

Minutes of St Michael's Parish Council Meeting, 10th May 2011

1. **Present:** Mgr Jim Overton, Godwin Pullicino (Chair), Anne Bulfin, Les Cordery, Siobhan Edgar, Tom Farrell, Lee Gibson, Helena Cross (Pastoral), Maureen Meek

Apologies: Maggie Laurence

Resignation: Emanuel Gouveia because of work commitments.

2. **Minutes of last meeting (1st March 2011)** agreed and signed.
3. **Matters arising from meeting on 1st March 2011** GP worked through the list of actions stemming from last Parish Council meeting to get an update on progress as follows:
 - Noise level at 9.30 Mass. To be discussed later on in this meeting. **Action closed.**
 - **Suggestion to have a TV screen in Narthex.** No Finance Committee meeting since last Parish Council meeting. **Action ongoing.**
 - **Church heating.** No Finance Committee meeting since last Parish Council meeting. **Action ongoing.**
 - **Ladies Toilets.** These have been replaced. **Action closed.**
 - **London 2012 - 'More Than Gold'.** This matter did not arise at Deanery meeting. **Action closed.**
 - **Homeless.** What can we do as a parish for needy / homeless people? A major concern is that help agencies / charities are in danger of losing funding or being cut altogether. SE contacted Surrey County Council regarding where cuts are being made and then we can identify who to target to offer assistance to. SCC was very vague about where cuts were being made to budgets. They provided an extensive list of local charities and organisations.
Does St Michael's wish to embark on this new project and identify new groups of people outside the parish to help or shall we start by identifying a need within the parish and build upon that in the first instance – e.g. transport to church? **Action. JO to speak to Gavin Boyle about present transport arrangements.**
 - **Teas and Coffees / Sunday Friends during half-term.** JO has spoken to leaders concerned. **Action closed.**
 - **Retired parishioners.** Retired parishioners - MM has spoken to a selection of parishioners and it seems that they are not looking for any activities/events within the parish. Many take advantage of a wide selection of activities held elsewhere with which St Michael's could not compete. **Action closed.**

4. Updates.

Pastoral update. (HC)

- The Committee has discussed the Liturgical changes to be introduced into the Mass later on in the year. JO has started to inform the parish via the newsletter and homilies. A talk, by Fr John Hemer, for readers and catechists is to be held in the parish hall on 2nd June to help deepen their understanding of proclaiming the scriptures.
- The readings for the following Sunday are now published in the weekly newsletter.
- First Holy Communion – 53 children made the FHC on weekend of 7/8 May and 3 more will do so on Sunday 15 May.
- Confirmation – 27 young people are to be confirmed on 9 June.
- Repository – is now open after all weekend Masses. Bernadette Stuart (Sat 6pm); Margaret and Patricia Gillespie (Sun 9.30am); Kathy Lee (Sun 11.30am); Lee Gibson (Sun 6pm).

Finance update. (LC)

- St Michael's continues to show a healthy bank balance. Plans for the forthcoming year will be announced following the next Finance Committee meeting.
- Current plans include replacing the boiler in the Hall kitchen (to solve the longstanding problem of no hot water in the kitchen) and improving the heating system.

School update. (AB)

- **Tanzania School project.** They have had a 'bucket' collection for the school in Tanzania.
- **Grandparents club.** AB asked for this to be advertised in the parish newsletter. **Action taken.**

- **Confirmation classes.** These have been held in the school dining hall, due to the parish hall being unavailable. AB to enquire whether the main school hall can be made available as this would be more suitable.

Parish update. (JO)

- First Holy Communion Masses. These were both wonderful occasions. JO congratulated the catechists for all their hard work and efforts in preparing the 53 children. The First Reconciliation Service (held in February) also went very well, with a number of parents also going for confession too.
- Confirmation. 27 young people are to be confirmed on 9th June. Reception afterwards to be planned differently this year. Each family wishing to be involved will make a contribution towards cost of catering. Concern was expressed that no families should be excluded. **Action: SH to discuss with Clodagh John.**
- **Day of Recollection.** JO suggests a Day of Recollection at St Cuthman's Retreat Centre, West Sussex. The Centre can accommodate up to 22 people, providing a room (£50.00) and refreshments (at an extra cost). The parish could organise a coach or travel in cars. **Action: JO to book Saturday, 29th October.**

5. **Letter re behaviour of children and noise level at Mass.** GP distributed a draft response to concerns received by the Parish Council about the behaviour of children and the level of noise at Mass, especially the Sunday 9.30am Mass. All agreed that the response explained very well the Parish Council's views on families at St Michael's. This has been an ongoing topic of discussion at Parish Council meetings for a number of years. Families with very young children are, of course, very welcome. However the views / opinions of all parishioners need also to be fully taken into account. **Action: The Parish Council's letter of response is to be included in the newsletter (21/22 May) and a copy to be placed on the notice board in the narthex.**
Also, members of the Parish Council to make an announcement at all Masses (Sat 6.00pm-LG; Sun 9.30am and 11.30 am-GP, Sun 6.00pm-ML). GP will draft and circulate the announcement.
6. **A Conversation with Caritas.** LG will attend one of the scheduled meetings in May. **Action: LG to advertise in the newsletter and invite anyone interested to join her.**
7. **Christmas Fair.** It was suggested the parish hold a Christmas Fair. The fundraising committee has already booked Saturday, 3rd December 2011 for the Fair, although no more details are available. **Action: Frank Collins to pursue this.**
8. **Parish Outing.** A group of five parishioners are going on a tour of Allen Hall Seminary, Chelsea on Sunday, 22nd May. LG would like to set up other parish outings. **Action: LG to organise a trip to 'Treasures of the Cathedral' and advertise it in the newsletter.**
9. **Ashford on the Map - -Sunday 5th June.** The Fundraising Committee runs a stall at this event and is looking for volunteers to run the stall, which would allow members of the committee some free time on the day to look around the stalls themselves. **Action: volunteers to Frank Collins.**
10. **Quiz.** The next parish quiz will be on Friday, 13th May in the parish hall, with all proceeds to the school in Tanzania (linked the St Michael's School). All are invited. **Action: AB to advertise in school newsletter.**
11. **Bible Study Group.** LG has just started her third series for the group and it is going very well. In the group of about twelve they discuss the three readings for the following Sunday. LG is in the process of writing a course entitled "Do you trust God? - The Story of Salvation" which will go through the 14 narrative books of the Bible and which she is hoping to run / offer to the parish together with a 5 talks DVD course called "A Biblical Walk through the Mass" by Edward Sri which is based on the new translation of the Mass.
LG asked whether there might be any interest from school parents to attend such a course during the daytime. The courses could even be held at school if the interest was there. **Action: AB to make enquiries at school.**

12. **Youth Group at Our Lady of the Rosary, Staines.** Two Confirmation catechists from Staines talked about their Youth Group that was started as an off-shoot of Confirmation preparation. The Confirmation candidates wished to keep on meeting after Confirmation. The group started with about 6 young people, and has built up slowly over the years. Age range: 13-16 year olds. They meet once a month, in Our Lady of the Rosary School Hall, mainly just providing an opportunity for the young people to meet up and chat. They do also organise outings / talks/ dance classes. Five adults run the group. Drinks and crisps are provided. There is no charge to attend. Could St Michael's set up a similar group? This year's Confirmation Catechists are keen to give it a go. Do we tie in with Our Lady or do we set up on our own? **Action: Tess De Souza to consult Confirmation Catechists.**

13. **AOB**

- **Alpha Course.** Whitton Parish ran an Alpha Course recently which was very successful. Should St Michael's look to run this course at some stage? The purpose of the course is to introduce people to the person of Jesus and gain knowledge of Him. **Action: LG to speak to Whitton parish.**
- **St Michael's Feast Day weekend.** It was agreed that last year's weekend celebration of St Michael's Feast had been a success. This year we will celebrate the Feast of St Michael over the weekend of 1st/2nd October, with refreshments in the hall after all Masses.

14. **Next meeting is on Tuesday, 13th September at 8.00pm**