**MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Fr Celestine Onwuekwe; Alfred Wheater (Chair); Sheelagh Chapman (Treasurer); Kate Fox (Secretary); Catherine Wellingbrook-Doswell; Robina Debnam; Gerard Walbanke; Simon Latham; Josef Edel.

In attendance: Janet Yates, Celestine Slater; Siobhan Evers

**The Meeting opened with prayers.**

**1. Apologies for absence:** Linda Wheater; David Jarvis

**2. Minutes of the Meeting held 24 September 2022** These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

However, Fr Celestine wished to record the fact that at the September meeting tribute was paid to Fr Richard Rowe who had served this parish with dedication since being appointed following the death of Fr Timmins in 2014. He is remembered as a thoughtful, kind and extremely intelligent man, who loved music, poetry and art.

**4. Treasurer’s Report**

Sheelagh gave a brief overview. Since taking over from Mick Hughes she has had to deal with the Gift Aid system to pass Kate the monthly figures, the transfer of names and signatures as well getting Fr Celestine set up as a signatory for this parish. She is also having to deal with the various utilities and the termination of the supply for Thaxted. Father will keep a check on the oil supply and let her or Alfred know when it is getting low. Obviously, there is now more pressure on funds as in addition to the work required to make the flat habitable, we will be paying Fr Celestine a stipend – this has yet to be sorted out with the Diocese. The bank balance as of 5th October was £45,241.

**5. Buildings**

Alfred had nothing significant to report. The work to the doors and porch has been completed and some plumbing work was outstanding to two radiators. Regarding the Thaxted property, the Council of Priests meet on 12 December to give the go ahead to sell the land – this should be a formality as all the relevant processes had been completed for some time.

Simon confirmed that the safe had been brought across from Thaxted and it remains for the Alter, Priests Chair and Baptismal Font to be removed. Once this was done anything else could remain; Patrick said he had a bookcase that he wished to remove, and this would be arranged.

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**6. Liturgical Matters**

**Vigil Mass Thaxted:** Patrick Obrien presented a paper to support the case for a Saturday evening mass at Thaxted. The Chairman voiced his concern that this would split the parish just as it was re-grouping following Covid and this view was supported by several members. Patrick supported his view with various statistics (and conversations he had with parishioners) and concluded that “we might expect attendance of 26 to 36 at Thaxted and 31 at Bardfield. This could not be guaranteed of course and negatives at Thaxted are we would have to pay – previously £100 per month – and there are no facilities for toilets or refreshments. The negatives at Great Bardfield are mainly access for less able parishioners and funerals must be held at St Mary’s. The benefit of a vigil mass (in either parish) would be to hopefully encourage young families whose children are committed to Sunday sports and (if in Thaxted) for residents who cannot or are unable to drive. Father Celestine said he would consult the Vicar General and he also queried the time of 5pm saying the earliest mass had to be 6pm - however this was yet to be clarified as other churches in the diocese do hold vigil masses at the earlier time.

**Confirmation**: There were four Confirmandi and, in the absence of Linda Wheater the Chairman gave details of the programme, which was to start on 8 January, culminating in confirmation on 16 July. The Chairman outlined other events for the Confirmandi including working with Warm Hearts Cold Hands and a retreat which would be held in the church followed by meditation and discussion.

Father said he was very grateful to Linda for her hard work, however the Bishop Alan wished to make his visit in March. It was agreed this was unacceptable as it would not give the candidates enough time to prepare for this special sacrament. A later date of 10 December had been offered and it was agreed that Fr Celestine should confirm this with the Bishop.

**Children’s Liturgy**: Robina mentioned the poor attendance regarding children but would be doing something different on each Sunday in Advent to get the children involved in ‘presenting a gift to Jesus’. The children would read out details of their gifts from cards they had prepared earlier, from the front of the church just before lighting the advent candle and singing the ‘candle’ song. The intention was for children to be more engaged and enjoy their time at church.

**Christmas Preparations/Carol Service**: Sheelagh said a Christmas music What’s App group had been formed to discuss preparations for the Carole service. Celeste was helping with the catering and Paul has purchased lights for the tree outside the church and he was also going to get trays for the windows. It was agreed that Paul should not have to make this financial commitment without support and along with the flowers that Shirley organised, it was appropriate that an exit collection for two Sundays (4th and 11th) should be for flowers and decorations. Regarding children on Christmas Eve, it would appear that the dressing up clothes were no longer available.

**Service of Reconciliation:** Father was happy to arrange this service prior to Christmas

**Christmas Masses**: Christmas Eve 5.00pm and Christmas Day 9.30am

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**7. Health & Safety:** Nothing to Report

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**8. Any Other Business**

**Youth:** Father announced that Dr David Beverly – new parishioners had agreed to take on the role of Youth Liaison and Kate was asked to invite him to the next meeting.

**David Jarvis**: There was an update on his condition and that he was slowly recovering from although still very poorly. We will keep him in our prayers.

**Catholic Post**: There was not enough support to subscribe to this publication.

**Live Simply Award**: This was something started by Fiona Walsh and Robina was hoping to find out more and progress this initiative if possible.

**Website**: Roger Pettett has said this has now been updated.

**13. Date of Next Meetings**:

This would be held on Saturday 21st January at 10.am

**Closing Prayer**

**The meeting concluded at 11.30 am**