

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 29th SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Attendance

Present: MQ, PD, PC, BL, DL, FM, SFP, DR, RW, NR

2. Apologies: None

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 Mass attendances had been slightly lower in recent weeks although Lydney was holding up well.

MQ had heard parishioners in Newent discussing the possibility of rotating Sunday Masses between Lydney and Newent to provide greater fairness to the recent changes to Mass times. The Council discussed the matter at some length but were keenly aware that experience showed that rotation would not work. Accordingly, the Council resolved to re-affirm the view that no further changes to Mass times were merited.

5. Spiritual Updates

Jubilee Year 2025

There were no updates to report regarding Jubilee events.

Christmas Masses

Discussion took place regarding location and timings for Christmas Masses across the parish in 2025. A broad consensus was reached but MQ will fine tune the arrangements and details would be published shortly in the Parish Newsletter and on the Parish Website.

6. Merger of Parishes

Transportation Arrangements from Cinderford to Coleford

The Council was informed that the transportation scheme that it had put in place had been only partially successful. Although a total of nine OLV parishioners had requested the provision of free transportation to Sunday Mass in Coleford there had in fact been no more than three or four actual travellers. Such a limited take-up made the Bus option rather expensive to justify. Those regular travellers were however people who did not have readily available alternative transport and so they could not be simply abandoned,

The Council approved the discontinuance of the Bus service and its replacement with a people carrier to be provided by a local taxi firm. Due to the limited capacity of this vehicle there would be a change in travel arrangements. In future the transport would collect the regular travellers from home and deliver them back following Mass. This arrangement would ensure that those parishioners were not disadvantaged by casual users taking all available seats.

Name for New Parish

The Council decided to carry this item forward to the next Council meeting.

7. Safeguarding Update

There were no Safeguarding issues to report.

8. Volunteer Updates

Parish Health & Safety Representative

The Council had been informed previously that due to Diocesan changes it would be necessary for the Forest parishes to appoint a Health & Safety representative. The Council discussed the nature of the role, the likely amount of time that an individual might need to devote to the role and the skills needed to successfully perform the role. Following that discussion the Council agreed that a Volunteer Request should be published in the Parish Newsletter to ascertain whether there might be a parishioner who either was undertaking or had previously undertaken an H&S role during their working life and who was able to assist.

9. Social Update

Parish Annual Summer Fete.

It was reported to the Council that the Summer Fete had been a considerable success despite the inclement weather. Not only had a decent profit been made but several younger parishioners had come forward to join the Organising Committee, which was heartening,

The net profit was £1000.00p. The Council resolved that as in previous years this profit would be shared between the Parish and charitable organisations. After a short debate it was agreed that local charities should benefit and that £250 would go to Youth Employment Monitoring Scheme and £250 to Orchard Trust.

Parish Christmas Day Lunch

The Council was advised that arrangements for this lunch were well under way

Parish Quiz

An offer had been made to organise a Parish Quiz night in February 2026. The Council had gratefully accepted the offer and awaited further detail in due course,

10. Financial Updates

Parish Treasurer

The Council had been informed that the current Parish Treasurer wished to relinquish the role following completion of the accounts for the current financial year. Following a brief debate the Council agreed that BL and DL should jointly assume this role (they being so willing). The training necessary to allow them to use the OPAS system would be arranged as soon as possible. The Council also resolved to publish a Volunteer Request in the Parish Newsletter for an assistant to the Treasury team' who could be trained up to perform the role.

11. Building Update

Improvements at St. Joseph's Lydney

The Council discussed further what improvements and enhancements might feature in the full planning application and how best to involve parishioners in any decision-making process. Several options were discussed. Ultimately the Council came to the view that the best option would be to arrange an open meeting at St. Joseph's to which all parishioners would be invited and encouraged to express their views. These could then be refined and edited into issues that could be achieved realistically, A

provisional date of 20th October 2025 was settled upon. Further details of the meeting would be published in the Parish Newsletter in good time for parishioners to give the matter some thought,

12. Any Other Business

Car Parking at Coleford Parish Hall

The Council agreed to carry this item forward to its next meeting

Church Noticeboards

The Council having taken note of a suggestion received from several parishioners agreed that a new Noticeboard at St. Margaret Mary Coleford and possibly also St. Joseph's Lydney to correctly identify both Mass times and the Parish Priest: Several possibilities were discussed following which it was agreed that quotations would be sought for suitable signage,

Statuary at St. Margaret Mary Coleford

An approach had been made by a parishioner who wished to commission a sculptor to create a suitable piece of statuary to adorn the side door at the church. The Council agreed that this would in principle be acceptable subject to the design being acceptable to MQ but it would need to be a private arrangement between sculptor and parishioner, Accordingly the Council gave its consent and agreed to maintain a watching brief.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1755 hours.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27th October 2025 at 3.30 pm (in Coleford Church Hall High Nash Coleford)

(Zoom connection available)