**ST JOSEPH & ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL**

**Full PPC Meeting**

**Wednesday 9th November at 7.15pm in the Church Hall**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Present:** Fr Danny McAvoy, Bernadette Fisher (Chair), Ann Burke, Anne Gibbons, Maura Holt, Trevor Keeling, Marion McGuire, Rita McNicholas-Gumm, Marie Danielle Tichbon, Claudia Wing.

**1. Prayer and formation**

Fr Danny led the meeting in prayer and formation.

**2. Bernadette welcomed everyone to this first, new style PPC and outlined the main purpose of today's meeting.**

* This was firstly to debrief everyone on the output of the first Steering Group meeting held on October 12th and, secondly to gather input from everyone about their thoughts and ideas relating to New Evangelising work in the parish.

Key outputs from the Steering group meeting were firstly summarised as follows:

**a) In this new way of working we would hope to:**

* Retain the style of established PPC as consultative, collaborative, compassionate, consistent and transparent.
* Become more visionary, focused, responsive to need, accountable.
* Articulate and share a clear vision and objectives for the parish, priorities for focus and action, allocate resources, monitor and acknowledge effort and success.

**b) Our guiding values will remain:**

Mercy, compassion, inclusivity, justice, help of the poor, love of our neighbour, trust in God.

**c) The Steering Group reflected on the Diocesan Priorities** *(from the Framework for Collaboration, March 2016) as follows:*

* To seek out and draw in non-believers and the un-churched.
* To develop lifelong discipleship, spiritual growth and a living relationship with Jesus Christ above all, in the Holy Eucharist.
* To discern the gifts (charisms) and vocations God has given the Christian community.
* To form and support existing and extraordinary apostolate.

**d) And those specifically within the Portsmouth Diocese** *(From Diocesan Guidelines 2010)*

* To develop an awareness of different communities within the parish.
* To encourage support and build interdependent relationships between local communities and ministry groups.
* To explore how best to steward and nurture all our gifts.

**e) We reminded ourselves of what a pastoral council should be:**

A collaborative structure that exists to ensure we focus on our primary function as Christians in the continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ, in our time and place.

**f) And that Pastoral issues are** (Diocesan guidelines 2010) *“those that impact on the lives of parishioners”.* Specifically:

* Integration of faith into everyday life – home, work, community.
* Nourishment and support of faith as we try to live as faithful disciples.
* Outward focus on the development of a vital Christian community, actively engaged in Jesus’ mission of service and influence in the wider world.

**g) And in this context, reflected on whether:**

* We are focusing on the right things.
* Is anything missing?
* Do we have all the key ministries in place?
* Do they all have sufficient/the right resources to deliver effectively?
* Could we do more to help parishioners grow in their relationship with God and each other?
* What could we do better/differently to further parish and Diocesan aims?

The Steering Group meeting then discussed a way of articulating the vision for this Parish and agreed on the following summation:

**To be with Christ, to deepen our relationship with him, and to be sent by him to relieve the suffering of others**

Three key teams would operate collaboratively in support of this as follows:

* **Education and Formation** – focuses on helping people to fall in love with Christ and so enable others to better integrate their faith into everyday life – home, work, community.
* **The Contemplative Life** – focuses on calling people to deepen their life and relationship with Christ through prayer and actively supports and encourages faithful discipleship.
* **New Evangelisation** – focuses on reaching out and developing a wider, vital Christian community that is actively engaged in Jesus’ mission of service and influence in the wider world. It should support related charitable activities and reach out to those resting from the faith and encourage justice, peace and social responsibility.

3. It was agreed at the Steering Group meeting that the New Evangelisation ministry requires further reflection and refinement and input from this PPC meeting.

Bernadette then outlined the key areas concerned with New Evangelisation at the Diocesan level beginning with a reflection of Evangelii Gaudium, 49, as follows:

*“If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life” (Evangelii Gaudium, 49).*

A paper summarising the main areas of work within the New Evangelisation ministry, at Diocesan level was circulated as followings:

**a)** [**Social Research Unit (SRU)**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/new-evangelisation.php)

[Catholic Social Teaching](http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/) seeks to provide inspiration and resources in support of the Church's teaching on social, political and economic issues, informed by Gospel values and the lived experience of Christian reflection. The SRU is a research unit that provides information that enables the Diocese more effectively to adapt its evangelistic efforts to the reality of today and to changing or emerging circumstances.

**b)** [**Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility Team**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/new-evangelisation.php)

Each of us is called to act justly and peaceably in our own lives within our families, our work and our community. We also have a responsibility where we can to get involved to support justice for all God’s people, particularly the poor and to be good stewards of creation.

As a church then we need to get involved in a whole range of human life issues: from those campaigns against abortion and beginning of life matters, through campaigns to do with childhood and old age, the care of animals, justice, peace and reconciliation in our own society and overseas, plus concerns with environmental resources, bioethical matters and end of life care.

The role of the Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility (JPSR) Team is to stimulate all Catholics to have a real concern for justice, peace and social responsibility at home, at work and in our society, promoting the value of human life from conception to natural death

**c)** [**Caritas Diocese of Portsmouth**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/new-evangelisation.php)

The love of neighbour is first and foremost a personal response to the love of God shown to us by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. It is our desire to give back what we have received – everlasting love, life and hope in the name of Jesus. We desire collectively to respond to this gift and it follows that love of neighbour is the hope for the entire ecclesial community at every level, from the local community to the particular church and to the Church universal in its entirety.

Caritas Diocese of Portsmouth exists to enable the support, teaching, promotion, ordering and organising of this constitutive element of Church within the parishes, schools, pastoral areas and deaneries of our diocese.

This team, in liaison with the Department for Administration, seeks to implement the aims of *Intima Ecclesiae Natura* and to establish and oversee the development of Caritas South Central.

**d)** [**Charities and Outreach**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/new-evangelisation.php)

The Charities and Outreach Team is formed of representatives from key charities operating within the Diocese (e.g. SVP, CAFOD etc.) and works closely with Caritas Diocese of Portsmouth. The Team meets at least once or twice a year for prayer, discussion and mutual support, the sharing of information, and closer liaison with the Diocese, the identification of current challenges and best responses, and the development of good practice. Included also within this work stream is the Formation for Dialogue and proclamation, which includes a focus on:

* **Christian Unity and** [**Marginalised and Inactive Catholics**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/new-evangelisation.php)

This team studies trends in religious practice and the causes of lapsing or non-practice within the Catholic community.

*“If we do not walk together, if we do not pray for one another, if we do not collaborate in the many ways that we can in this world for the people of God, then unity will not come about” (Pope Francis, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 2014).*

This team is comprised of up to 12 members from across the diocese. Its aim is to pray and work for spiritual, liturgical, doctrinal and ecclesial communion, and to promote a desire for this within the clergy and laity of our own diocese. It assists the Ecumenical Development Officer (EDO), who is appointed by the Bishop.

* [**Inter-Religious Dialogue and Jewish-Christian Fellowship**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/dialogueandproclamation.php)

*An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides. … True openness involves remaining steadfast in one’s deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one’s own identity, while at the same time being “open to understanding those of the other party” and “knowing that dialogue can enrich each side” (Evangelii Gaudium, 250-1).*

This team comprises up to 12 members from across the Diocese, who assist one or more IRD coordinators (appointed by the Bishop). The team aims to identify and build good relationships with the people and leaders of the other religious communities (non-Christian) within the different areas of our Diocese and to enable mutually enriching discussion and sharing. This team also constitutes the Jewish-Christian Fellowship, although this in time will become a distinct team. Moreover, as the work of the IRD team progresses, it will probably develop further sub-teams along the same lines as the Jewish-Christian Fellowship.

* [**Courtyard of the Gentiles**](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/evangelisation/dialogueandproclamation.php)

*“I think that today the Church should open a sort of ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles,’ in which people might in some way latch on to God, without knowing him and before gaining access to his mystery … who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009).*

This provides a space and forum for constructive and hope-filled dialogue between the Church and those of no defined belief but who seek with a sincere heart. It is comprised of up to 12 members.

**4. The meeting then went on to consider the question of:**

*Who would we most like to now bring into friendship with Jesus Christ and how can we begin to provide them with the opportunity for building their faith?*

Key population groups were identified as:

* The homeless
* Those who feel isolated
* Single parents
* Troubled young people
* Ex offenders
* Ethnic communities
* The sick and housebound
* The disabled
* Those with mental health issues

It was agreed that we were already addressing some of these with existing work streams and that we would need to prioritise any additional groups, to become more effective. It was also noted that these population groups defined were not mutually exclusive as someone homeless might also be an ex offender and have mental health issues. The idea of bringing together some of these key populations to help build networks and synergistic relationships were briefly discussed. This might include a charitable cafe that promotes social integration by employing e.g. those with mental health problems, the homeless, ex offenders, the disabled etc.

More generally the meeting felt however that it would be helpful if we were to become more effective at:

* Influencing those responsible for related policy and practice at a local and national level
* Building networks and establishing social relationships to ensure that we are constantly aware of parishioners needs and that no one slips through the net
* Rebuilding relationships with parishioners who may have left, e.g. from the St Margaret Clitherow parish
* Reaching out and supporting the children of parents who do not attend church.
* Reaching out an supporting non-practising parents of children attending our Catholic schools

Father Danny reminded the meeting that Bishop Philip had asked for parish groups to think creatively and do something that we have never done before in order to build and strengthen our network of social relationships. Some ideas put forward in relation to this were:

* Creating a greater awareness of what is actually happening within this parish and the support that is available, e.g. telling the story of parish life using displays/videos in key places such as school entrance ways
* Perhaps having a children's video completion for their version of life in the parish
* Using the Patron Saints days to bring together diverse cultural groups, perhaps to share international cuisines
* Making better use of the physical assets the church has in relation to its town centre location in the context of the regeneration of Bracknell
* Thinking more creatively about using a new porch/entrance area and the areas outside the church to more continuously interest passing foot fall in important issues such as climate change, social justice etc.

It was agreed that this work would continue at the next Steering Group and PPC meetings in the New Year.

**5. Skills audit and parishioner feedback**

The idea of acquiring an audit of parishioner's different skills was discussed and we would then have a clearer idea of where to go for specific kinds of help/guidance, as and when needed. Father Danny indicated that a Diocesan database of this nature is being rolled out throughout the Diocese (PAMIS – Pastoral Administration Management Information System) and Mary has been working with the Diocesan IT department to set-up and test the system for our use in Bracknell. Current census data to be reviewed and new information gathered where necessary and entered into the system with a view to ‘going-live’ in the New Year.

**Action required:** Mary to please investigate this further.

Father Danny also told the meeting that the Bishop had requested that Gallup carry out an extensive piece of research among our parishioners as he considers the Parish of St Joseph and St Margaret Clitherow to be an example of excellence. Father Danny indicated that this was imminent and there would be an opportunity for input to the questionnaire from the Steering Group/PPC.

**Action required:** Father Danny to keep us informed of progress and advise of opportunities to provide input.

The meeting ended at 9pm.