Minutes of the Meeting of St Etheldreda's Parish Forum

Held on Thursday, 16th March 2017 at 7.30pm

**Those Present**

Fr Tony Shryane, Reverend John Steel, 19 parishioners

1. The Meeting opened with a prayer.

2. **Parish Forum Explained**

Fr Tony Shryane explained to the parishioners the purpose of the Forum, i.e. it is a meeting open to all parishioners at which information regarding future plans for the Parish are given, including information on the 'Alive In Faith' initiative. It is also an opportunity for parishioners to air their views and listen to the views of others. Points raised will be factored into the decision-making process.

3. **Appointment of Chair and Secretary**

Michelle Seidler was asked to take the Chair and Angela Bishop was asked to take the role of Secretary; both agreed.

4. **Financial Report**

Tony Gryzbek presented a summary of the parish accounts. The parish is in a healthy position: as in 2015 we had a surplus of £9k, but in 2016 it was £12k. Prior to 2015 the Parish was in deficit. Someone asked if the money for the roof had been paid off and it was confirmed that it has been. However, the money for Cambodia has not yet been paid over.

5. **Alive in Faith - Projects**

A report was given on the status of the 3 Projects: The PA System, The improvement to the lighting in church and expanding the car park.

Deacon John explained that the money which has been pledged will be available over the next 5 years. The parish's share is about £80,000, which is about £16,000 a year over the next 5 years; this can only be spent on projects which have been highlighted.

The parish needs to consider other projects as we have more money than we had planned for.

5(i) **PA System**

Improvements to the PA system have been carried out and seem to be working well. A further improvement needs to be done, i.e. another speaker at the back of the church under the organ loft and one in the Sacristy. The controls for this will be put in a box so as to prevent them from being interfered with.

5(ii) **Lighting**

We have had one quote for the church lighting (£5,052) but, although we have asked for other quotations, these have not been forthcoming. A picture of the lights which have been chosen was circulated to the meeting; these are chandelier lights which will take LED bulbs. In addition to replacing the current pendant lights, two will be hung at the back of the church above the entrance to replace the strip light.

There will be 2 spot lamps pointed to the organ loft and 2 facing the Crucifix and 2 lights on each side of the Sacristy.

The point was raised about how low the lights would hang and that they need to be reached relatively easily for cleaning. They would probably be about a foot lower than the current ones. It was proposed that we purchase a 'tower' which would mean we could do a lot of jobs in the church ourselves.

Someone commented that once the church had better lights, the building may well look ‘shabbier’, so we would need to have the church redecorated.

Deacon John explained where the sockets would be going: in the main part of the church near the Blessed Sacrament; 2 sockets in the church will be replaced, one at the back and one at the front.

We have asked for 2 twin sockets to be put in the Sacristy, replacing one socket with a twin socket and connect it to the church lighting rather than the house lights.

5(iii) We are getting quotes for altering the car park. A fence is to be put up from the meeting room across to the other side, so the patio area will become part of the car park. In the middle of the car park there will be a yellow box down the middle so people can turn round. We are hoping for 10 extra parking spaces, giving 28 in total. Someone asked about residents parking and Fr Tony explained that they only have permits for weekdays.

Someone asked about the trees and whether they could be cut down. Some had been trimmed, as far as we are able, otherwise we need permission to cut them and have a professional to do the job, as we are in a conservation area.

The parish needs to look at what we want to spend the rest of the money on. The process for any new projects is that we have to submit our proposals to the central committee of 'Alive in Faith' to seek their approval for the project and then for spending the money.

. The earliest the car park could be done is July, but we have to wait for the money to come through before we can start this project. The speaker system and the lights will have cost about £7,000, so we will have about £24,000 for the next year. If it will cost more than that we will have to wait until year 3 to tackle the car park.

6. **Open Discussion**

It was suggested by a parishioner that the Parish needs to think about the parish life and going out into the community and that we need to be building up the life of the parish. It seems we may not be doing as much as we should in Ely, but the issue is that parishioners will have to want to get involved in any such projects.

Some of the money pledged is for outreach. We may not be able to do some things ourselves, but we could contribute money to some of the projects.

Fr Tony said that we have our own commitments, such as the Food Bank and Cambodia. The parish has grown a lot recently, so perhaps there are some people now who would be interested in some outreach projects, but we need to consider how we explore this option. We have to look at what the needs are, and how we as a Parish can answer that. We could have an appeal for people to help in this area. If it is a specific project we can talk to people at Mass about this and encourage people to get involved. However, people need to know that when they volunteer their services will be used.

At this point, someone wanted to know about 'newspaper expenditure'. It was explained that this included the purchase of a new printer and other sundry expenses were included under this heading.

Another parishioner asked if some money could be spent on the Parish Rooms. We were told this would come under maintenance. Someone wanted the carpet to be replaced and better furniture bought, so there were more lightweight tables, which could stack, and also matching chairs. Perhaps more storage is also needed. There was a discussion about carpets and keeping them clean, as they are only cleaned once a month, along with the toilet.

It was suggested that we make the Parish Rooms a project. The rooms are used a lot, and someone asked if we could employ a person to clean the rooms, so they look more welcoming for users. One parishioner said often the Rooms were left in a messy condition, so it was suggested that Fr. Tony draw up a list of 'House Rules' for all users of the Rooms, so that they were left in a tidy and clean state.

The question was asked as to whether the organ needed servicing, but apparently, it does not. At this stage, it was suggested that a double socket is put into the organ loft.

Fr Tony said the plan is that a Parish Forum is held twice a year in March and October. A Finance Committee meeting is held four times a year, so we keep the momentum going.

7. There being no further issues raised, the Forum closed with a prayer.