

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

Minutes of the Meeting held 24 November 2016

**PRESENT:** Fr Richard Rowe (President) Patrick O'Brien (Chairman) Michael Hughes  
(Treasurer)  
Kate Fox (Secretary) Robina Debnam John Yates  
David Jarvis Fiona Walsh

1. The Meeting opened with prayers
2. Apologies for absence: Damian Walsh, Phoebe Walsh
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 September 2016: These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting following clarification regarding Item 12: Should state Conor would try to attend the meeting - but not arrange the meeting, as stated.
4. Treasurer's Report: Mick provided the up to date figures which showed a year to date which showed an excess of receipts over payments of £15,783.77 and total funds of £58,242.39. Receipts included donations towards the expenses connected to the burglary from individual donations and £750 from the Bardfield Times, together with £131 from Coffee morning and £35 from Ride & Stride. Expenditure included the purchase of new silver ware and replacement locks etc., insurance of £1856.21 and £626 was charged to repairs in response to the electrical survey. He confirmed that the claim in regard to the burglary had been settled. Mick was still looking in to the matter of zero rated Council Tax for Ursula's old house. All those attending were provided with a copy of the up to date monthly accounts containing all the figures. Contractors' insurance: Mick confirmed that it was essential that any contractor we employed had to have the relevant insurance cover for public liability of between £2M and £5M depending on the work involved and 'hot spot' insurance in the case of electrical work. John spoke about the asbestos report and that the little that is within the building - lagging around the pipes - is fine if left alone. It is understood that Conor has a copy of the report obtain from the diocese. Counting Money: It was acknowledged that ideally there should always be a minimum of two people involved as protection for all parties. Mass Numbers: These were still being monitored.
5. Gift Aid Report: David reported that there were three new members however this was probably balanced by those who had moved away.
6. Ginger Group: Roger Pettet had stood down as Chair of the Group due to business reasons. The way forward would probably see the role being shared with members taking turns but this was not confirmed and no one is taking responsibility for the next meeting. We have dates for 14 January, 18 February and 18 March after which there will be feedback from the Stewards of the Gospel. Father said the Ginger Group should be looking at planning for the parish and the way forward and not dealing with redecoration and repairs etc., this was within the remit of the Parish Council. Nevertheless it was appreciated that members of the Ginger Group volunteered for various works. Much of the discussion was about the Stewards of the Gospel. Robina advised that Linda and Alfred (who are Companions) were getting lots of e mails and could not cope; Damian will ask for help for them.
7. Kitchen Renovation Report: Neal has all the fittings and Shirley and Linda asked if the intention to replace the window - there was no reason why this couldn't be done and would be checked. They also asked if they could purchase microwave for about £35 and a new urn. It was agreed that this could go ahead and need not come to the PC but dealt with by the Finance Committee. The question regarding the toilets was raised and the intention was for the taps to be replaced. The question of insurance was mentioned and

Neal would be asked to confirm that his men were covered and ideally a copy of the relevant insurance certificate should be seen.

8. Safe Installation - Asbestos Problem: This was still ongoing and one suggested location was the penitent's side of the confessionals. The safe would of course be fire proof and Father would also like to use it for safekeeping of the registers of baptism and marriage. John once again reiterated his comments regarding asbestos in this building and that he would welcome sight of the asbestos report.

9. Liturgical Items: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Our Lady of Lourdes church in Braintree 11 February 2017 celebrating the centenary of the Brentwood Diocese and it was agreed that we would do the same in this Parish. Christmas Services: These were confirmed as Carols at 7.30 for "midnight" Mass at 8pm on Christmas Eve in Thaxted and the usual 9.15 and 11.00 am masses on Christmas day. Cards giving the mass times of both parish churches were to be circulated in the December issue of the Bardfield Times. The Year of Mercy was now ended and Fiona would remove the sign over the chapel door.

10. Youth Matters: The Christ the King feast day was very successful and enjoyable with 31 children taking part and Fiona said there were many positive comments from parents. The collections from Sunny Day bags were for the children's side of Miso - the Pope's chosen charity towards a feeding programme. Funds from the coffee morning had been donated and together there was over £100. She had been given £10 for Youth Sunday collection which was passed to Mick and it was agreed that this second collection should take place again as it had not been announced and the collection was usually quite generous. Flame: to be at Wembley Arena in March. Brentwood Youth Service Lourdes trip - summer 2017. Megan has volunteered to help occasionally with the children's liturgy. Fiona asked if she could purchase mass sheets for the older children - an example was circulated - at a cost of £1.40 per week; this was readily agreed. Jenny Balcombe has volunteered to take on the Communion class. Father mentioned the Bishops visit on 26 February 2017. Unfortunately this would be too early for Confirmation of our possibly 7 candidates. Fiona is to check with Magdalene about the Confirmation course at Clare.

11. Deanery Report Fiona reported on behalf of Damian, who had attended a Deanery meeting for Stewards of the Gospel as our representative and such meetings will continue as they were considered beneficial. There is a Stewards of The Gospel day - the first of six days - this Saturday and he will attend with his DSPG hat. The Conference planned for February 2017, to discuss what has been happening in the parishes, will still go ahead despite the fact that the questionnaire will not have been completed; the date for completion has been extended to Easter 2017. Father noted that this is a significant piece of work as it is a once in a generation opportunity for everyone to express their views. The difficulty was to find the best way to engage with the parishioners so that one answer was provided for each question that reflected the majority view. One suggestion was to display questions and ask for comments with the use of Post Its. The DSPG had a new Chairman - Monsignor Chris Brooks - Damian was able to join the meeting via Skype while working in Lisbon. The intention was to appoint a Director of Development to oversee the work throughout the diocese. Questions being addressed are how the Catholic Church is responding and how they see the future. The Bishop wants to see how we can cohesively work together rather than in separate units. We will leave it to the Ginger Group as to how we get the necessary answers to the questionnaire.

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12. Health & Safety: John said at the moment there were no particular problems but maintenance was ongoing. In Thaxted the entrance required a new concrete ramp and a hand rail. The original quotation was only £150 and a further estimate will be sought. Gardening: The arrangements put in place by Alfred are working well. David was disappointed that there not enough volunteers but this way the grounds and hedges were being maintained. Conservatory: It was agreed that the work should go ahead to demolish this structure and do any necessary boarding to keep the premises secure and water tight. Patrick would speak to Neal in this regard. Robina asked if perhaps the

bathroom should be done before the Bishop's visit so he could see the house as a possible resource; there was no agreement to this. Fire Escape - Matt had raised this question and the discussion concerned and Mick read a letter from Chris James at the Diocese Finance Office which stated that “ *...it would be difficult to be fully compliant and providing the existing entrance remains the entrance, the new entrance would be primarily an escape route. What would be problematic would be to use a new staircase as an entrance and then have no secondary escape that was usable by disabled people.*”; thus indicating the need for two ramps.

13. Any Other Business: Father asked if we could have a new photocopier as the existing is difficult to operate - and sometimes not at all. This was agreed. Cleaning: Shirley and Linda had asked if someone could be employed to clean once a month to support the cleaning undertaken by volunteers. Before a decision was taken Robina would make an Appeal at Sunday's mass.

14. Dates of Future Meetings: 19<sup>th</sup> January and 6 April with AGM confirmed as 8 June 2017