

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2024

### 1. Attendance

**Present:** Peter Chisholm, Pip Deave, Paul Dekkers, Phillip King, Brian & Dot Lord; Fiona Mills, Sarah Perkins, Dorota Rapacz, Noel Riossi

### 2. Apologies: Ruth Wood

### 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.

#### First Holy Communion

The Council heard that the service took place as planned on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. It proved to be uplifting with a wonderful atmosphere, and both the children and Canon Finlay thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The Council expressed its deep thanks to Fiona Mills for her sterling efforts in mentoring the children and organising the event .

#### Mass Attendances

The Council noted that Mass attendances were remaining stable within the Forest parish area. Recent figures were as follows;

Coleford 35 parishioners;

Cinderford 28 parishioners;

Lydney 55 parishioners.

## Replacement Parish Priest

The Council noted that in recent times both our Vicar General and our Dean had praised the Forest community for the way in which it was coping with the lack of pastoral support from a dedicated parish priest. The Council were gratified by such praise but were mindful that this had been due in no small part to the excellent support from high calibre visiting priests.

Both Vicar General and Dean were adamant that the Forest had not been forgotten when it came to the matter of a replacement parish priest. Whilst this was encouraging there was unfortunately as yet no definite news regarding any new appointment. Noting that the current Supply Priest Rota expired on 18<sup>th</sup> August the Council remained hopeful.

### **5. Spiritual Update**

There were no updates to report.

### **6. Financial Update**

There were no updates to report.

### **7. Buildings Update**

#### Cinderford

The Council was advised that an inspection report prepared by a specialist company at the request of the Diocese had recommended the removal of asbestos lagging from the boiler room and from the underfloor pipework at Our Lady Of Victories. The Diocesan Health and Safety representative recently made contact to enquire whether the asbestos had been removed. The response was that it had not been removed on the basis that this was unnecessary since the boiler room was securely locked and the keys held in Coleford and the access panel to the underfloor pipes securely screwed down.

The Diocese remained concerned that non-compliance with the recommendation might adversely affect the insurance position. In an effort to provide reassurance to the Diocese a site meeting was due to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July with the Health and Safety representative. Attention would be drawn to the precautions taken and the existence of clear warning notices and confidence was high that this would be deemed satisfactory by the Diocese.

The Council expressed some concern. Should further inspection ultimately lead to either the Diocese or its Insurers requiring the removal of all asbestos from the boiler room and pipework then the expenditure required would be significant - probably running into many thousands of pounds - and it was unlikely that the Diocese would be

prepared to contribute to the cost. After further discussion it was agreed that the Council should await further word from the Diocesan Property Services department before considering whether action on its part was required.

### Coleford

The Council was advised that the painting and associated works at St Margaret Mary was now under way and was expected to complete in good time for a projected wedding celebration due to take place in the middle of July.

## **8. Volunteers Updates**

The Council was advised that the listing of all volunteers within the Parish was up to date and that those volunteers so required had signed to confirm that they had read the recently-provided Safeguarding material.

The Council noted with pleasure that Dennis King had recently received an award from Missio for his 40 years of valuable service to its cause.

## **9. Social Update**

The Council was told that the Forest picnic held at Beechenhurst on 15th June had not been an unqualified success with only eight people in attendance. Doubtless this was due in large part to the extremely inclement weather which meant that those attending were thoroughly soaked by the end of the day. Nonetheless the attendees enjoyed the social element and the games that were organised.

The Council was informed that despite repeated appeals no-one had come forward to volunteer as co-ordinator for the Parish Fete due to be held in mid-September. After a lengthy discussion the Council came to the view that there was no option left open to it other than to cancel the Fete for this year. The proximity of the planned date of 15<sup>th</sup> September meant that difficulties would now be encountered when it came to booking entertainments, organising stallholders' etcetera. It was agreed that notification of cancellation should appear in the next available edition of the Parish Newsletter and that this should state the reason for cancellation as being the lack of support and interest expressed by parishioners.

The Council resolved to undertake discussions this autumn with a view to revising the date for the 2025 Fete – possibly mid-June - and to commence event planning immediately in the New Year.

The suggestion was put forward that a Christmas Quiz should be organised as an alternative to the Parish Fete. The Council was unanimously in favour of this. Further discussion then ensued as to whether the Quiz should be held in late November or early December and as to whether it should be an afternoon or evening function. No final conclusions were reached and further discussion was pencilled in for the next Council meeting.

It was reported that the St. Vincent de Paul Society has mooted the idea of holding regular Bingo sessions to boost support and to provide a social focus for members. Further details would be forthcoming in the near future.

#### **10. Safeguarding Update**

As required by the Diocese the Parish website had been updated to include the Safeguarding Notice circulated recently at the behest of the Bishop.

#### **11. AOB**

There was no AOB.

**There being no other business the meeting concluded at 1725 hours.**

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 1630 hours in Coleford Church Hall High Nash  
Coleford**

(Zoom connection available)