

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

Minutes of the Meeting held 19 January 2017

PRESENT: Patrick O'Brien (Chairman) Michael Hughes (Treasurer) John Yates, Robina Debnam
David Jarvis, Fiona Walsh, Damian Walsh, Kate Fox (Secretary)

1. The Meeting opened with prayers.
2. Apologies for Absence: Father Richard, Phoebe Walsh, Pam Gale
3. Minutes of the Meeting of 24 November 2016: Following clarification on some of the items, these were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.
4. Treasurer's Report: Mick provided the up to date figures to the end of December; the new figures reflected income and expenditure for November and December. November income was high as it included some annual payments and there were five Sundays. Other income included £100 from coffee mornings and £33 from Thaxted flower contributions. Under Payments, Catechetical expenditure was mainly for candles and most of Routine Maintenance was for £4500 expenditure on the new kitchen. The Diocesan Quota in December included the retired clergy levy and £1050.13 under burglary was for replacement silver ware. Surplus income for the year to date is £13600 with total fund of £55,638.26. The bank balance, including 2nd collection money, now shows a healthy figure of £56,124.06. It was noted that Jenny Balcombe was purchasing items for the first holy communicants which expenditure would of course be reimbursed. Mick said that expenditure in regard to such church activities would be covered on presentation of receipts but should be mentioned to Father, in advance, as a matter of form. Robina would advise Jenny accordingly. Damian raised the possibility that the parish could be in a position where there was the need to provide a priests salary and allowance and asked could this be funded on present income. There was a brief discussion about the figures involved. The question Damian raised was on what basis decisions of financial affordability are made by the PC regarding a) immediate operational, current expense or b) future strategic capital investment. He raised the following questions: by how much on average would offertory donations exceed average expenses? What is the scale of annual projected surpluses? What opinion does the P.C. wish to present to the Parish concerning the proportionality of surplus in relation to known or hypothetical scenarios of change, without recourse to special appeals?
5. Gift Aid Report: David confirmed there had been no new activities.
6. Kitchen Renovations: This was now complete although the cost had come in higher than expected a total of £4847. Nevertheless the result was a very smart and useful area and the Chairman wished to record a vote of thanks to Neil Davidson for leading on this.
7. Spending Priorities:
 - (a) Safe installation at Great Bardfield: This had become somewhat protracted and although the cost of the safe its self was reasonable at £420 + VAT the cost of installation was, as yet, uncertain. There was also a site survey to be completed before the work could go ahead.
 - (b) Work at Thaxted – Security and Safety: Work was required on the ramp and hand rail for safety reasons and on the front and rear doors for security. An initial quote of £3200 was considered rather high and Mick had spoken to a parishioner who it was hoped would be able to arrange the

work at a much lower figure. If the figure was acceptable to the Finance Committee, it was agreed in principle that this work could go ahead without further delay.

(c) Photocopier: As previously agreed this was something that would benefit the parish and should be capable of printing and copying. The recommendation was to go ahead with this expenditure.

(d) Demolish Lean-to at Our Lady's House. Patrick had spoken to Neil and it was concluded that this could be carried out by a work party project in the spring.

(e) Security Systems at Great Bardfield Church and Priest's House: Estimates had been received in the sum of £1800 for the church and £1450 for the Priest's House plus VAT and the cost of any 'fobs'. There would also be a £100 annual maintenance charge and a £75 call out fee. There was some concern if we had a secure safe and there was very little else of value to be stolen this expenditure could not be justified and there was also the problem of having parishioners who could be on a 'call out' list and how many fobs would need to be purchased to allow access. It was agreed the matter would be re visited once the safe had been installed. Damian asked about Canon law and the appropriateness of its location for the Blessed Sacrament; this was unclear but a safe is used at Thaxted as security was the overriding factor. Damian asked that the Canon law position should be ascertained.

8. Bishop's Visit: This would take place on 19 February with Masses at both parish churches; however it was not clear whether the Bishop would accept our invitation to stay for a buffet lunch. Members said they would be disappointed if there was not the opportunity to discuss the life of the parish with the Bishop.

9. Liturgical Items: (i) Damian said the format of the Bidding Prayers was discussed at the Ginger Group meeting it was asked if readers move away from the 'book' and introduce their own as appropriate. There was general agreement and this would be discussed with Father.

(ii) Newsletter: It was hoped that more room could be made for announcements either by changing the existing layout or increasing the pages. Patrick would speak to Father.

(iii) Altar Servers – St Stephens Guild: Enrolment into the guild was being investigated. In answer to a question it was confirmed that Father did pray with the servers before mass.

(iv) Exposition: 11 February 2017 – Our Lady of Lourdes - it was suggested for a period of 2 hours and would be discussed with Father.

(v) Music: Damian said we are now trying to sing the alleluia and introduce new ways of celebrating the mass. He thought we should try to find an alternative Gloria and asked for any input or views. He said he is often asked for certain hymns but it is agreed these do need to appropriate to the occasion/time of year.

10. Ginger Group: Damian reported on a well-attended meeting on 14 January which also welcomed Stewards of the Gospel from Kelvedon, Braintree and Saffron Walden. Among the key things discussed was the Stewards of the Gospel parish questionnaire. Some of these were handed out at on Sunday 15th at Great Bardfield. They will be distributed at Thaxted next Sunday. They will also be available via e mail and a website to be set up. It was agreed appropriate that known e mail addresses could be used as this was also a better way of responding as would be the website. It was pointed out that there were some parishioners who were not able to get to church and they should be provided with questionnaires. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the responses and the deadlines involved. Clergy meeting on DSPG/SoG Initiative February – if Father could not attend these, members of the clergy said they would keep him informed and Linda and Alfred, among others, said they would offer to drive him to the meetings. There are Clergy Days on 8th and 9th February and 25th February for the Clergy and SoG Conference. Dates of next GG meetings: 18th February and 18th March.

11. Youth Matters: Fiona reported that number were still strong. The 1st Holy Communicants course was going well with six candidates. Confirmation: she has spoken to Magdalen and there will be no Confirmation at Clare this year and it looks as if this relationship may not continue; we have six or seven possible candidates. Following the celebrations with the children on the feast of Christ the King both parents and other parishioners have said how much it was enjoyed and would welcome similar masses. This would be investigated and Fr Richard had suggested perhaps four events a year.

12. Deanery Report: Damian said they were trying to keep the NEDPC work and the SoG agenda merging rather than operating in parallel worlds. Next NEDPC meeting is 16th February 2017.

13. Health & Safety and Maintenance: This had been covered in earlier discussions.

14. Any Other Business: Cleaning: Robina said there had only been one volunteer following the appeal and asked if they could employ someone on a monthly basis – perhaps after the first Sunday of the month. It was agreed that reasonable cost of a two hour period – say up to £20 in total – once per month could be met from funds.

15. Date of Next Meeting: This would be on 6 April 2017 and the AGM would be on 8 June 2017. Mick suggested we look at the dates of the other meetings which don't have to be fixed for September and November as the exigencies of Carols at Horham Hall had previously required.

16 Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded at 9.35 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

N.B. After the meeting it was established that there will not be Clergy Days on 8th or 9th February.

