

**St. Alban's Parish Pastoral Council**  
**Minutes of meeting held**  
**18<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**Present:** Fr. Gerry; Martin Brown; Mark Booton; Lorraine Collins; Sandra Endsor;  
Angela Fairbrother; Anne Kearney; Susan Lewis; Maria Neads; Jim Parlato;  
Shaun Reid; Walter Stone;

**Opening Prayer:** Reflection on 'Gratitude: A Prayer' by Max Ehrmann, led by Angela

**Minutes of last meeting proposed as a true copy by:** Susan

**Seconded by:** Angela

Martin opened the meeting by thanking all PPC members for attending the last meeting of the current term (Walter had made a special journey from Bedford!). He said there had been a good mix of informality and work throughout the term.

**1. Matters arising**

- 1.1 Confirmation:** Numbers have increased from 12 to 17. Jim reported that it is a good group and the youngsters are getting involved in the programme – they are now a third of the way through, and they all express interesting and positive views, which is hopeful for the future. Fr. Gerry thought it has been a good for the congregation to bring the group to monthly mass because teenagers are not very visible in the parish at the moment.
- 1.2 Land opposite church:** Original application for five houses was taken to appeal and approved by an independent committee. Fr. Gerry has been advised to apply for a white line to be painted along the whole of the church's land and a double yellow line painted on the opposite side of the road against the new properties.
- 1.3 CAFOD:** The success of our **Lenten "give it up" campaign** will be seen when the envelopes are collected- in during Palm Sunday. Fr. Gerry didn't think that the collection for Retired Clergy would have a detrimental effect on the final amount.  
The cost of tickets for the **Fairtrade Wine tasting** has been reduced to £6. There will be a selection of five or six different wines to try. Glasses will be provided and Shaun volunteered to produce the tickets.
- 1.4 Lent:** Fr. Gerry and Sue Brown will plan a **Reconciliation service** for the Tuesday of Holy Week.  
Fr. Gerry and Kurt Thomason (Mayfield Road Methodist Minister) have met to arrange the Good **Friday walk of Witness**. This year the itinerary will be St. Philips, St. Albans and finally Mayfield Rd. Methodist Church. We may stop on Sussex Circus to make some sort of witness, but nothing has been planned yet.  
There will be **Good Friday Services** at St Albans at 3pm and at Oakwood at 7pm.
- 1.5 Advent 2010:** John Bell has agreed to reduce the price for the two days to £500.
- 1.6 First Holy Communion:** Number of children has reduced to 26 from the 30 that attended the enrolment mass. Anne Kearney is working with the children during the Sunday morning Mass.
- 1.7 The Oakwood Lent Course** has been well attended so far. The subject matter has been hard to deal with, but Fr. Gerry said that sometimes we need to confront ourselves and take stock. This course certainly makes us do that!

## **2. Election Process**

Fr. Gerry received nine nominations for the new council and, as that is the number required there was no need for an election.

**The new council will be:** Fr. Gerry; Mark Booton(ex officio); Lorraine Collins; Maria Neads; Shaun Reid; Mary Keogh; James Kissane; Eileen Rees; Fran Wickes; Jo Rowlands; Geoff Rowlands; Simon O'Connor; Clare Cox and Cath Green.

Fr. Gerry proposed the nominees all be accepted, Shaun Reid seconded the proposal and the current council members voted to accept all nominations.

The first meeting will be either the 22<sup>nd</sup> or the 29<sup>th</sup> of April – Fr. Gerry to check his diary.

It was once again suggested that there should be some form of phasing in members retirement rather than a 'mass exodus'. Members thought that in order to change the direction, or revive enthusiasm, you need a large amount of 'changeover'.

## **3. Children's Liturgy**

Maria wondered if we could replicate the garden party that was held to celebrate St Alban's Day, but this time to celebrate the end of the school year. Fr. Gerry said he would prefer to have it on St. Alban's Day again (20<sup>th</sup> June), and do something at mass that day to link in with the feast. Maria said she would take these comments back to the Children's Liturgy Group.

Fr. Gerry asked if the children would be doing something at mass on Easter Sunday (previously they have done a small drama around the Gospel) – Maria said she would speak to members of the Liturgy group who will be around on the day. She will also organise Easter Eggs for the children involved in the Children's Liturgy.

## **Review of term of office**

\*All agreed that the meeting with Paula Bailey to thrash out just what we understood and wanted from our term as councillors was a very useful and enjoyable exercise. It gave us a good foundation and helped to recognise the areas we needed to concentrate on, and it also helped to bond the group. But this wasn't just a task force the important thing was to get to know each other. And over the three years people have 'shared' with each other and developed the confidence to say what they feel.

\*It was felt that the council did not feel 'in charge' of the parish but more like the nuts and bolts that keep the parish going by contributing to the tasks in hand. Walter said " St. Albans is part of my life, so it is natural to want to do things. We know that Fr. Gerry is ultimately responsible for the parish but the council has been given the freedom to try things out. For example the Spirituality Group met over a long time before bringing anything to the parishioners, so that they learnt to trust one another, eventually running the 'Knowing God Better' programme. (The 'relationship' is strongest part of the group)

\*Maria has become more involved in the Children's Liturgy mainly because of the responsibility for reporting back to the council, but now is co-ordinator for the group.

\*Jim has responsibility for our young people and through the youth group and Confirmation group has brought them together on a regular basis.

\*Tom's ordination was one of the highlights of the three years. We were privileged to be part of it and felt that we made a good job of the preparation. Using different aspects of the ordination ceremony each week made the congregation feel part of the process. Susannah's presentation of the vestments was also a highlight and again helped to bring the parish into the ceremony. The white scarves tied to the gates made a welcoming sight!

\*In the previous term the parish was taken up with the re-ordering of the church and the move to St. Alban's School for regular masses. This made the council more practical, made the congregation more of a community and brought Oakwood more into the mix by using the premises for meetings in the evenings. As a result of this the previous election involved 27 nominees, a sign that people wanted to be part of what was happening! Almost everyone has now accepted the new layout of the church, even if for some it was reluctantly at first.

### **A.O.B**

Walter suggested that the new councillors be welcomed to the PPC by letter which would also inform them of the date of the first meeting. All agreed - Sandra will draft one for Fr. Gerry to approve.

The Spirituality Group will be holding an open meeting to plan future events on  
12<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre.

It was agreed that the members of this council would meet at the Dovecote, Morley Hayes on  
6<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 for 8pm for a farewell dinner.

**It is hoped that the new council members will bring new ideas to the parish and we wish them well in their endeavours.**

**The End!**