, however in the meantime the payment had to be made.

5. Gift Aid Report: Nothing to report

6. Liturgical Items

Robina raised the following: i. Visit to Brentwood Cathedral 21 July 2016 11am to 12 noon for a group up to 30; ii. Check that Chickney visit has been booked by David; iii. Day of Recollection at Great Bardfield – Pheobe had booked 3 September but this might need to be postponed because of numbers. Andy Bunting, Primary Missionary Leader, would be contacted; iv. Sacrament of the Sick - to be checked with Father; v. Corpus Christi – Benediction or something immediately after mass on 29 May.

7. Youth Matters

Numbers continue to be good. There is another Flame at Wembley in March of next year. First Holy Communion takes place on 15 May when the 11:00 mass will be at Great Bardfield. The 9:15 mass will be at Thaxted.

8. Deanery Report

Damian advised that the Deanery has (unofficially) disbanded. However when the NEDPC AGM was held recently the will of the participants was to continue to meet even if they didn't call themselves the Deanery Pastoral Council. The Bishop did not want it to look as if the Stewards of the Gospel were a replacement for Deaneries, as this is not actually the case.

9. Health & Safety. Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds

Damian asked about the grass cutting and Matt said he will look at doing this in the next week or so. They will both deal with the hedge work at the appropriate time.

11. Social Event – Quiz Night 27.2.16

Although very successful financially - £948.18 was raised – and an enjoyable social event it was disappointing that there were few participants from the parish and very few helping on the night, which made it much harder for the few who were there.

12. Ginger Group Discussion – Proposal for way forward for the Parish

Robina raised points on behalf of the Ginger Group following their recent meeting and circulated some notes. The main matters discussed were the ramp and the question of doing up the priest's residence without prejudice to what it is used for. Cleaning and painting of the house was estimated at £2.5K and estimates for the ramp were between £12K and £15K plus VAT. It had been agreed to propose to the PC that we go ahead with the ramp for disabled access however there were reservations that money spent on the ramp could be better spent elsewhere. Mick advised that when the church underwent its health and safety inspection it was mentioned that a second ramp may be required to deal with access in the event of a fire; this would be checked. If this were the case the cost could be prohibitive so this needed to be clarified before making a decision. Damian said one had to look at whether it was wise to spend this amount of money – is it cost effective. If we were in place for 5 to 10 years it may be money well spent however Patrick felt that if we were faced with closure it is likely that we would still last for three years or so. **It was agreed that the cleaning and painting of the priest house should go ahead. There had been a quote provided which did not include materials and it was felt this could be undercut but the work should go ahead without delay.**

Other points raised: (i) What is the point of the Ginger Group – is it just a talking shop; (ii) Need feedback on Stewards of the Gospel so we can advance together with other parishes – Damian said this was a once in a generation event – and Bishop Alan's legacy; (iii) Outcome of Bishops meeting with priests; (iv) Fundraising – where does the money go. This goes into the general fund but Robina said the “coffee ladies” were really keen to have the kitchen refurbished. **There was unanimous agreement that this work should be undertaken and Robina would get details of what was required and liaise with Conor and Neil about moving the work forward as soon as possible.**

The next meeting would be held on 14 May.

13. Any Other Business

Abbotswick – Diocesan Strategic Planning Group meeting. Emphasis of the Stewardship of the Gospel (SofG) is clarified as Evangelisation, and any Administration challenges (eg due to lack of money or clergy) are in service of Evangelisation. It had been intended that the effective appointment of the Stewards date would be around Easter. So far over 70 Stewards have been appointed and around 26 parishes are still in the process of finding Stewards, including our own parish. Discussion in the Ginger Group up till now was that we might manage without a Steward, as we had a prior process in place. However there are six training days for SofG starting 21 May and it was considered that it would not be deemed optimal not to have one attending and representing our parish and filling the Steward role. Some parish priests have started approaching people directly, but Fr Rowe, following the original diocesan intended approach of awaiting volunteers to come forward, did not wish to do this. This approach may need reviewing in the light of signals ‘from Brentwood’ and the lack of a Steward so far. Robina asked if someone could attend the meetings of SofG and report back on an ad hoc basis. It was agreed that Damian would liaise with Fr Rowe in time for the first training day on 21 May for his views, and consult with Fr Richard on what should be the next steps.

Chairman: Patrick said that he would carry on in this role for a further year but would wish to stand down at the AGM 2017.

Date of AGM: This would be held on 30 June 2016 at 8:00pm

14. Date of Next Meeting

This would be held on 22 September 2016 at 8:00pm

