

Minutes

Those present:

Stephen Badcock (*Chairman*), Fr. John (*Parish Priest*) Doug Birchall (*Minutes Secretary*), David Richardson, Jenny Birchall, Alan and Barbara Lamberton, Sylvia McCallum, Angela Ashby, Haley Dossor.

Apologies:

Fiona Badcock, Teresa Doran, Phil Hills.

1. The meeting began at 2:30pm. It was held in the Parish Hall, with social distancing being observed by all those present.

2. Financial report (*David Richardson*)

A meeting of the Parish Finance Committee had been held in the last few days, when the current state of the parish finances had been reviewed. The balance in the Current Account is just over £ 8000, and there is £357,451 in the Diocesan Account. Regarding collections, there are now 25 parishioners giving by monthly standing order, which yields an income of about £25 per week. Following the discovery of certain irregularities in another parish, the Finance Committee will be conducting a review of the methods by which money received by our Parish is collected and counted, and if necessary tightened up.

The computer used hitherto for the Parish finances is not the property of the Parish; the machine belongs to Fr John, and all relevant data is on a memory stick. The Finance Committee has resolved to purchase a reconditioned laptop for the Parish finances, to be kept in the Presbytery; David will be looking for a suitable model.

There are three areas where maintenance/repairs requiring substantial expenditure are in progress or required:

- i) Repair/maintenance to the roof lights in the Sacristy (c.£3000);
- ii) Upgrading of the church gas supply (when the boiler was serviced earlier this year, the pressure in the supply pipe was found to be insufficient. Replacement/repair will cost c.£3000);
- iii) several trees at the back of the garden are overgrown and need to be trimmed. This must be done professionally, since we are in a conservation area.

Total expenditure for these three areas is expected to be about £10,000.

3. Progress report on the renovations to the Presbytery (*Fr John*)

The work carried out over the last few weeks is almost completed; the scaffolding is still in place, but should be removed shortly (lockdown permitting).

4. Christmas arrangements

Fr John said that with the Coronavirus Pandemic continuing, all our plans must necessarily be provisional. He thought it would be best to have a mass at 5:00 pm and one at 7:00 pm on Christmas Eve, and on Christmas Day a 9:30 am mass at St Felix, and one later in the morning for the Convent. He would try and arrange for another priest to celebrate the Convent mass.

There followed a general discussion about details for the Christmas masses. Various ideas were put forward, such as having a sign-up sheet displayed in advance in the porch, and a seating-plan, so as not to exceed permitted numbers attending each mass, and to maintain social distancing. Fr John thought we might also have to omit the Procession to the Crib.

It was decided that details of arrangements for Christmas masses will be finalised nearer the time, once we know what restrictions will be in place then.

5. Memorial Garden (see Annexe 1)

Fr John distributed copies of a draft leaflet which he has produced, setting out guidance for the use of the Memorial Garden both for visitors, and those wishing to have their loved ones commemorated, and/or their remains interred there. He invited the meeting to comment or suggest improvements to the draft: the meeting unanimously approved of the draft as presented, the text of which is reproduced at Annexe 1 of these minutes.

7. Review of current safeguarding measures (including current use of the Parish Hall).

Fr John began by saying that most things needing to be discussed seemed to have been covered already; it also seemed likely that the Government would shortly be announcing a further lockdown, which would mean that many activities in the Parish would once again be suspended or cancelled. If it turned out that the church would be open only for private prayer, he asked what would be the best time of day for the church to be open. There was a short discussion as to how best to accommodate this; it was decided that daily masses would be celebrated by Fr John at 9:30 am, and the church would be open for private prayer from 10:00am, continuing over the lunchtime period. It was also suggested that there could be a rota of stewards to be in attendance for not more than an hour each during the prayer period; also, that there should be a supply of antiseptic wipes, which people could use to sanitise their sitting places before leaving.

Regarding the Parish Hall, it was agreed that, if lockdown is re-imposed, no meetings, events or gatherings should take place there until further notice; parish gatherings should take place there only if the use of the Hall was essential, with social distancing to be observed; and the hall would not be available for bookings by outside organisations.

8. Any other business

Fundraising methods: Haley Dossor said that he felt that paying money by cash was rapidly “going out of fashion”, particularly since the Coronavirus outbreak. He recalled that we had recently been encouraged to pay our weekly collection money by a standing order to our banks; some had taken this up, but many parishioners still put cash in the plate, he had done some private research, seeking to find out how other churches received their regular collection monies. He distributed a handout with the results of his findings, with some samples of payment systems attached (for main text of the document, see Annexe 2). The meeting agreed that it would be useful to consider alternative payment methods; Haley and David Richardson volunteered to look into this.

AP> Haley and David to take this forward.

Live streaming of masses & services: Fr John said that at present, many churches were providing live streaming of their masses and other services for those unable to attend mass at their usual church. David Richardson has done some research into this. Stephen said he has seen this working well for funerals. Fr John said that he thought it worthwhile to look at the possibility of setting up a streaming system for St Felix, and a good person to ask for information would be Darren, who has set up the system used at the Cathedral in Norwich.

AP> Stephen (and others) to do a feasibility study for installing a live-streaming system at St Felix, and to seek advice, and a financial quote, from Darren.

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Christmas ideas?: Fr John asked if anyone had any other ideas about what we might do as a Christmas display, or something similar. Barbara Lamberton suggested a tableau of a Christmas Crib, to be set up in the Parish Hall, so that it is visible to passers-by in Gainsborough Road.

AP> Barbara to take this forward.

No firm date was fixed for the next meeting, since we are not at present in a position to make definite plans; it is likely to be at some suitable time in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 4:05 pm.

Doug Birchall

Minutes Secretary

20.11.20

*(the abbreviation **AP>** signifies "Action Point")*

Annexes:

1) *Draft regulations for the Memorial Garden*

2) *Haley's note about different fundraising payment methods (examples not included).*

Annex1 Draft regulations for the Memorial Garden

THE MEMORIAL GARDEN.....

..... is situated behind St.Felix Church, and is a place where the Cremated Remains of former parishioners may be interred. It is a peaceful place, bright with roses and other flowers, where people can sit in the sun and remember their loved ones.

In accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, Cremated Remains are buried, and not scattered. Our Christian belief in the Resurrection of the Dead on the Last Day means that we treat human remains with the greatest respect : our dust and ashes will one day be wonderfully transformed into the new body of the resurrection, and so should not be allowed to be blown away by the wind maybe to rubbish dumps, drains, or other unsuitable places, but rather be reverently laid to rest in the earth.

The first step towards such a burial is to ask the Parish Priest for an Application Form, which should then be filled in and returned to him. Then a date and time for the interment can be arranged.

No fee is charged for such burials, but a donation towards the future upkeep of the garden is both appropriate and appreciated. (NOTE : To bury Cremated Remains at the Felixstowe Cemetery incurs a fee of £150, double - £300 - if the person lived outside the immediate confines of Felixstowe, eg. at Trimley).

Because of restricted space, the burial of wooden caskets or plastic urns is not possible. The Cremated Remains are brought along in the cardboard box in which the Crematorium issued them to the undertaker, and these are then poured reverently into the hole which has been prepared.

In order to maintain the character of the garden, individual memorials may not be placed at the spot where the burial has taken place : if you would like to have a memorial, then it should take the form of a plaque affixed to the brick wall in the corner of the garden. These should be of uniform size and material. The Parish Priest will be able to give you the trade card of the local man who makes them, and the Parish Priest should approve the proposed inscription before the plaque is made.

Artificial flowers and such things as holly wreaths are not allowed in the garden : cut flowers and potted plants should be placed on the ledge below the Crucifix. Please do not leave wrapping paper there, and please remove your flowers when they have died. No plants of any kind should be planted out in the rose bed, or in any of the containers without consultation with the Parish Priest.

It may be that you would like to help with the maintenance the Memorial Garden in a practical way : offers of help with gardening etc. are always welcomed.

Fr.John, Parish Priest

Annex 2 *note about different fundraising payment methods*

St Felix Church Felixstowe

possible additional methods of fund raising via 'tap and go' technology

The fact that we are becoming a cashless society is having a negative effect on Churches and indeed all charities, and the recent Covid 19 pandemic is driving this trend even faster.

Debit cards have overtaken cash, and by next year only 27% of retail transactions will involve notes or coins.

Many churches are now using or considering the use of 'tap and go' systems, either for regular collections, or more widely for hall rental payments etc.

The information below is from Church of England resources as our Diocesan expert was unavailable at the time of my enquiry. If we decide to follow up on this, I am sure that similar deals and products would be available.

There are various systems on the market, and the one chosen would depend on the frequency of use, and the amounts likely to be involved.

GBxMini

This is a lightweight and versatile reader which can be used contactless or with chip and pin.

- internet connection not required
- self service
- transactions up to £45 tap, or for larger donations chip and pin
- either a fixed location or portable
- Gift aid can be claimed
- Price category up to £350.00

GBx Core

- This is a more robust product which is floor standing but portable and has all the basic features of the GBx mini
- Price category: £350-£500

Payacharity

This is a floor-based system but with a variety of designs, but includes all the features of the GBX mini. It is suitable to be used in an unattended building.

- Price category: £350-500

iZettle

This has been adopted widely by small retailers, art exhibitions, etc but needs to be linked to someone's ipad, iPhone or Android phone, which could be a disadvantage.

Please see the attached case study which gives more details.

also attached a 'Goodbox' information sheet. This system seems to be widely used by churches, and includes the GB series above.

Haley Dossor
2.11.20