

.MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 24 FEBRUARY 2005

PRESENT:

Father Michael	Chairperson	Philippa Gray	Prayer Group
Daniel Howells	Youth	Seamus O'Connor	SVP
Clare Chiles	Bereavement	Arthur Jones	Catechists
Meriam Badilla	Legion of Mary	Paul Relf	Sacristy
Mero Badilla	Legion of Mary	Sheila Smith	Council of Churches
Francis Graham	Prayer Group		

The meeting began at 7.05 pm with a prayer.

APOLOGIES:

Jeni Burridge, Michael Burridge, Jackie Murray, Bridie O'Brien and Elizabeth Relf.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EACH COMMITTEE:

Worship/Spirituality

The Prayer group now meets on Thursday night. The national spiritual retreat will be held at Nicholston House led by Father David Keniry – "I know my own and My own know me". Frances will be attending the National Service Committee in Dublin in June. Fr. Michael offered to pay travel expenses. In June, there is a meeting in Birmingham with Father Raneiro Cantalamassa from Rome. The meeting is open to all former leaders and members to discuss the future of Renewal in Britain.. The Welsh National Conference will be held at Carmarthen from 22nd to 26th August..

The Legion of Mary has seven members and they are continuing to visit patients at the hospital.

Thanks were extended to Daniel Howells for his help and support in the sacristy.

Two new young members have joined the Choir, one bass and one soprano. The choir is meeting every Sunday rehearsing new music for Easter.

The Youth of the Parish are not meeting so frequently as most now have part time jobs. There will be 5 members of the Youth representing the Parish at World Youth Day in Cologne this August, where the Pope will also be present. They will be financed by the Parish so their only expenses will be evening meals and spending money. Accommodation and supervision is guaranteed.

Education

There is an excellent Confirmation group this year although the numbers are down to 11 candidates. There is a desperate need for new catechists: Heather Harris is having a trial period as a confirmation leader and Belinda is continuing for this year but it is likely she will

finish if Heather continues, owing to family commitments. The Mass of Confirmation is set for Friday 23rd June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Father. Michael will offer any adults who have not been confirmed the chance to receive the Sacrament this June. There will be no need to attend the classes.

There are 8 children who have started the programme on Reconciliation. There is also 1 new catechist in training and one of the parents has volunteered her services next year as a catechist. It is hoped that the children will make their First Confession at a Service of Reconciliation arranged by Father. Michael for Holy Week.

Social Concerns

Since Christmas, the S.V.P. is averaging 5 visits a week though some parishioners who are not feeling well have asked for no visits. The Matthew Mulcahy sponsored walk was a great success and raised £2700. During April, Sister Joseph will visit the Parish to give a talk on the use of the money raised from the walk

The Parish bazaar, organised by the S.V.P, was also a great success and realised £1097.90.

The Sudan project is now completed and £100 was donated, the final payment having being made before Christmas. The income at Gendros is just about breaking even and the Priest's wish of sending money back to India is not possible so it was decided that the S.V.P. will adopt the Benedictine priests at Gendros for their new project. A handmade chess set, carved by one of the members, will be raffled after Easter to raise funds for Nepal, our Parish project. A local day out is being planned for the housebound of the Parish. Clydach has offered the use of its new mini bus and a driver. Father Michael offered to pay for the meal. During Lent, there is no collection box for the S.V.P. as the Lenten Alms box is open.

Thanks were extended to those who had attended the recent Council of Churches meeting and all those who had attended the Unity service at Morryston Hospital Chapel. The Walk of Witness is scheduled to take place on Good Friday morning starting at Sacred Heart Church. A prayer service is held every last Saturday of the month at Aeon Chapel at 10.30 am.

The Bereavement Group continued to meet throughout the Summer. Invitations were extended to relatives and friends who had been bereaved during the past year and a Service of Remembrance was held in November. Many of the group were able to meet with the bereaved and offered support and comfort after the service.

RESPONSE TO APPEALS TO INCREASE GIVING

The reaction of the Parish to the fund raising articles in the Menevia news was one of "confusion"! During the season of Lent, the clergy have been instructed to push for an increase in weekly income. Our Parish is a generous one but some poorer Parishes have been struggling to pay the levy. A new system has therefore been agreed for the Diocesan levy, which has meant that the levy, or tax has, in general, increased for most Churches. The first £5,000 of income is "tax-free" and after that each Church will contribute 29% of its total weekly income. The resulting levels of the new levy will be held for three years. This was the theme of the Bishop's Pastoral letter which delivered a powerful line from Cardinal Hume who suggested that each of us should contribute one hour's income per week to the Church. On the fifth Sunday of Lent, parishioners will be encouraged to sign gift aid forms and direct debits. At present our income is approximately £40,000 and we receive about £6,000 back in gift aid – only 75% have signed the gift aid form and people need to be educated about its purpose. The levy payment for Sacred Heart Church will be approximately £12,000, 16 week's collections. The Parish can afford this but, at present income, will have to cut back on other things – ideally an income of £1000 per week should

cover costs. Everything is costly within the Church and it was suggested that a list be displayed at the back of Church showing the costs of administration, new purchases, maintenance costs, etc., so that parishioners would value all that is done with Church income.

LENT/EASTER EVENTS

Exposition followed by Benediction takes place every Thursday morning after Mass and from 10th March will also take place in the evening.

There will be a Parish Penitential Service during Holy Week so that the children are able to make their first confession and parishioners will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter.

The Passover meal will be held on the Tuesday and there is a revised service this year.

The Easter Vigil is likely to start at 8.30 pm but the time may be adjusted according to the sun set.

SACRED HEART CENTRE

The work, although slow, is coming along nicely. Completion is expected shortly after Easter. Despite some problems, the total costs are down so the extra money can be used on Altro flooring which can be costly – quotes for this are currently being received. Plans of the new kitchen to be installed by local company R.A.C.S. were shown to the meeting. The monies raised from the sale of Foundry Road will cover the costs which are expected to be in the region of £15,000. The kitchen will meet all requirements for use in the commercial world and also meets Environmental Health standards.

New hiring agreements and costs will be introduced and the Halls will now need to be advertised, i.e. flyers, the web, adverts in local papers and an open day/evening so that both halls can be used during the daytime as well as the evenings. A Parish Social evening will be arranged to celebrate the opening of the Centre with a Blessing.

PARISH SUMMER TRIPS

The S.V.P. will organise an Over 50s outing plus the trip for the disabled/Housebound.

A Summer Family Barbecue to be held at Pembrey county Park and a coach trip to Tenby/Pembroke followed by an evening meal are other possibilities.

DATNM

Thursday, 9 June 2005, at 7.00 pm.

Father Michael thanked all who had attended, and the meeting ended at 8.30 pm with a prayer.