

St Gregory's and Our Lady of Peace & Blessed Robert Dibdale Faith in Action Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting on 26th June 2024

Present: Maureen Thompson (Chair), Barbara Cassidy, Marion Whelbourn, Terry Phillips, Edmund Blackie, Jane Thomas, Damien O'Brien, Becky Bailey, Teresa Franczuk, Lucy Dudley, Simon Chappell

Apologies: Cecilia Donnelly, Maria Mealey, Mike and Helen Dolce, Olivia Lavelle, Wedge Adams

1. Opening Prayers. Maureen Thompson (Chair) welcomed those in attendance
2. Apologies: as above.
3. The Minutes of the meeting on the 23rd January 2024 were approved as drawn.
4. Matters arising: None.
5. Feedback: Chair fed back on the successes since the last meeting:
 - Work of the RCIA
 - The World Day of Prayer was attended by (amongst others) two representatives from both of Our Lady of Peace and St Gregorys. St Gregory's will host the event in 2026.
 - Youth Groups: Damien and Sophia have been working on proposals on which Damien will report
 - GCSE talks and Lenten Reflections on the Passover by Marina Smith
 - Coffee mornings at both Our Lady of Peace and St Gregorys
 - Remembrance Garden at Our Lady of Peace on which Damien will report
6. Arch Bishop's Pastoral Letter

Parishes and **Deaneries** are to establish Pastoral Councils (PCs) gatherings of clergy and lay faithful (we of course already have a PC). They are consultative bodies informing and guiding the decisions that need to be taken as we look to the future and the future is:

 - Fewer clergy
 - Fewer parishes
 - Merger of parishes
 - Likely need to close some churches
 - Closer working of neighbouring parishes – formation of clusters

The first Deanery PC has already met. In addition to Fr Alex, we have two representatives on the Deanery PC, Theresa and Peter Finkel.

In the near future, the Deanery PC will be gathering statistical information (e.g., about numbers of Masses, numbers of attendees, church capacities and so on) to inform discussions about the decisions to be made.

7. Youth Activities – Our Lady of Peace

Damien and Sophia have been considering possibilities:

- Youth Choir
- Youth Club
- Film night
- Ceili/Ceilidh (Irish/Scottish Dancing)

The need for appropriate tuition and safeguarding was acknowledged.

In addition, a youth choir will be starting at the School shortly (contact Becky)

There was discussion about how we get the views of young people. There was support for asking those young people who were recently confirmed. An opportunity to speak to them may present itself at the party to be held after Fr Alex says the Mass of Celebration for their Confirmations.

8. Parish Calendar.

Chair reminded Committee that notice of Parish activities and events (including School Masses and activities) should be given to Ashley three months in advance for inclusion in the Parish Calendar.

9. Remembrance Garden OLP

Damien presented an outline proposal for unused grassed land behind and surrounding the Church and in passing referred to the Grotto for Our Lady being in a state of disrepair. There are opportunities for areas for prayer, entertainment, sheds and a gravitational watering system.

Consideration is being given to creating easily accessed wooden raised beds/planters, rewilding part of the area and renovating Our Lady's Grotto. Future maintenance is a consideration and is perhaps something in which young people may take an interest.

Fr Alex has agreed that local businesses be asked for support and there have been some good responses.

This is a long-term project and will have to be coordinated with the Building Work at the Church.

10. Communications Strategy

Damien tabled a strategy document with ideas. There was general discussion and issues raised included:

- We need more volunteers at every level e.g., Eucharistic Ministers
- We need to be aware of the new rules requiring consent if someone is to appear online.

- The potential for the use of appropriate social media in relation to communicating with young people
- The newsletter/bulletin is still an effective way of appealing for assistance in relation to specific causes – an example was given about the response to a recent Life Appeal for clothing.
- The potential for using gazebos outside of church to assist promotion of particular appeals e.g., SVP

11. Socials Ideas e.g., St Gregory the Great Celebration

Chair introduced this as the parish's next significant social event. It was recognised that historically such events have been managed by individuals and that this is no longer practical in the light of the demands of the role and such things as hygiene, fire, health and safety requirements. There was general discussion about ideas for social events and ideas included Parish Picnics, Musical evenings, Light Suppers and Quiz nights.

12. Socials Sub-Committee

Discussion about items 11 and 12 generally overlapped.

It was agreed that a Socials Committee is required to manage such events. Damien and Becky volunteered to be on the Socials Committee and Becky agreed to seek further volunteers from parents of school children.

13. Fire Awareness

Simon described the actions he currently takes in attempting to meet insurance requirements in relation to St Gregory's buildings. This includes, e.g., regular checking of alarms, fire blankets, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, emergency lighting and exits in the church, office and Parish Room. He reiterated the need for a comprehensive approach to meeting safety requirements across all legislation and church buildings.

14. Any Other Business

- Marion said more volunteers are needed for Sunday Coffee and Mary's Meals. Although the current rota for Sunday Coffee (the main source of income for Mary's Meals) has been drawn up, it is demanding and more volunteers would enable rota and duties to be spread out. Marion will arrange for an appeal to be included in the Bulletin.
- Marion is considering the possibility of afternoon teas at the weekend if the Lunch Club is not continued.
- CAFOD and the SVP are working together in a programme to influence political decision - making
- Committee to enquire about resuming ECO messages in the Bulletin
- The Abbot's Visitation Report: the Report was circulated this week (the Visitation having taken place in November last). The general consensus was that the report is bland.

15. Closing Prayers