

# **Minutes of the Meeting of St Etheldreda's Parish Forum Held on Thursday, 12th October 2017 at 7.30pm**

## **Those Present**

Fr Tony Shryane, Reverend John Steel, Michelle Seidler (Chair), Angela Bishop (Secretary) and 11 parishioners

1. The Meeting opened with a prayer.

## **2. Financial Report**

Father Tony gave an update on the Parish finances, which are in a healthy state. The monies for the Alive in Faith projects are sent to the Parish once a quarter. Parish collections are well supported and currently we have £15k in the bank. Some of this will be sent away as it is for second collections and some goes to our account with the Diocese. We still have to pay insurance, levies and other such costs, but we should still have a good amount left for the general running of the Parish.

We paid for the lighting and PA system out of Parish funds which we will claim back from the Diocese in the next few weeks. We overran on electrics because of some additional work done (extra sockets put in).

A Parish Administrator/Secretary has been appointed to take over some of the admin from Fr Tony with a view to when he retires from the Parish, to keep the continuity going when a new priest is appointed. The Administrator works 5 hours per week on 2 days. In time she will be able to take on more duties which are not done at present.

We are allowed to claim Gift Aid on the 'loose collections' which has been going on for a few years. It is a complicated issue, but this can now be done by the Administrator. We can go back to 2016 to claim up to £8k, which means extra money back from the Taxman. The 'loose collections' for the Parish amount to about £20k a year.

It is proposed that people who do not currently gift aid may be asked if they would like to gift aid their donations.

## **3. Alive in Faith - Projects Update**

The lighting and sound systems have been completed.

With regards to the Car Park project, we have had a quotation for £58k and we are trying to get a further quote. However, it is not currently urgent, as we have not got the money yet and won't have for another 2-3 years.

We want to have some work done on the garden which should give us a better view of what we would like to do outside, so we have gone ahead with one quote for £1,500 to cut back some of the trees and shrubs and clear some of the garden, so we can see what needs to be

kept/thrown out and also see the fence, which needs to be renewed. When the large tree is being worked on, the car park will be closed for safety. This work will start on 8th November and should only take a few days.

We need to look again at our projects and if they are changed, people who are donating will need to be informed.

#### 4. **Parish Update**

It was reported that the Parish has had a plea from Siem Riep for their school room which is sinking. They need \$7k for this. They also need paracetamol, soap bars, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Stella will make a request at some stage for these. We need to check what money we have already to contribute to the fund, for example in the 100 Club.

A new church cleaning rota has been organised. There are 22 volunteers who have been organised into 3 teams of 7 (8). This rota will start next week and the cleaning will be done once a fortnight. The cleaning can be done any time during the week and is a flexible arrangement, better to suit the volunteers.

#### 5. **Open Discussion**

Once again it was suggested that some money be spent on the Parish Rooms. As previously, it was suggested that the heavy tables be got rid of, possibly to a charity, and that they are replaced by more lightweight tables, with lighter stackable chairs, to make it easier for those who use the rooms on a regular basis. The matter of the flooring was also raised again, but this will be looked at as and when the rooms are decorated.

It was suggested that the toilets be modernised and this could be done when the Parish Rooms are revamped. We could ask the Alive in Faith committee if we could use some of the funds for the Parish Rooms and, as most parishes have a Church Hall, there shouldn't be any problem in getting permission.

Someone asked if the rooms could be made into one, but this was looked at some years ago and the cost was prohibitive.

It is hoped that the Parish will see that progress is being made and we are trying to move the Parish forward by tackling short, medium and long-term issues.

Someone suggested that putting on a Christmas party for the children would be a nice idea but, as with all such events, people need to be willing to take on the organisation of them, as we cannot expect Fr Tony to do it.

We also need to look at how we hold on to our children in the Parish. With the First Communion children, we try to involve the parents as well and get them to be part of what is being done.

If people volunteer for jobs, it is important that their services are used, or that help may well be lost.

The date of the next Forum will be set at the December meeting of the Finance Committee.

#### 6. There being no further issues raised, the Forum closed with a pray