**Minutes of Parish Advisory Council Meeting Held on Tuesday 18th October 2016**

**Present:** Fr. J Barnes, P. Dance, D. Richardson,, T. Doran, J. Birchall, D. Birchall, M. Macdonald, B. Macdonald, E. Utting, , A. Lamberton, B. Lamberton, Sr. Mavis, Sr. Mary, D. Thomas, A. Dance, S. McCallum, B. Pinto, K. Pinto, C. Richardson, T. Brazier, W. Ablard and M. Bucknall.

**Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Phil Dance welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Fr. John opened the meeting with a prayer.

**General Update**

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Previous minutes were approved.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Fr. John reported there was now an active Confirmation Group. A Proclaim Group has been established and has held three meetings. Suggestions as to how to improve the life of the parish have been proposed and acted upon.

Alan Lamberton gave an update on the provision within our church for less able people. A survey produced by SCDC had been conducted by four independent groups on the provision for disabled access to the church and surrounding areas. A number of opportunities for improvement have been identified and these will be costed and implemented under the direction of the Finance Committee. Provision will also be made for those with hearing and vision impairments.

Update on Parish Finances

David Richardson gave an update on our parish finances. Alan has put together a leaflet to inform parishioners about the deficit between parish contributions and parish outgoings. This was distributed at all Masses where Alan gave a talk requesting more donations be gift aided.

Progress on Lectern and Confessional

Plans have been prepared for the new lectern and the drawings have been approved by Fr. John and the generous donors from the parish. Investigations into the most appropriate sound system are under way and it is hoped that we may have a new lectern in place by Christmas.

The proposed reconfiguration of the confessional has some challenges associated with it. Fr. John is working with Alan Lamberton to overcome these challenges and we hope to be able to improve the current confessional in the coming weeks. The improvements to the confessional were part of our Year of Mercy activities.

Fr. John mentioned that the Lady Chapel needed redecoration and he has very kindly offered to pay for the works as an act of thanksgiving for his two years in the parish.

Planned Events

We have had a number of successful events over the summer and we plan to continue with the good work. Plans for Christmas will include the Posada journey around the parish, the Christingle Service and the Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch which will be held on the 11th December. Anyone who knows of a person of seventy years or over please let Monica have their name. Team Felix are organising a Christmas Party on 17th December which will have the Grand Draw as a key feature, all were encouraged to ensure successful sale of tickets.

**New Inititatives**

The Care Group Launch

Catherine Richardson has been doing a great job in leading this important venture. 17 people are interested in joining the Care Group, Helping Hands, which is a parish group formed to reach out to people in need in our community. We have 16 people currently needing assistance. A formal launch is planned for 22nd and 23rd October by Catherine, where all parishioners will be invited to participate.

Parish Survey Results

The parish questionnaire was produced, distributed and collated in the month of August. 90 replies were received which was a good response and encouragingly 77% of those completing the questionnaire felt that the parish offering was good or very good. Some opportunities for improvement were indicated and these are being actioned.

Building a More Welcoming Community

A number of positive initiatives are underway and now include a children’s choir being organised by Austina and a possible revival of the folk group by Phil Ashby. Austina and Phil will be working with Doug and Fr. John to progress additions to the music offering. People were encouraged to think of new things to enhance parish life and to bring these to the Proclaim Meeting scheduled for 5th November at 11.30.

Some experiments have been conducted with a view to improving the experience of the congregation entering and leaving the church. The large book trolley had been removed and the books placed on pews. Whilst this had improved access, much of the value of the welcoming experience had been lost. Brian Macdonald and Fr. John have been looking at solutions and some new book cases will be installed so that books may be distributed and collected as part of the welcoming process without the barrier of the trolley. Welcoming scored the highest among the things we do well in the survey and thanks to Brian and the teams for doing a good job.

A return of the House Groups would be encouraged for Autumn/Winter 2016 and more details will be available in the newsletter.

**Any Other Business**

Phil Dance gave an outline of the progress on our approach to safeguarding. The Catholic church was seen to be a role model for good practice and is being emulated by others. The training for the new system is now complete and a programme for rechecking the DBS status of our volunteers will commence. Training material is available to bring all parishioners up to date with the latest thinking on safeguarding and can be made freely available. It is to be hoped that the leaders of various groups will take advantage of this opportunity. More information in the newsletter over the coming weeks.

Wilf Ablard reminded the meeting that the Chairman had offered his services for one year and that a replacement will need to be actively sought to maintain continuity.

Opportunities will be taken to present World Youth Day to the Confirmation groups. Help has already been sought from the diocesan youth team for our Confirmation candidates. If we are to send delegates to this event, then fund raising would need to be in place to support them.

Sr. Mary reminded us that Sr. Annie will be giving a talk at the Convent on Saturday 22nd October at 2.30 on the current situation in Aleppo. All are welcome. Sr. Annie is based in Syria and has been in the UK speaking to Church Leaders and Members of Parliament about the situation from her personal experience.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 24th January at 7.30 pm.

Phil thanked everyone for coming and Fr. John ended the meeting with a prayer.