

# St Dunstan's Parish Team Meeting

July 7th 2021

## Present

Adrian Sharman, Fr Peter, Joe Dunne, John Sexton, Mark Potter, Deacon Russell, Michele Harrison, Mary Smith, Julianne Birch and Elizabeth Lucek (to record minutes)

### 1. Welcome and opening prayer.

Fr Peter opened the meeting with a prayer. Fr Peter thanked Adrian for stepping in as chair temporarily. Adrian thanked people for attending the meeting.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting.

Comments on the minutes from the last meeting were requested in writing so that answers could be included in an appendix.

### 3. Parish Update

Fr Peter gave an update on changes within the Parish. Five weeks earlier Fr Peter received a phone call from Bishop Richard to say that Fr Simon was to be invited to be the parish priest at Dorking. It later became clear that there was not going to be a priest to replace Fr Simon. Fr Simon will be moving to Dorking at the end of July. Bishop Richard also said that Nick Harden, one of the transitory Deacons (a Deacon en-route to ordination to the priesthood, usually 1 year later) would come to Woking at the beginning of September. Nick is likely to be staying at the parish from Friday to Monday or possibly Friday – Sunday, depending on his studies. Fr Peter will be responsible for his pastoral formation in the diaconate.

Fr Peter discussed how it will be possible to change from two priests in the parish down to one while still maintaining the excellent work done in Woking. Changes will be required, and discussion is still ongoing, but Fr Peter outlined a possible new arrangement of services. It is anticipated that on Saturday there will be 10am Mass with Morning Prayer, Rosary and Exposition; the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be reintroduced on Saturdays between 10.30 and 11.30 am. Masses would be celebrated on Saturday at 6pm, with the three Masses on Sunday continuing as before. There will be weekday Mass on Monday at 10am, then Fr Peter will be away from Monday afternoon until the 10 am Mass on Wednesday. There will be no Mass on Tuesdays. Under the restrictions arising from Covid, Requiem Masses have recently been celebrated separately from the weekday morning Mass, but that will not be possible going forward. Requiem Masses will be celebrated at usual 10am Mass time. Memorial services in the church could be celebrated by Deacon Russell. Crematorium Services would be celebrated by Fr Peter and Deacon Russell as they are able, with Nick Harden if he is available.

Fr Peter is involved with many other meetings within the Parish, but he suggested that this was an opportunity to encourage the laity to become even more involved, and to empower them to carry out work which will make the parish even more successful. Fr Peter said that he has received many compliments about the parish and commented that the parish is trusted to both continue work that is already being done, and to take on more.

Fr Peter said that he would want to stay as involved as possible in school chaplaincy work at St Dunstan's and SJB. He said that if laity become more involved then he will have time to do more things.

Comments were then invited from the Parish team, which led to a discussion of how the parish team might respond to Bishop Richard's decision.

Comment: It was not a surprise that Fr Peter sees the upcoming changes to parish as an opportunity. It was noted that Fr Peter taking responsibility for Deacon Nick Harden's formation in the diaconate when he comes to the parish would rather offset the help that Nick Harden could give. There was disappointment in Bishop Richard's decision, concern for Fr Peter in having to take sole responsibility for the parish, and a feeling that, should Bishop Richard have thought it essential, an assistant priest could have been found. At least one parishioner has written to the Bishop, and it was decided that a letter would be sent from the Parish Team, expressing their concerns with the decision. Fr Peter expressed his gratitude for the support from the parish team. He did not rule out a letter being sent to Bishop Richard but was not optimistic that the Bishop would change his mind.

Comment: A concern was raised about the pressure on Fr Peter to celebrate four Sunday Masses, and it was asked whether there might be any support from retired or visiting priests. It was also asked whether the times of the Sunday Masses could be changed, or whether one of the other weekday Masses be replaced with an alternative service?

Fr Peter responded that Bishop Richard had mentioned that Fr Richard Madders, might be able to help from time to time, but that he has constraints of his own. Fr Peter has a meeting with Fr Richard on Friday. There is no prospect of another supply priest although efforts are being made to find someone.

The question was raised about having a service of The Liturgy of the Word and Communion on those days when Mass cannot be celebrated. Fr Peter told the team that Bishop Richard does not support such services being held routinely. He accepts their use in an emergency but in general would prefer Mass to be cancelled. Fr Peter commented that his understanding was that all the Bishops took this approach.

Deacon Russell expressed his disappointment at the lack of support from the Bishop for having a service of The Liturgy of the Word and Communion.

Fr Peter commented that in Weybridge he thought the Sunday afternoon Mass is celebrated by a visiting priest, but Fr Peter would not want to adopt this practice even if it were possible. He would rather that additional help was on a rota basis so that Fr Peter would not lose touch with any of the congregations.

The parish team agreed that they, collectively, were very sorry to see Fr Simon leaving the parish and are concerned about the workload that Fr Peter will be taking on. Fr Peter said that he would find it easier to reduce a fuller programme if it becomes clear that it is not sustainable, rather than expanding a more cut back schedule. He said that there was further discussion needed with the parish team and with Deacon Russell.

The parish team offered Fr Peter their full support, together with support from both schools, and asked that he should call the team together if he thinks it would be useful. The team will draft a letter to Bishop Richard, on behalf of the team, the parish, and the community.

## 5. Finance – Joe

Joe had sent out a summary of the accounts covering the first 5 months of the year to end of May (see Appendix 1) which show that the parish finances are currently breaking even. This is due primarily to the success of appeal made back in November 2019 which led to an increase in regular contributions and persuaded many parishioners to transfer to giving by standing order.

Joe gave an update on the figures for 2020, which showed a surplus at the end of the year of just under £17K, compared to the previous two years for which there was a deficit.

The current income is as expected for this time of the year, and we are ahead of the situation we had last year. However, as the accounts are reconciled on a cash basis, the balance can ebb and flow between months. An

end of year statement can be prepared, but it is more difficult on an interim basis. However, Joe was confident on the statement for the 5 months to end of May.

The contribution to the clergy for Christmas 2020 was £8200 per priest and for Easter 2021 was £6200 (reduced in comparison to the previous year). At a normal Easter people who pay by standing order would quite often make an additional contribution for the priests and apportioning a proportion of the total collection has not compensated for that.

The Diocesan levy is large, but we are one of the larger parishes in the diocese and so one of their key fund raisers. Funds for the diocese overall have been affected by Covid as some parishes are more dependent than St Dunstan's on passing around the plate on Sundays, and their income has, in places, been very badly affected by the pandemic.

Question: Has the availability of the 'tap and pay' machines installed in the narthex significantly increased the income of the parish?

Answer: Yes. In their first 12 months of use, £12,400 of donations came through the machines. The decision to install them early in the covid pandemic last April has proven to be worthwhile and they have been a useful avenue for income. The average donation 'per tap' is £15, and occasionally larger donations are made this way. In the current calendar year to date donations have reached £8,400.

Fr Peter thanked Joe for his work and thanked Ian White for managing Gift Aid donations and Gift Aid envelopes. In time the parish will receive the money from the tax rebates. If this is of a similar value to last year, it will be helpful for parish finances.

## 6. Safeguarding Adrian Sharman

Alan Blanchard has agreed to take over parish safeguarding from Adrian. Alan has had DBS validation and is getting up to date with the necessary training. So far it has been a smooth transition, and Adrian thanked Fr Peter for his help.

Comment: Fr Peter said that the possibility is being considered of inviting a second person to act alongside Alan. The same has been considered for Joe Dunne, and Oliver Whiddett has agreed to shadow Joe with the aim of having two people to manage financial affairs, to increase security for the future

## 7. Fr Frank's memorial – Fr Peter

During the week starting August 9<sup>th</sup>, Fr Peter will go down to Lewes to Marcus Cornish's workshop to see the final form of the statue before it is cast at the foundry. Final alterations can be requested if required at this meeting. The memorial is now virtually complete. It is anticipated that the memorial will be ready to be installed sometime around the end of September or the beginning of October. All the other plans for landscaping are complete. Some groundworks have now been completed.

Question: When is payment due?

Answer: A sum of £6K was paid up front for initial materials and plans. If the memorial is cast in August, then another bill is anticipated in September, with the final bill in October. The total will be around £28-30K. A sum of around £9K has already been donated without explicitly inviting contributions.

Fr Peter commented that progress on the statue has been slower than hoped. Fr Peter also said that he would like Bishop Richard to come and bless the memorial and he will invite Fr Frank's family to be part of the occasion, although this could be after the installation.

## AOB –

Mary Smith: Mary suggested that as a parish team it would be useful to take stock of roles to support Fr Peter. Pepe does a great deal of maintenance work, but Mary suggested that it might be useful to consider whether someone might be appointed premises manager, who would be responsible for the fabric and buildings of the church, taking on some of the tasks currently done by Fr Peter.

Joe Dunne: the parish is very grateful to Pepe whose work has saved the parish considerable expense, most recently by laying the foundations for Fr Frank's memorial. Joe also supported the idea of the parish employing a premises manager in the future, instead of relying on the clergy or on volunteers.

Adrian formally thanked Pepe for all his work.

Mark Potter: Mark distributed a summary paper before the meeting – see Appendix 2.

Michele Harrison: Michele commented that there is currently an outbreak of COVID-19 at SJB.

Adrian Sharman thanked Julianne Birch and Michele Harrison for all the work they and all the staff have done within the schools during the pandemic.

Adrian also expressed, on behalf of the team, their huge gratitude and thanks to Fr Simon for everything he has done whilst here at St Dunstan's. Fr Simon will be greatly missed but we wish him success on his journey.

Fr Peter ended the meeting with a prayer and a blessing.

Appendix 1 Financial Summary

Joe Dunne

<b>ST DUNSTAN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b>				
<b><u>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
	<b><u>5 Months to</u></b>		<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>
	<b><u>31 MAY 2021</u></b>			
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>				
Offertory	101,560		190,620	185,625
Donations	5,825		5,988	10,902
Tax Rebates	15,973		51,026	38,255
Fund Raising	837		3,104	7,647
Repository	79		625	1,683
	<b>124,274</b>		<b>251,363</b>	<b>244,112</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
Personnel	29,596	77,208		103,894
Travel		878		4,719
Office Costs	6,827	16,319		13,265
Establishment	10,812	30,155		23,786
Property expenditure	2,392	11,859		21,069
Equipment	5,129	-		7,045
Domestic	2,727	7,101		8,077
Liturgical, Pastoral	4,834	9,157		25,387
Diocesan Levy	42,143	80,240		80,119
School	638	1,479		
Donations				2,601
	<b>105,098</b>		<b>234,396</b>	<b>289,962</b>
	<b>19,176</b>		<b>16,967</b>	<b>-45,850</b>
<b><u>EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS</u></b>				
Write back of provisions				3,872
Legacies received				
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>19,176</b>		<b>16,967</b>	<b>-41,978</b>

## Appendix 2 Other Churches and Community Update

Mark Potter

**Hope Magazines** - I have given Fr Peter a copy of an excellent magazine to give away to people. Published by Good News for Everyone (formerly Gideons UK) the mags are free to those who can make good use of them and Andrew Bates of the Christian Agencies Network (CAN) has said that there is an almost endless supply. The magazines are simply scripture in an attractive format - the first half are psalms of hope and the second half is John's gospel. Food Bank customers are already recipients. Here is a link which will give you some idea of what the magazines look like Please order them through John Nash though: [john@jnash.biz](mailto:john@jnash.biz)

**'Working together for Woking' event** - Andrew Bates (CAN) is working with Woking Borough Council and ROC Woking to put together this event which will bring together agencies working in community support (e.g. The Foodbank, Woking Street Angels, Christians Against Poverty, Homestart, etc.). They will set up stalls and be able to receive information from each other. The event is planned for the end of September and will take place at Welcome Church. Invitations, with more details, will be coming out shortly from Elspeth Andrews' team at the council.

**Big questions with Justin Welby at Woking F.C.** - The Archbishop of Canterbury is visiting the Guildford diocese at the end of September and speaking at invitation events to encourage CofE churches in their evangelism. The aim is that church members invite a guest to hear him speak and then start their Alpha (or equivalent) courses the following week. Woking has been made an exception in that a bold and faith filled step has been taken to book Woking F.C. for the afternoon of Sunday 26th September for an event where Justin Welby will answer big questions. This event will be **open to all Woking churches** to participate and indeed needs everyone to be involved to make it a success. I've been asked to share this news with you, which is hot off the press. I'm sure further details will emerge very soon.

**Woking Street Angels** celebrate 10 years of operation in Woking this year. You will have seen the ad for the Dinner/Dance in Sept in the parish newsletter. St Dunstan's has also kindly agreed to host the Celebration and Recommissioning Service which will be held on Sunday 3rd October at 3pm followed by tea in the Function Room. All parishioners of St Dunstan's and all churches and VIPs, indeed everyone in Woking is invited. Other events include a music and singing concert at Woking United Reformed Church (URC) on 6th November. They have been back patrolling the streets ever since the hospitality venues reopened in Woking.

**Colin Ray, RIP** It is with great sadness that I report that Colin died a couple of weeks ago after a long illness. Colin was a member of Woking URC for decades and will be known to parishioners and other churches as the organiser of the Lent lunches held here in St Dunstan's every year for a long time back. Please remember him and his bereaved family in your prayers. I think we should arrange for a Mass to be said for him.

**Refugees** When the **original** resettlement scheme finished, almost coinciding with the start of the pandemic, more than 2,000 people had been homed in the SE England out of the 20,000 pledged by the Government. Woking more than met its 4 year pledge with 48 families resettled in the Borough and more individuals besides. The project is being extended by the Government, as you know, and Woking should be able to take further families. It may be open to more regions from which refugees may come but Syria is likely to be the prime source. The first arrivals in the UK were in March. I do not have an update yet for Woking. Five families who have been in Woking for 5 years now have independent leave to remain and have secure tenancies. Other ILR applications are being processed. Progress in learning English and employment has been good and more than 23 families have at least one employed member. Laptops have been acquired to help with learning and St Dunstan's have been very generous in funding three of them.