

ST AIDAN'S PARISH AGM 16th July 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to warmly welcome you all to our AGM as our parish emerges from the Covid pandemic.

My name is John Hannacher and I am chair of the parish council and would like to say a few words about the activities of the various parish ministries and then Sue Finch will talk about parish finances.

The Parish Council meets quarterly and the minutes are posted on the Parish website as are the minutes of this meeting. Photographs and names of those on the Parish council are posted on the wall in the Narthex.

Before we start I would like to pay tribute to our wonderful parish priest of many years, Fr. Ken who was living here in retirement and who died in October last year. Of course we miss him but know he was very pleased that it was Fr. Roy who took over the parish from him.

I would also like to thank Anne Parsons who is stepping down from the Council after a number of years as one of the parish representatives – we thank Anne for her support with our best wishes.

Let me now read the reports from the other parish ministries.

Formation

Our Catechists have been preparing children for their First Holy Communion and 12 children received theirs at mass on Saturday 6th May.

There will be a Confirmation programme this year in conjunction with St Columba's, IHM and Our Lady's and a team will be working with Brian Gallagher. The first meeting will be on 23rd September.

Baptismal preparation also continues with Julie Stewart taking over from Suzette Harris.

Thanks to all our dedicated catechists for carrying out this important work.

Social & Cultural - (Deirdre Lay)

Social and Cultural is a key part of parish life with regular Sunday coffee mornings and monthly parish lunches.

We had a very successful volunteers social on the 7th August last year. Volunteers from both St Aidan's and Our Lady's were invited and we catered for a total of 83 parishioners, 63 parishioners were from St. Aidan's. This year's event will follow the AGM.

We had our annual celebration of the Feast of St Aidan with a Walk followed by a BBQ on Sunday 28th August. This was well supported raising a total of £480 which was paid into the parish Account. This year's celebration will be on Sunday 27th August.

The Grand Draw took place on 18th December raising a total of £1045.00 after expenses.

The Quiz night held on 19th May was a great success raising an amazing £2521.00. Our thanks to Deacon David and his wife Jane for providing all the food and running the quiz. Many thanks to the Social and Cultural team for all their work on the night, from setting up the hall and clearing away and the cooking and serving of the food.

We would welcome new volunteers for both coffee and the parish lunch to come forward. If you think this is something you might like to help with please contact Debbie our Parish Secretary on our Parish e-mail who will forward your details to Deirdre.

I am also pleased to say that we now have pictures in the hall of The Holy Father, Pope Francis and King Charles III.

Ecumenical - (Vivianne Gattoc)

We continue to support ecumenical activities in the local area and, Fr. Roy now also attends the regular meeting of the Churches Together group with Vivianne.

This is where the various activities are planned including the Women's Day of Prayer held on 3rd March, the Remembrance Service in Little Chalfont on 13th November and Carols on the green on 10th December. We also supported the Little Chalfont Village Day on 17th June.

A picnic lunch is being planned at Restore Hope in early September – details will be announced in due course.

Liturgy - (Vince Smith)

The Liturgy Group at St. Aidans effectively provides resources that enhance our collective worship including music, choir, readers, altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers etc. and there are many who contribute with some being less visible than others.

The past year has seen the steady continuation of the provision of these aspects of our worship and as ever I'm sure you will all wish to offer our thanks who give their time and talents for the benefit of us all.

A common theme from these reports is the request for more to join our ranks. Whether it's readers, Eucharistic Ministers, singers or musicians there is always room for more.

The choir this year has seen an increase in our numbers and we have also had the benefit of Michelle Vurdien's versatile musical skills who kindly volunteered to step in and play at the Easter services as Sarah Gallagher was away during that time.

Not all the music played at church is suitable for the guitar so having the keyboard leading the music over the 5 services in Holy Week was a big bonus.

Thanks to Michelle, and Cian for their contributions during the past year.

Of course, we should not forget the contribution that Gerard and Susan Anderson made to the funerals of Fr. Ken and Judy Lloyd.

At St Aidan's we are fortunate to be able to stream our weekend masses so that those who cannot attend in person for whatever reason can at least participate. This service is also available "on demand" and can be viewed at any time.

In the past few weeks there have been training sessions for Readers and Eucharistic Ministers.

Youth

Our Youth representative on the council Shadia Anderson stepped down this year and we thank her for her support of the young people in our parish.

At the request of Bishop David, each Parish has been charged with participating in a "One Step" Challenge and Father Roy has elected, with the active assistance of Deacon David, to focus on fostering Youth Activity in both our parish and that of Our Lady's.

Deacon David has set up a Youth Action Group, starting with altar servers with the intention of growing it from there and focusing on developing social responsibility and making a difference.

Around 14 young people recently attended a successful meeting held at Restore Hope, in Latimer, and learnt about their ethos and the activities they have available. Discussions are also being held about future activities which might include Fundraising for good causes, getting involved with Riding for Disabled and meeting with Ukrainian children who are living in the local area.

Maintenance – (Finbarr O'Donoghue)

There is a steady and important list of maintenance work needed to keep the church, presbytery and grounds secure and in satisfactory condition. Special thanks also go to Deirdre for her support in this area.

Recent examples have included: -

Installation of security cameras at various locations in the grounds and all movement and activity within the grounds is now recorded and checked on a 24/7 basis.

Emergency push bars installed on the fire exit door by the choir, repairs to the ceiling in the church toilet to repair damage caused by a leak in the roof, a new weatherboard has been fitted to the Sacristy door and cracks repaired to church windows.

Re-painting of the lines in the car park is planned for this year and a contractor has been found who can replace the malfunctioning winding mechanism on some of the church windows.

Pastoral Area (Peter Kirk)

Regular meetings are held in the parishes within the enlarged Pastoral Area and our parish is represented by Father Roy, Joanna Hale and Peter Kirk.

The objectives of the Pastoral Area Council, under the guidance of our Clergy, are for parishes to work as closely as possible with each other and to share in best practice for the good of everyone within the Pastoral Area.

Recently the principal focus has been on preparing for the Synod of Bishops, meeting for the first session in Rome in October 2023. The theme is synodality itself – journeying together in the areas of communion, participation and mission.

Towards this end a Diocesan Assembly convened at Thornton College in Milton Keynes yesterday on Saturday, 15th July and the parish delegates who have taken up Fr Roy's invitation to attend were Declan Brosnan, Peter Kirk and Julie Stewart; Joanna Hale also attended in an organisational capacity.

Conclusion

A word of thanks to those people who regularly donate food for the Chiltern Foodbank – since last November we have provided over 220kgs of food for families in need in the local area.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank everyone who gives their time freely in support of the parish in so many ways, however, we would like more parishioners to volunteer.

Anyone who would like to be involved please contact Debbie Rogers, our parish secretary whose contact details are available in the weekly parish newsletter and who will forward your details to the relevant co-ordinator.

I would like to conclude with a thank you to Fr. Roy for his stewardship of the parish. Deacon David Curtis, Deacon John Crowshaw who provides support from time to time, my fellow members of the parish council and Deborah Rogers our parish secretary.

John Hannacher 16th July 2023