

CHURCHES OF THE FOREST OF DEAN

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL DATED 20th MAY 2024

1. Attendance

Present: Peter Chisholm, Paul Dekkers, Brian & Dot Lord; Sarah Perkins, Dorota Rapacz, Ruth Wood, Noel Riossi

2. Apologies:

Pip Deave, Phillip King, Fiona Mills

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

The Council noted that although figures had declined slightly there was still a healthy, functioning Catholic community within the Forest parish area.

St. Margaret Mary Coleford is averaging 28 to 40 parishioners at Mass.

Cinderford is averaging around 20 parishioners at Mass. It was disappointing to note that attendances from the transient Filipino community had declined significantly, although this might be explained in part by the fact that more convenient Mass times were to be found elsewhere.

Lydney continues to go from strength to strength with a vibrant multicultural Mass congregation averaging more than 50 parishioners. It was also noteworthy that Lydney continues to attract new parishioners.

Ordination of Bishop Bosco MacDonald

The Ordination Mass had been relayed via LiveStream to Coleford Church Hall for those parishioners unable to attend the Mass at Clifton Cathedral. Some eighteen parishioners had attended what proved to be an enjoyable occasion, albeit that camera coverage from the Cathedral was less than ideal – the Bishop was not on camera during the most important part of the Mass. There is now available on 'YouTube' a full video version of the Ordination Mass with better use of camera angles and a focus upon the Bishop at key moments.

Consequent upon the ordination of Bishop Bosco;

- Monsignor Liam Slattery has been re-appointed as a Vicar General of the Clifton Diocese;
- Father Gary Brassington has been re-appointed as Dean of the Pastoral Area of St. Wulstan.
- Father Colin Mason has been appointed a Vicar-General of Clifton Diocese and Dean of Clifton Cathedral replacing Father (now Bishop) Bosco MacDonald.

5. Spiritual Update

Lenten Reflections

The Council was informed that the Lenten Reflections went very well. There were not many people in attendance at these sessions but feedback suggested that attendees had found the sessions supportive and of value.

First Holy Communion

The date for First Holy Communions to take place is confirmed as Sunday 2nd June 2024 (Corpus Christi) to take place at St. Joseph's Lydney.

Confirmation

The Council noted with pleasure that three young parishioners had requested the opportunity to be prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is hoped that the preparation sessions will begin later this year. In due course notification of the arrangements will be published in the Newsletter to allow any other eligible parishioners to participate in these sessions.

Forest Parishes Website

The Council had received comment to the effect that the Forest Parish website compared poorly to peer websites in terms of tone of welcome and user friendliness. The ensuing debate raised several issues but it was generally agreed that the layout and approach of the Forest website was perhaps not ideal when it came to encouraging people to choose our parish over another. All Council members were tasked with benchmarking our website against other Catholic parish websites and to bring suggestions to the next meeting.

6. Financial Update

There were no major financial updates to report.

7. Buildings Update

Coleford

Minor issues with the heaters at St Margaret Mary had been resolved and all now work.

The contract with British Telecom for broadband services at the Parish Office and Coleford Church Hall has been renewed. A new broadband router had required installation and there are minor password-related issues. It is expected that these will be resolved shortly.

Prior to his replacement as Dean Father Brassington had approved the Council decision regarding the works at St Margaret Mary recorded in the Minutes of the April Council meeting. A contract has now been let for these works to be carried out in the first week of July. The contractor is aware that the works must be completed no later than the middle of July.

An estimate for the cost of fitting heat-resistant deflectors at St Margaret Mary to deal with the issue of heat staining to walls above the radiators has been received. The Council took the view that the likely cost was excessive. An alternative solution will be sought and implemented as soon as possible.

8. Volunteers Updates

There were no updates to report.

There was a query from a Council member as to whether we had a comprehensive and current list of parishioners who had indicated a willingness to volunteer. Enquiries will be made and a report delivered to the Council at its next meeting.

9. Social Update

The Council noted with disappointment that a volunteer co-ordinator for the work necessary to deliver the Parish Fete had not yet been identified. It was agreed that a fresh Newsletter item would appear in two weeks' time in order to align with an appeal from the altar steps in each of the Parish churches.

10. Safeguarding Update

There were no issues to report.

11. AOB

The Council understands that there is presently no definite news regarding a new Parish Priest for the Forest of Dean parishes although the Council believes that this will be an early priority for Bishop Bosco.

The Council was told that arrangements are in hand to improve the reproduction quality of music played during LiveStream broadcasts from Lydney. Contrary to earlier thinking the audio feed will now be input directly into the LiveStream desk (as opposed to taking a microphone feed from the P.A. system) which should give better overall audio reproduction.

Following the showing in Coleford Parish Hall of the ordination of Bishop Bosco it has become apparent that the Parish would benefit from the replacement of its existing projection equipment which is now somewhat dated by modern standards. The Council noted the matter and agreed to keep it under review.

The Council was advised of an approach made to a Council member concerning the possibility of the Forest parish joining a Catholic network that wishes to organise a celebration of the tenth anniversary of 'Laudato Si' due in 2025. Little definite information is available at this stage. The Council approved continued contact between the individual and the network but stressed that no commitment should be given at this stage on behalf of the Parish.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 1650 hours.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 1st July 2024 at 1630 hours in Coleford Church Hall High Nash Coleford

(Zoom connection available)