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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING SATURDAY 20 MAY 2023**

Present: Fr Celestine Onwuekw; Alfred Wheater (Chair); Sheelagh Foort (Treasurer); Kate Fox (Secretary); Catherine Wellingbrook-Dodswell; Linda Wheater; Robina Debnam; Gerard Walbank; Josef Edel.

**The Meeting opened with prayers including those for David Jarvis and Michael Hughes both of whom died recently and were great servants of the parish.**

**1. Apologies for absence:** Siobhan Evers;Jenny Wheater; Simon Latham. It was noted that Simon would be tendering his reservation due to commitments regarding the care of his wife Hazel.

**2. Minutes of the Meeting held 11 March 2023:** These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting, Proposed Gerard Walbank, seconded Sheelagh Foort.

**4. Treasurers Report**: Prior to the meeting Sheelagh had circulated two documents regarding income and expenditure to April 2023. The first is produced by the Diocesan software package and the second is based on the system Mick Hughes used. Sheelagh explained previously that she managed to transfer the figures produced by the software package to Mick's version successfully until 5th February when the figures went adrift and have continued to drift. It was also important for everyone to see how quickly the parish was racing through the money built up during Fr Richard’s time because we were saving on salary and living costs at the Presbytery.

One of the biggest problems now is getting to the bottom of the high electricity bills and getting IFM, who handle fuel supply on behalf of the diocese to acknowledge that there is an issue. After further discussion it was agreed to absorb the cost of an engineer to check the meter. If the meters were found to be accurate it would be difficult to know what to do next.

Sheila was also trying to work out why the water costs are so high and needed to locate the meter.

Second Collections: Cash protocol had been sorted out - Celeste is doing the banking and Alfred and Matt the counting. Sheelagh had also been in discussions with Campbell Lukose at the Diocese regarding the difficulties with online banking and receiving statement in good time.

Exceptional Expenditure: Quite a proportion of reserves had been spent on renovation and decoration of the flat. However there were still some outstanding items. Fr Celestine mentioned that his shower was not working – Alfred would contact the installation company and the radiators would benefit from thermostats – Alfred would liaise with a plumber.

**Financial Position**: Sheelagh confirmed that as at 1st April the balance was £26,089.29. Gerard asked if perhaps we could appeal to the diocese regarding the Diocesan Quota, [which at 26.5% of the offertory and Gift Aid refund was a large proportion of our income] explaining that our funds were going down dramatically.

Alfred wished to record a vote of thanks for Sheelagh in this considerable undertaking and her resolve in her dealings with IFM and the diocese.

1.

**5. Buildings**

**Roof insulation**: David Beverley had kindly investigated the possibility of grants for this work and when funding became available this was something that should be considered.

**Sale of Thaxted:** Despite ratification by the College of Consultants (Canons) at its meeting on 23 March, Amanda Balicki had not had the decision in writing. However, Stretton, the auctioneers had all the necessary details to proceed, and this will be chased if nothing heard in the next week or so. Alfred said that although we will not be able to achieve everything in the Quinquennial report from the sale, we can make good inroads.

**Lighting**: Fr Celestine asked if extra lighting could be installed in the area above the lectern and it was agreed that, in the short term, a clip on light similar to that already in use on the altar be purchased. Kate to investigate.

**6. Liturgical Items**:

**Children’s Liturgy**: Disappointingly there were not enough children attending - more often none – and Robina would discontinue these events; she would consider something leading up to Advent, and other significant times in the church year.

**Confirmation**: Linda gave an update on progress so far and said the group were working very hard with the tutorials she ran from home. The collection regarding the homeless was overwhelming and took some time for her and Celestine to sort through and then deliver centrally; she was reminded to ask for help another time. The Confirmandi group were going out on 24th May with others in Chelmsford to work in a ‘soup kitchen’ and have a first-hand experience. It was confirmed that the Confirmation service would take place on 10th December and she would carry on lessons until the end of June and have a break for the summer with two more sessions on 12th and 21st November with a rehearsal on 3rd December. The intention was also to move the tea and coffee morning from 3rd to 10th to coincide with the Bishops visit. It was suggested that the Confirmandi be involved in the choice of music, and this would need to be discussed with Paul.

**Vestments**: Fr Celestine had brought a supply back from his trip to Nigeria.

**Holy Communion**: Linda read out a guidance statement which to a discussion on the way forward for our parish. Holy Communion under both kinds is permissive not obligatory and parishioners needed to be assured of this. Also, as Father Celestine did not take alcohol there was a prescribed way in which anything remaining in the chalice had to be disposed. In addition, those who wished to receive the Precious Blood of Christ needed to be reminded that they should be in good health – Covid rules apply. Kate would ask Patrick to add a note to the Newsletter.

**Safeguarding:** Nothing to report, apart from completing Fr Celestine’s DBS check.

**11. Health & Safety:** Robina said that unfortunately she did not feel able to carry on in this role, partly due to health limitations but also, she was not online or computer literate. However, Kate had agreed to carry on monitoring the Safety Toolbox.

**12. Any Other Business:**  No other business.

**13. Date of Next Meetings**: The AGM would be held on Sunday 15 July following mass, with the hope of encouraging attendees to attract new members.

**Closing Prayer**

**The meeting concluded at 11.30 am**