**CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT GREAT BARDFIELD AND**

**THE ENGLISH MARTYRS THAXTED**

**Notes of the Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 30 June 2020 at 11.00am**

**This meeting had been called with the specific purpose of discussing the proposals for the resumption of Communal Worship.**

Present: Fr Richard, Alfred Wheater (Chairman), Linda Wheater, Siobhan Evers, Sheelagh

Chapman, David Jarvis, John Yates, Kate Fox (Secretary)

**The Meeting opened with a prayer.**

1. **Apologies:** Received from Robina Debnam, Jen Balcombe, Damian Walsh, Fiona Walsh, Phoebe Walsh.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting held 29 February 2020:** These were approved as a true record of the meeting. Proposed Siobhan Evers, seconded John Yates with the following amendment noted: *“The Sacrament of Holy Communion was due to take place on the feast day of St Anthony of Padua (June 13th) the day prior to Corpus Christi (not 13 April).*

Correspondence, relating to the discussions, had been received from both Damian Walsh and also Fiona Walsh. There had not been sufficient to circulate these prior to the meeting therefore Alfred and provided copies and, due to the length of the comments, time was given for these to be read by those present. Some of the points raised had been addressed in the various communications circulated by Linda on a regular basis.

Children’s Liturgy: It was presumed that it would **not be at all possible** for this to take place and had not been the subject of any proposals.

Individual Prayer: A ‘garden meeting’ was held with the permitted maximum at that time of 6 people which included John Yates (H&S) and Shirley Foster (Cleaning rota) who’s input would be key. Father Richard supported this initiative and the meeting enabled a protocol to be set in place. These sessions have proved popular especially with the Blessed Sacrament placed on the altar by Father and have been managed extremely well by volunteers.

Attendance at Mass: It has continued to be recognised that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended for the time being, which has been publicised in all communications. Nevertheless some people do miss receiving Holy Communion and would like to be able to do so if at all possible. Therefore Father Richard put forward that mass would take place in Great Bardfield on Sunday 19th July [not 12 July as previously considered] at 9.30 conditions allowing. This was agreed unanimously.

On reflection, Linda realised that the wording in the 5th paragraph of her email to the Renewal Group on the 27th June viz: ‘If you are unable to be with us on the 11th July, can you please advise us why’ could be misinterpreted if not read in conjunction with the rest of the paragraph, ‘Hopefully, we will be able to form telephone trees to offer help where we can.’ Linda said she was simply trying to get a feel for how people felt about returning, at this early stage of the easing of lockdown, and to form a chain offering help to those who needed it. Also the telephone tree could be used to help us gauge when we would need to increase the maximum limit on numbers allowed to attend Mass.

Damian wished to record that he did not personally support the current resumption of communal worship agenda timeline as so far communicated and if it came to a vote of the Parish Council, to include his views in that vote.

**3. Resumption of Communal Worship**

Notwithstanding the above comments, the manner in which Communal Worship could be enabled needed to be established. There was a lengthy discussion and exchange of views and ideas.

**The First Mass – 19th July 2020**

John Yates recommended a maximum of 40 could be accommodated while still enabling 2m safe distancing

**Entering**: Hand sanitising base and names and contact details taken for track & trace, if needed.

**Seating**: Stewards would be required to direct parishioners to seats working from the front to the back, family groups obviously together, individuals would require appropriate space.

**Face masks/covering & Gloves**: The wearing of these would be compulsory during the service, although under 11s & those with medical needs are excempt.

Much of what is required to take place before the Mass is covered in the ***Guidance for the*** ***Celebration of Mass*** previously circulated by Linda. It also included details of what the priest should do regarding the purificator and cruets etc. The Priest must also wear gloves when handling the Eucharist and Fr Richard was aware of these details

**Servers:** There will not be any

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion would put on fresh rubber gloves & the gel their hands before accepting the Ciborium from the priest

**Communion**: (i) It was agreed one Eucharistic Minister would be in place (time would tell if this was adequate) as it would help re availability of Ministers and make managing exiting easier. (ii) Parishioners would go to the front a bench at a time and sanitising hands again with product provided at the front, before receiving. (iii) Once communion has been received and consumer in silence, since we will already have acclaimed the presence of the Lord at the Priest’s Communion, – exit by the fire escape and leave the premises. This is in line with Option 2 of the Guidance for the Celebration of Mass, which Fr Richard and the PPC voted to adopt.

**Other points**:

* No Holy Water
* No Homily - just a short ‘thought for the day’ from Father.
* The Blessing would be given before communion takes place
* Readings – this would be done on an ad hoc basis as a rota would not be possible
* The reader to do both readings and the psalm.
* Readers would wear disposable gloves, turn pages but not touch the lectern
* Toilets remain closed
* No offertory procession
* No collection – a bowl would be placed as you enter the church, before you sanitise your hands. Guidelines suggest cash is placed in a plastic bag and left for, say 24, hours before counting.
* It was suggested that an outside service could be held in the garden allowing a higher number which Father supported, but would rely on the weather, or the use of gazebos.

**Following the Service:** Help would be required to wash and dry all vessels and clean down the benches and surfaces.

1. **Communications:** This subject came up at various points during the meeting and Linda explained her concern to reach as many people as possible although there was no definitive contact list of parishioners.

**Numbers**: Linda’s original e mail, sent to those whose details she did have, resulted in 38 people (including children) saying they would attend on 12 July. [They would have to be notified that the date had changed but the point is that this is near to the maximum.] On counts taken over a 12 month period there was an average attendance of 60+. However it was likely that, in the short term, if you remove those who are shielding, those who will attend other venues, and those who do not feel comfortable returning to communal worship just yet, we could probably accommodate all those who wish to attend

**Contacts**: Sheelagh had mentioned the ‘telephone tree’ system – which is often used in emergency scenarios so no one person has to do all the phoning, but this still relies on having those contact details. Father would ask Patrick to provide the list he has for the Newsletter circulation – he would have to ask permission to pass on these details due to GDPR. Siobhan asked if we could perhaps use local press to get the message out. Kate said she could put something in the BT that would not be until the August/Sept edition. Thaxted do not have a monthly publication so not easy to reach those parishioners.

1. **Finance**: A general note that more parishioners had moved to Standing Orders since Lockdown to enable them to continue to contribute and of course increase the tax refund that comes to the parish. David mentioned that there would come a point when cash might not be accepted but it was agreed that this would cause several problems including funds received via the coffee mornings and visitors to the parish making one off donations.

**Closing Prayer led by Father Richard**

The meeting closed at 1.15 pm

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