



**Minutes of Meeting held at
St Aidan's Church on Tuesday 7th March 2017**

1.0 Welcome and Opening Prayer

Fr Ken opened the meeting by leading a prayer.

2.0 Attendance and Apologies

2.1 Present: Grant Kudsee, Mike Robinson, Brian Shelley, Joan Barham, Fr Mike, Fr Andy, Fr Ken, Fr Alessandro, Dcn John, Peter Kirk, Richard Kolka, Lewis Canning and Stephen Forster.

2.2 Apologies for absence were received from Charles Whitehead.

3.0 Agenda

3.1 The draft agenda was accepted.

4.0 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th January 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

5.0 Bishop Peter's proposal to amalgamate Pastoral Areas

Fr Michael submitted a note he had received from Bishop Peter asking for views on his proposal to amalgamate our pastoral area with those of Mid Bucks and Aylesbury, with the possibility of moving St Joseph's into the South Bucks area instead of the proposed new area. Bishop Peter said that in his view the new arrangement will help the working together of the parishes in the area and enable greater flexibility in the way our priests and deacons can serve the mission of the Church.

First we heard a summary of the history of this part of the diocese. The original plan when the present areas were established had been for there to be two areas. One covering Aylesbury and Mid Bucks with the exception of Great Missenden and the other covering South East Bucks which would include Great Missenden.

A wide ranging discussion ensued but only two decisions were made. The first was that Bishop Peter should be asked to leave St Joseph's in the South East Bucks Area; no one was in favour of St Joseph's joining South Bucks. The four parishes in South East Bucks have become accustomed to working together and wish to continue a partnership which is continuing to improve and develop. On top of that the five church buildings are in reasonable close proximity whereas and for instance Denham and Marlow are miles apart. The second decision was that a letter be sent to Bishop Peter seeking clarification on his proposal. The points to be raised should include whether there are models for pastoral areas different from ours which the bishop would like us to adopt, whether he had other points in mind apart from those mentioned in his letter and whether geographic proximity or foreseeable numbers of priests had any influence on his proposal. We should also give Bishop Peter a preliminary idea of our views. The Council delegated to Fr

Michael, Grant Kudsee, Peter Kirk, Lewis Harding and Stephen Forster the job of drafting this letter for Fr Michael to send. They agreed to meet on Thursday 16th March 11am at St Joseph's (Grant to be consulted by phone/Email).

As stated above these were the only decisions made. The following points were amongst those made during the discussion; some represent the views of one person only while others were more generally shared:-

Two new areas would be better than one so why not revert to the original proposal (Great Missenden to join us with the rest of Mid Bucks going to join Aylesbury).

The geography of one area does not work well so just by way of example Princes Risborough could just as easily be in another diocese while Aylesbury is a considerable distance from our parishes

Inadequate public transport facilities favours smaller pastoral areas.

The Catholic population, both laity and priests, are getting older so that more clergy time is now being spent on visiting the elderly both at home and in hospital.

The most important criteria in determining the size of an area is the ability of the parishes within it to work well together. This and proximity are more important than clergy numbers.

Great Missenden apart, Aylesbury is the most natural town centre for the parishes in Mid Bucks while Aylesbury has little in common with our parishes and is far distant from them.

St Joseph's is in close geographical proximity to St Teresa's in Beaconsfield

St Joseph's school is listed on St Teresa's web site as one of the Catholic local schools but in fact only 12 children from St Teresa's attend it

Both St Joseph's and St Teresa's are "strong" parishes

Rural and urban areas present different needs.

Some pastoral areas may not even have Councils which meet. We do not have detailed information about Mid Bucks or Aylesbury

St Joseph's feels it has much more in common with the other three parishes in South East Bucks.

The proposal would produce an area with so many clergy and parish representatives that a council on the lines we operate on would cease to be viable and this was more likely to weaken rather than strengthen coordination and cooperation

The diocesan map of its pastoral areas showed that some were even bigger in terms of both parishes and geographical size than the bishop's proposal for us.

Working in a large area had its own benefits

The proposed single area will diminish the role of the laity which goes against current trends

Overall more points were made in favour of having two pastoral areas than just the one but as stated above no decision was made mainly because it was felt that Bishop Peter might have points to make that we are not aware of which could influence our views

6. Updates on Actions from Previous Meeting

6.1 *The Compass Programme*

Sadly this programme is in abeyance for lack of leaders. The few leaders there had been had done an excellent job but running a weekly programme for two different age groups had proved to be too great a commitment. It was hoped that the programme could be restarted but to do this a new team of leaders would have to be found first and a new model put in place. The detail of this would best be devised by the new team but it was thought essential that parental involvement was needed from the outset to help the leaders on a rota basis. It might be better to start with one age group and then move on to starting with another age group when the first has been established. Weekly meetings might be too ambitious but all of this detail would best be settled by the new team. We felt that the Advisory Group were best equipped to further this and Brian Shelley agreed to put this in hand. St Aidan's had some parishioners interested in helping and the other two parishes were prepared to try and promote the programme to add to those numbers

6.2 *Confirmation Candidates' Programme*

Updates are included in the reports from St Aidan's and St Joseph's set out below

6.3 *Corpus Christi Procession*

The clergy have yet to settle the detail of this.

6.4 *CAFOD Affairs*

Following a second meeting with the CAFOD Supporter Group at St Aidan's on 22nd February, it was agreed to hold the next meeting on 4th April to involve Nora from Chesham and Monica from Chesham Bois, to plan a strategy road map for the rest of 2017 to raise awareness, plan fund raising and increase youth involvement in the three parishes. The possibility of a CAFOD awareness session in the summer (with bar-b-que), hosted by St Aidan's, involving not only the three parishes but also St Joseph's, High Wycombe and Slough supporters is also being considered. John Ludlow has agreed to succeed Brian Johnson as the main contact at St Aidan's.

6.5 *Co-ordinator for Marriage Preparation*

Married couples continue to act as 'mentors' leading engaged couples through the SmartLoving/ Engaged Marriage Preparation Course. Two mentor couples met with 3 prospective mentor couples from St. Joseph's on 12th February and introduced them to the material. It is hoped that they will agree to take on this valuable ministry. More married couples are required. Deacon John will cease to be the co-ordinator in June and a replacement is required whose primary tasks will be to act as a focal point and to link couples with mentors. Priests are still responsible for the initial consultation

6.6 *The Proposed Cathedral Centre*

Fr Mark is coming to St Joseph's on Sunday 12th March to give this project further promotion and there will be presentations at all Masses within the pastoral area on this coming weekend. This will include showing a DVD so projection facilities will need to be checked in advance. The organizers do not want there to be a second collection; they are more interested in promoting the project so as to attract longer term support.

6.7 *Mass times for Holy Days and Ash Wednesday*

The clergy have yet to look at this so that where possible clashes can be avoided. This year Ash Wednesday Masses had all been at similar times so it was hoped that this could be avoided next year. It was also hoped that activities incompatible with fasting and abstinence could be avoided on fast days. The tendency on the part of some to give low priority to going to Mass so that, for

example, they were not prepared to vary their usual routine so as to be able to go to Mass was, to say the least, unfortunate.

7.0 Parish and School News, Developments & Forthcoming Events

St Joseph's and Our Lady's Schools

St Joseph's has agreed to provide some administrative staff hours to help with financial management and reporting at Our Lady's. This is an interesting way to start the move towards becoming a multi-academy trust (MAT). The diocese has become more pro-active with plans for converting Bucks Catholic schools to a comparatively small MAT. The Chairs of Governors are meeting to decide on a planning programme. There is now a body of experience building up elsewhere in the diocese from which our MAT will be able to benefit. The support now coming from the diocese is a very welcome development but there remains a great deal to be done with many hurdles to be overcome; one example is that Marlow being an independent school is not eligible to join a MAT as these are exclusively for schools in the state sector.

Our Lady's School

The School had received a letter from Nick Gibb, the Schools Minister, congratulating it on its SATs results which showed that the progress made by pupils in the four years between testing had been amongst the best in the country in the top 3% of schools (copy letter attached)

St Columba's

The following activities have been programmed for the next two months

- i Preparation for Commissioned Ministers of Holy Communion by the Liturgy Commission (Mgr. Kevin McGinnell) starting on the 16th March 2017 at 7.30 pm at St Columba's (for 4 Thursdays);
- ii Lent Reflections:
 - Wednesday 8th March Catechesis by Fr. D'Autilia
 - Wednesday 15th March Film "Risen"
 - Wednesday 22nd March Film "The Passion"
- iii Youth Way of the Cross : Friday 7th April 2017 at 7pm

St Aidan's

1. We have taken part in (since the January PAC meeting):
 - (a) "24 hours with the Lord": a prayer vigil organised for Unity Week by Churches Together and held at St. Aidan's from 5pm on Friday 20th January – 5pm Saturday 21st January with 6 prayer stations based on this year's theme "Crossing Barriers".
 - (b) Baptism Preparation on 8th, 15th and 22nd January;
 - (c) 1st Reconciliation (for 1st Holy Communion Candidates) on 4th February;
 - (d) Confirmation Preparation at St. Aidan's alongside St. Joseph's;
 - (e) Compass Youth Group until its sad (and hopefully temporary) demise on 2nd February;
 - (f) CAFOD Supporters' Day 18th February;
 - (g) Women's World Day of Prayer with Churches Together on 3rd March;
 - (h) "The Big Picture" – CAFÉ Bible Study Course for the pastoral area being held at St. Joseph's every Thursday at 9.30am and 8pm from 12th January – 5th April.

2. We are looking forward to:-

- (a) Stations of the Cross in Lent on Fridays at 10am and Sundays at 6pm;
- (b) Churches Together Lent Course based on "The Kings Speech" on Wednesday evenings at the Methodist Church;
- (c) Holy Week and Easter including a Churches Together 'Walk of Witness' on Good Friday ending at St. Aidan's and based on the Stations of the Cross;
- (d) Baptism Preparation Course 30th April, 7th and 14th May;
- (e) May Fayre on Monday 1st May;
- (f) First Holy Communions, Saturday 20th May;
- (g) Confirmation for the Pastoral Area on Sunday 21st May at St. Joseph's;
- (h) The Celebration for Dcn. John leaving parish ministry (but continuing in spirituality and spiritual direction) on Sunday 25th June.

St Joseph's

- (a) RCIA has 3 adults who will be received into the Catholic Church and/or Confirmed at Easter.
- (b) Baptism preparation class for March begins next Sunday (three week course).
- (c) First Holy Communion preparation programmes for both the parish group (30 children) and school (40 children) are well underway, with First Reconciliation taking place over the next fortnight. Parish First Communion on Sunday 30th April and School First Communion on Saturdays 10th and 17th June.
- (d) Confirmation sessions continue with the Confirmandi joining 10,000 young people from across the country for FLAME at Wembley Area this coming Saturday. Organised by CYMFed, this is an event of faith-filled inspiration from world class speakers and musicians. Confirmation for the Pastoral Area takes place Sunday 21st May at 2pm and 5pm in St Joseph's Church.
- (e) Marriage Preparation for 15 engaged couples who will be married in St Joseph's this year is being organised.
- (f) The Big Picture bible course continues on Thursdays until 6th April. There is a consistent number attending both the morning and evening sessions.
- (g) Lenten events, services and devotions are taking place as we prepare for Easter. New for this year is Fr Martin's Lenten Garden in St Joseph's Church which will evolve and change over the 40 days.

8.0 Any Other Business

Easter Cards

Joan reported that these will be in A4 format with the two sheets folded so that each of the four parishes would have one page each. They would be given out at the two schools first on the basis of one per family with the remainder distributed at the churches. The print run will be 1,400 and the cost £348 +VAT. It was left to Joan to decide whether to charge this pro rata to the parishes or to charge each parish 25% of the total.

Confidentiality of these minutes

It was agreed that nothing in these minutes need be treated as confidential

9.0 Fr Alessandro led the closing prayer. The meeting ended at 10.00pm

NB The next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th May at Our Lady's.



Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Mr Mark Holdsworth
Headteacher
Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
Amersham Road
Chesham Bois
Amersham
HP6 5PL

17 February 2017

Dear Mr Holdsworth,

I would like to congratulate you, your staff and your pupils for the very high level of progress pupils in your school are making.

Your school's results, as published on 15 December, show that your school is amongst the top 3% of schools in England in terms of the progress your pupils make between key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2 in English reading, writing and mathematics.

We want to ensure that every child has the necessary fluency in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them for a successful secondary education and beyond, and your school has provided this.

Thank you for your hard work and professionalism in producing such high standards and congratulations again to you and your staff for all you have achieved.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Gibb MP