

CHURCHES OF THE FOREST OF DEAN

Our Lady of Victories Cinderford
St. Margaret Mary Coleford and Sedbury
St. Joseph's Lydney

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL DATED 19th AUGUST 2024

1. Attendance

Present: Peter Chisholm, Pip Deave, Paul Dekkers, Brian & Dot Lord; Fiona Mills, Sarah Perkins, Ruth Wood, Noel Riossi

2. Apologies: , Phillip King, Dorota Rapacz

3. Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and accepted.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Feedback on Recent Services and Future Plans.

Mass Attendances

Saturday/Sunday Mass attendances were remaining stable within the Forest parish area at around 110 parishioners across all churches.

Replacement Parish Priest

There was no definite progress to report although the Council was hopeful that news would be forthcoming in the foreseeable future following a recent meeting of the Diocesan Council of Priests.

5. Spiritual Update

Jubilee Year – Pilgrims of Hope

Pope Francis has decreed that 2025 shall be a Jubilee Year and that its motto shall be 'Pilgrims of Hope.'

The Council was advised that at its Diocesan Day last month Bishop Bosco revealed plans to hold Jubilee Year events around the Diocese in 2025. An ad hoc pastoral meeting for St. Wulstan's took place on the Diocesan Day itself and outlined broad potential themes for consideration. The Diocese is now asking parishes within each pastoral area to nominate two representatives to work together as members of a Pastoral Area working party over the coming months. An initial 'face to face' meeting has been scheduled to take place in Brockworth this October but subsequent meetings may well be held remotely. This working party would be guided by both Monsignor Slattery and Father Brassington but lay members would be expected to formulate ideas and execute planning to enable the Jubilee event/events to take place.

The Council resolved that the Forest parish should play a full part in this important work. The Parish Newsletter would carry further details shortly but individual Council members were also tasked to enquire amongst parishioners for volunteers to join the working party.

The Council was also advised that as part of the Jubilee Year celebrations Father Gerry Walsh would be organising a pilgrimage from Worcester to Clifton. This pilgrimage, due to take place in May 2025, would involve several members of the St. Wulstan's Pastoral area walking the full distance between the two centres. The main aim was to encourage as many parishioners as possible to join the pilgrimage for at least part of the way. Sadly, the pilgrimage would not visit churches in the main Forest but it was hoped to organise for Forest pilgrims to walk from Coleford to Gloucester to join with pilgrims from Newent.

The Council resolved to publicise details of the pilgrimage in the Parish Newsletter at regular intervals and to play a full part in encouraging parishioners to join the pilgrimage.

Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress

The Council was informed that the Forest Parish had been allocated two places at the Adoremus National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress on 14th September next at Oscott College in Birmingham. One place has already been taken but the other place was still available. The Council agreed to offer this place to any parishioner wishing to attend. The offer would be publicised in the Parish Newsletter.

6. Financial Update

There were no financial updates to report.

7. Buildings Update

Waste Disposal

It had been brought to the attention of the Council that the Forest parish churches had no facilities for the disposal of sanitary towels and used nappies. Enquiries had been made and no other churches in the Diocese maintained such arrangements. It was presently unclear what the legal position was but it was most likely the case that no legal obligation existed to provide disposal facilities. The Council was of the view that the legal position notwithstanding there were positive reasons supportive of the idea that such facilities ought to be provided. The Council resolved to make further enquiries and to review the matter in the near future.

Disabled Lavatory Facilities

The Council was informed of a recent episode at St. Joseph's Lydney involving a disabled parishioner that had been both embarrassing and demeaning for the parishioner concerned. The Council was aware of the fact that lavatory facilities for the disabled at Lydney were less than ideal. Plans did exist to upgrade the facilities but in the absence of a permanent parish priest the Council had no authority to sanction the necessary expenditure. The Council resolved that the matter should be brought once more to the attention of the Diocesan Property department and the Vicar General.

Coleford Church Hall

The Council was informed that following an aborted application to rent the church hall several health and safety related issues had come to light. This situation could not be allowed to continue and the Council approved early action being taken to remedy the position.

Mould in the kitchen area of the hall remained a problem. Remedial work had been undertaken by a Diocesan-approved contractor but this had proved inadequate. The Council agreed that local contractors should be approached with a view to providing an acceptable solution.

St. Joseph's Lydney

The Council was apprised of a complaint having been received from the owner of a neighbouring property in relation to overgrown vegetation spreading into that property. The area involved was significant and work would likely take 2-3 days to complete. A quotation had been received for the work involved but this was in excess of six thousand pounds. A cheaper quotation had recently been received but this was still for a significant amount and clarification was needed as to whether this included all necessary work. The Council noted that the matter was in hand and resolved that it should receive urgent attention.

8. Volunteers Updates

There were no Volunteer updates.

9. Social Update

As previously reported to the Council the St. Vincent de Paul Society has plans in hand to hold monthly Bingo sessions on a Friday to boost support and to provide a social focus for members. The SVP was seeking volunteers to help run these sessions and an appeal would be made via the Parish Newsletter.

10. Safeguarding Update

The Council was advised that all Level 1 Safeguarding training was now complete. Further training would be required for those volunteers needing to comply with Level 2 and this was presently being organised.

The Council was advised that the Diocese was presently formulating a Code of Conduct for leaders and volunteers. This would be published in due course and the Council would receive further details as and when these were made available.

11. AOB

The Council noted that due to holiday absences between now and mid-November 2024 both the Parish Newsletter and the Parish website would be run temporarily by alternate publishers. It was not anticipated that any changes would be noted by parishioners.

The Council was advised that consequent upon the aforementioned holiday absences there might be some disruption to the Live Streaming of Sunday Mass. Whilst as many Sunday Masses as possible would be live streamed it could not be guaranteed to happen every Sunday. All live streamed Masses in this period would be from St. Joseph's Lydney.

The Council noted and approved the above.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 1735 hours.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 23rd September 2024 at 1630 hours in Coleford Church Hall High Nash Coleford

(Zoom connection available)