

Minutes of the Meeting of St Etheldreda's Parish Forum
Held on Tuesday, 28th February 2023 at 7.30pm

Those Present

Fr David Finegan, Michele Seidler (Chair), Angela Bishop (Secretary), Tony Gryzbek and 8 parishioners

1. Michele (MS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then the Meeting opened with a blessing.

2. **Introduction**

MS said it would be good to reflect how much had been done in the Parish since our last Forum one year ago when we were coming out of Covid restrictions:

- (i) The return of numbers to Mass, reinstating the offertory procession and reintroduction of teas/coffees after Mass.
 - (ii) The Synodal Pathway has been fruitful and from this we now have the Stewardship group, which is doing good work.
 - (iii) A Bible group has been set up, as well as Communion and Confirmation groups. On this matter Ben Thompson sent a few words; the First Communion group has 24 children and there are 10 candidates for Confirmation on 25th May. He asks that parishioners support them on this day. He is trying to get together a social group for the Confirmation group going forward. Someone asked if there would be prayer cards to pray for an individual child at our twinned parish in Cambodia and this was going to happen again this year.
 - (iv) Ben is also trying to get together memories and photos from the parish over the last 30 years.
 - (v) We have had a summer BBQ, Christmas carols, SVP activities, the gardening party and cleaning has recommenced monthly.
 - (vi) There have been closer links with the Cathedral which we will build on with the celebrations around St Etheldreda.
 - (vii) On 23rd June there will be celebrations in the parish with Bishop Peter.
 - (viii) The church heating has been fixed.
 - (ix) The parish rooms have been decorated and the floor uncovered and treated.
 - (x) Children are getting more involved in the church life.
 - (xi) We now have regular altar servers.
 - (xii) There are now more items in the Repository thanks to Margaret Steel.
 - (xiii) Ukrainians have been coming for English lessons
- All in all there is much to be thankful for.

3. **Parish Finance**

Tony Gryzbek (TG) presented a summary of the accounts pointing out a few items of interest. Offerings have risen £6k but are still down. Gift Aid offerings have reduced. Insurance had risen greatly, but it appears they charge quarterly which means when they catch up it is high. House maintenance was high because of repairs to the roof. We had a deficit of £7k in 2022 because of the roof repairs.

Regarding Alive in Faith, we have had £70k over the years. We have spent £9k (lighting, sound). We have £43k left for further schemes. TG was thanked for his work as Treasurer and producing the accounts.

The question was posed as to whether the parish could have a card machine for payments, but this would need a good internet connection, which is not available in the church and to get the system upgraded would be an expense (the house internet system was upgraded a couple of years ago). It was therefore suggested that there could be a link on the website so people can pay that way.

More people need to be encouraged to make offerings by standing orders and to gift aid their offerings. If parishioners are not sure if they have signed a gift aid form, they can check with Phil Parker. A proportion of the loose change in the plate can be claimed in gift aid.

Fr David thanked TG and all the people who count the offerings weekly.

4. Open Discussion

- i) A parishioner asked on behalf of the gardening party whether the parish could purchase a shed and compost bins and get rid of the BBQ and if someone could check that the shredder works. Gerald Fox volunteered to check if the BBQs are useable. A parish permit has been applied for so that waste from the garden can be taken to the recycling centre. It was suggested that wood from the old shed could be used to make compost bins. Pallets could also be used for this. Jonathan Skerrett will be asked to obtain a couple of quotes for what is needed. One more meeting of the party will be needed to finish the work in the garden.
- ii) It was suggested that the part of the garden by the end car parking space have shingle put on it to make it easier for people getting out of cars.
- iii) Someone pointed out that the cost of votive candles has been the same for over 20 years. It was decided that the donation for lighting a candle should be raised to 50p per candle. A new label will be printed to this effect.
- iv) It was pointed out that in the newsletter there are people on the sick list who have been there for a very long time, including non-parishioners. It was suggested that we have a book in which to write names of people we wish to pray for and then the book be brought up to the altar with the offertory. Joan Wall offered to look for an A4 size book.
- v) It was agreed that the Advent/Christmas Angel tree last year was a very good idea and it was suggested that we continue with this going forward.
- vi) Stella Fox (SF) will put up a list at the back of the church of those children in Prek Toal who will be baptised at Easter. SF gave a brief update on conditions in Prek Toal, which have improved, but are still bad, mainly due to lack of tourism and loss of jobs.
- vii) On 22 April on Palace Green is a festival of Christians Together and the SVP will have a display about their group and also a display for the parish. There will be refreshments and plant stalls. Parishioners are encouraged to attend.
- viii) The time of the Saturday evening Mass was raised and discussion as to whether to change it. Parishioners will be asked to vote on this and a notice to this effect will be put in the newsletter in due course.

- ix) Someone asked if we could have a calendar of special events in the Parish which could be displayed in the parish rooms and on the website.

5. St Etheldreda's Day Celebrations

There will be a Mass with the Bishop at 7pm on Friday 23rd June. This is the first of 6 years of celebrations. The Mass will be followed by a party – we hope in the garden – and people will be asked to bring along food for a 'bring and share' meal. There will also be drinks available and donations will be asked for. Gazebos, chairs and lights will be needed. Volunteers will be sought to help organise the evening.

On the Sunday there will be Evensong at the cathedral with the Bishop.

We are hoping to get more visitors to our shrine, as the cathedral mentions the relic in information they provide.

Someone asked if there would be any joint celebrations with the cathedral. There will be a Mass there later in the year.

6. Church Redecoration

We need to provide a list of changes/decoration which we want for our church to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

Suggestions brought up at the meeting were:

- Moving the font
- Consider the length of the pews near the radiators
- Permanent fixing of the Tabernacle at the back

We will need to come up with ideas for fund raising, as this will be a very expensive project.

Someone asked if there were any grants we could apply for with the church decoration. Paul Raynes will ask a contact in the Diocese about heritage grants.

7. Any Other Business

- (i) The question was asked as to whether we will be using Eucharistic ministers and having Communion under both kinds. Fr David said we are waiting until the Diocese notifies us that this can be done. People will need training again and we will need people to help taking Communion into the parish.
- (ii) MS told the Forum that she wishes to step down from chairing these meetings and asked people to consider whether it was a post they would like to take on, or whether they knew of anyone who might be interested. The next Forum will be in October 5th @ 7.30pm and it would be useful to have someone in place by then.

8. There being no further issues raised, the Forum closed at 9.00pm with a prayer.

Date of next Parish Forum meeting: Thursday 5th October 2023, 7.30pm.

ST. ETHELDREDA'S ACCOUNTS 2021 & 2022

INCOME	2021	2022	EXPENDITURE	2021	2022
	Total	Total		Total	Total
Offertory Collection	41562.96	47323.20	Church/Hall Maint/Repairs	12393.17	21739.90
			House Maint/Repairs	3770.88	4884.42
Donations/Gifts	1200.24	866.00	Council Tax	2473.71	2533.89
Candles/Flowers	1825.56	1755.15	Gas/Electric/Water	3075.24	2864.65
Fund Raising	0.00	126.50	Priests Salary & Nat. Ins.	5379.39	6393.56
Repository/Papers	111.00	163.50	Priests Housekeeping	3065.71	2679.28
Stole Fees	2625.00	2570.00	Priests Car Expenses	864.00	1214.55
Other Receipts	364.16	1284.00	Newsletter.Postage/Stationary	25.00	364.35
Pilgrimages/Outings	0.00	0.00	Telephone	1893.16	2457.70
Legacies	0.00	0.00	Repository/Papers	814.73	779.46
Christmas & Easter Offering	2482.48	3028.28	Candles/Flowers	891.54	1083.01
			Equipment	1217.91	1552.89
			Donations	665.89	232.00
			Liturgical	519.51	554.03
			Christmas & Easter Offering	3805.15	2690.46
Interest	164.27	858.28	Diocesan Levy	2869.00	3325.00
Other transfers	0.00	0.00	Ministerial Training Levy	359.00	416.00
Gift Aid Claim	5107.60	4855.40	Schools Levy	7172.00	8312.00
Foundation Mass Stipends	1954.59	1471.00	Clergy Pension Levy	3068.00	3526.00
			Insurance Premium	985.22	2044.70
			Other Levies	612.00	1155.97
Sub Total	57397.86	64307.31	Sub Total	55920.21	70803.82
Second Collections			Second Collections		
Diocesan	2370.03	1852.40	Diocesan	1645.97	2412.95
Other	647.85	2166.81	Other	1187.81	2125.09
Specific Donations			Specific Donations		
Total	60415.74	68326.52	Total	58753.99	75341.86
	2021	2022	Alive in Faith (Restricted Funds)		
Total Income	*****	*****	Total receipts in Account at 31/12/21	70,218	
Total Expenditure	*****	*****	Less payments to 31/12/2021	-9,330	
Surplus/Deficit in the year	1,661.75	*****	Balance B/F 1/1/2022	60,888	
			Plus receipts in 2022	6,081	
Bank Balance 1 January	*****	*****		66,969	
Plus Surplus/Less Deficit as at	1,661.75	*****	Less heating scheme costs	-23,215	
Bank Balance 31 December	*****	*****	Balance C/F 31/12/2022	43,754	