

## St Joseph's Catholic Community

### Minutes of the Parish Pastoral Team held on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:** David Campbell (Chairman), Alastair Ng, Kevin Burr, Peter Charlwood, Francis Holford, Susan Milford, Sam Richmond and Fr Colin Wolczak

**Apologies:** Geoffrey Bignell, Aseel Gilbert and James Harrison

The meeting opened with prayer led by Francis.

**1. The Minutes** of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were approved and signed by the chairman.

#### **2. Appeal**

The appeal on the previous Sunday was discussed. There had been a mixed reaction which is to be expected but, although there were some negative comments, on the whole, it was felt that the general feeling was one of understanding of the need to raise the income of the Parish. There were complimentary remarks about the performances of Geoffrey Bignell and Peter Braganza in the DVD. Some felt that there could have been greater clarity about the objects of the appeal and some reference to cutting out unnecessary costs would have been helpful. It was suggested that one of the appeal team speak at the end of each Mass next Sunday to emphasise the purpose of the appeal, to point out that we are asking for people to offer (or recommit) their time and talent as well as their money, and to bring their pledge forms back next Sunday.

The need for a prompt acknowledgement of receipt of the pledge form was stressed and also an effective follow up to offers of help.

#### **3. Review of the PPT**

David Campbell presented his findings from a perusal of the last five years' minutes both of the PPT itself and the various sub groups and committees. His conclusion was that parish initiatives often fail, are cancelled or never started. The root causes for this are complex but are likely associated with parish culture, structure (organisation) and processes.

#### **Structure – the role of the PPT.**

The PPT appears to see itself as a body that plans and coordinates the overall policy of the Parish. Parish council members are drawn from over five areas of ministry and so the council is a "council of ministries". The (sub)committees carry out these policies. The council needs enough committees (and thus a large number of councillors) to ensure that all ministerial bases, so to speak, are covered.

Coordinating those ministries is a chief among the goals of the council. The council tries to coordinate the execution of the parish policies it sets: in short, the council tries to manage the parish's committees. Accordingly, most council meetings are spent delegating matters to the appropriate ministerial commission or committee.

Coordination means that the council should receive reports, note conflicts (such as when one ministry or parish organisation is duplicating the work of another), and advise the ministry heads how to avoid them. This does not always appear to have worked well in the past.

The apparent role of the PPT seems to be unrealistic, overly ambitious and overly bureaucratic. Unrealistic, because it presumes a level of available time and expertise which the council members cannot be expected to have. Overly ambitious, because only a superbly

trained and highly skilled council could even hope to coordinate all pastoral activities. And bureaucratic (or plain tedious), because so much of the PPT meetings have been taken up by considering reports from the five ministerial commissions.

In reality, however, the pastoral plan and initiatives are implemented by the ministerial groups themselves, not by the PPT. Decisions are taken at the subcommittee level by the Parish Priest, who is a de facto member of each sub committee. In fact, when the PPT takes on an executive role, it hinders the council's ability to discern and evaluate.

### **Culture**

Problems appear to have been created at all stages by natural human tendencies:

- Functional thinking: not taking a parish-wide or cluster-wide view;
- Having too many rules for some things and not enough for others;
- Disappearing or changing sponsors for some initiatives;
- Bipolar behaviour – analysis, paralysis or dash in and get on with it!
- Untested assumptions;
- Forgetting what the initiative was for;
- Pet projects;
- Spending a lot of time on less than critical issues.

### **Process**

The roles and responsibilities of individuals in the PPT need to be clarified – “job descriptions” for Chairman, Secretary, Councillor, etc. In a similar way, job descriptions need to be prepared for members of other ministries, but this should involve them rather than being imposed on them.

### **Proposal**

David's proposal would be to devote the PPT to a well-defined consultative role in the Parish and leave the implementation to the other parish ministries/committees and organisation. He will circulate a *strawman* proposal prior to the next meeting. Any increase in the clarity of the PPT's role would need to be accompanied by similar steps in the parish ministries.

## **4. Progress reports on PPT priority tasks**

**Children's Liturgy** – Susan reported on the numbers of children attending Children's Liturgy as follows:

	2011	2010
Group3 – 5-12 years	12 avge	14 avge
Group 2 – 4-5 years	15 avge	12 avge
Group 1 - 3-4 years	15 avge	15 avge
Christingle	Not yet	55

It was noted that the website is not accurate for the youngest age group who are likely to benefit. Susan suggested that she speak to the congregation at the end of a Mass to remind parents of the fact that young children need to be accompanied and able to participate. It was agreed that she should find a date in November to do this.

**Ongoing Faith Formation** – Peter reported on the following initiatives by the Formation Group:

Aseel has offered, in terms of bridging the gap between First Holy Communion and jGYM, to start something up this School year. Realistically the summer term could be when it is launched along the line of jGYM 3 years ago.

In terms of young adults (18-25), Aseel is hoping to run a retreat day for this age group on Friday 6th January. It will be similar in structure to the Damascus taster day, with worship,

prayer, teaching and workshops. Some of the current Damascus leadership team will help out with the day. The reason for wanting to do this is because there are a good number of young adults who have grown up through GYM and Damascus and are now either working or at University and they have expressed a desire for a retreat for themselves when they are back in Guildford. If the event is successful in January, it is hoped to run something regularly during the university holidays. The plan is to advertise the event across the cluster. Now that the University of Surrey chaplaincy is part of the cluster, the event can be advertised there for those that are remaining in Guildford during the holidays.

Mary Burckett-St Laurent has suggested using the Catechism and would be prepared to be involved in running a course on the Catechism.

Formation Team members have been asked to consider a response to the request and email around the team with any thoughts in the next few weeks.

**Social activities programme** – Susan reported that a few volunteers have come forward and that hopefully others would tick this box in the appeal pledge form.

The first event planned is an Advent shared Sunday lunch for which a bar licence will be required.

Jo Pomeroy has initiated coffee/tea after the 10 am Mass on the First Friday;

Adriane Roade has suggested that the Latin American community might put on a Latin American evening to raise funds for the parish.

**Marriage and family life** – Sam reported on the following initiatives:

- Home is a Holy Place programme next Lent;
- Prayer Group for mothers in conjunction with Cathy Carney during Advent;
- Single Parent support and social group in conjunction with Rosemary Harrison;
- Blended families – there is a need for support for families with a variety of relationships – but we shall probably wait until after the Home is a Holy Place programme until we decide what we can offer;
- A Mass in January 2011 for couples married in St Joseph's in 2011 after which there will be a social gathering at which their needs can be sought;
- Something for grandparents;
- Quarterly Masses for families whose children have been recently baptised, as well as looking to develop further initiatives for these families to keep them coming back to church;
- Finally, a support structure for the first five years of marriage.

**Improved communication** – Susan presented a proposal for a Guildford Cluster magazine: Its purpose would be to foster a sense of community and to inform parishioners what is going on across the cluster – it would largely mirror what is available on the website. Key features would include:

- a cluster publication with a team drawn from across the cluster;
- be published three times a year;
- be closely linked with the website;
- include a page particular to each parish;
- articles highlighting the activities of different ministries across the cluster;
- interviews with the clergy;
- encourage contributions from parishioners;
- reports on diocesan/parish activities, eg, pilgrimage to Lourdes, RCIA, etc;
- children's/youth section encouraging contributions from children;

It would be free to parishioners but the PPT might wish to attract advertising in due course so that the project becomes self-funding. An initial print run of 500-600 is envisaged. It could be produced in-house with colour restricted to the front and back covers. However, if it was

outsourced, costs could range from £188 for 500 to £256 for 1,000. The experience of St Nicolas' Church has been very helpful in this regard.

It was agreed that it would be produced in-house for the time being, especially if the print run is only 600. We will initially have colour front and back with black and white inside as this will be cheaper. Kevin Burr said that an 8 page publication in that format would cost just over 10p including paper. If we produce 600 that will prove to be a modest outlay.

Susan will put together an editorial team drawn from St Mary's and St Pius X + volunteers to contribute articles and manage print and distribution.

**Needs of the Elderly** - Alistair reported his initial findings. There is a tendency for people to start groups and be left to carry on their roles without any means of bringing in new members to take over key tasks. This has occurred with the Over 50's group. The recruitment of new members has proved to be difficult. There is also concern that financial constraints may cause some members not to go on outings. They have received subsidies in the past and it may be that this needs to be ongoing. We are looking at the current provisions but also how other services can be linked into the group.

## **5. Next Meetings.**

The next and last meeting in 2011 will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> November starting at 7.30pm.

Meetings for 2012 are scheduled as follows:

10 January    13 March    15 May    10 July    11 September    13 November