

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 23rd SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Attendance

Present: PD, PD, B&D L; FM, SP, RW, NR

2. Apologies: PK, DR, PC

3. Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and accepted.

Matters Arising

Councillor Resignation

The Council was informed that notice of resignation had been received from P.K. as a councillor representing Our Lady of Victories Cinderford. The Council expressed its gratitude to Phillip for his contribution to its debates and decision-making during his tenure. The Council agreed that it was desirable that Cinderford had two councillors and resolved to seek a replacement for P. as soon as possible.

Waste Disposal

[Following on from Item 7 of the Minutes of the August meeting] - The Council was informed that a bin for the disposal of nappy and sanitary waste had been provided at St. Joseph's Lydney together with a supply of individual disposal bags. This led to a wider debate concerning the location of such bins and whether it was the responsibility of the parish or of individual parishioners to dispose of such waste. A range of views were expressed. The Council ultimately resolved that a bin for the disposal of nappy and sanitary waste should be provided in the lavatory (female if the church had one) at all Forest parish churches together with a supply of individual disposal bags for use by parishioners. The Council was clear that it was proper to expect the church cleaners to remove such waste and place it along with other waste for collection by the refuse services.

St. Joseph's Lydney

[With reference again to Item 7 from the August Minutes] The Council was informed that most of the overgrown vegetation that had generated the neighbour complaint had now been cleared. The area looked far tidier than it had and the Council was advised that this work should satisfy the complainant.

4. Feedback on Recent Services and Future Plans.

Mass Attendances

Saturday/Sunday Mass attendances were remaining stable within the Forest parish area at around 100 parishioners across all churches.

Replacement Parish Priest

The Council noted with pleasure that the Forest Parishes finally had a replacement Parish Priest in the person of Father Martin Queenan who was leaving Warminster Parish. Father Martin commences his role as Parish Priest for the Forest and Newent on 29th September next. Whilst he settles in cover for some of the Masses will continue to be provided from St. Peter's Gloucester.

The Council debated as to how best to welcome Father Martin to the Forest Parish and ultimately resolved to leave the matter in abeyance until such time as he was fully settled into his new role.

5. Spiritual Update

Jubilee Year – Pilgrims of Hope

[Following on from Item 5 from the Minutes of the August Council meeting] - It had been announced that a further Diocesan planning meeting was scheduled to take place on 23rd October next. The Pastoral Council already had a nominated representative scheduled to attend this meeting. Accordingly further discussion would be held in abeyance until feedback from the Diocesan meeting was available.

Curia Meeting

There is to be a Diocesan Curial Conference on 9th October next. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for parishioners and volunteers to meet with members of Curial departments and to learn more about the workings of the Diocese. The Pastoral Council had a representative planning to attend. All parishioners would be eligible to attend if they so desired. Full details were available in the Parish Newsletter.

Code of Conduct

The Clifton Diocese had produced a revised Code of Conduct for adoption by all Leaders and Helpers within parishes. It was a broad code made up almost exclusively of matters related to commonsense. All Leaders, Helpers and Volunteers would be invited to sign the Code. The Council resolved that a copy of this Code should be appended to the Minutes for information

Advent Retreat

The Council was reminded that the date of the Advent Retreat was drawing nigh – 14th December 2024 to be precise. The number of parishioners presently subscribed was low and action was required to increase numbers. An announcement of the date and venue had recently appeared in the Parish Newsletter and an invitation had been extended to parishioners from Newent but some further publicity would be welcome. The Council agreed that Mass Celebrants should be asked to mention the Advent Retreat at the end of all Parish Masses over the next few weeks.

6. Financial Update

There were no financial updates to report.

Electricity Usage

An abnormally large electricity payment had recently been deducted by the Diocese for electricity usage at St. Margaret Mary's and the Parish Hall. Further enquiries had revealed that this was part of an historic account adjustment following a change of electricity supplier at Diocesan level. The issue was in the process of being resolved and whilst it was anticipated that some arrears might be due it was to be hoped that the figure involved was less than the amount of the present deduction.

7. Buildings Update

Waste Disposal

See under Matters Arising.

Coleford Church Hall

[Following on from Item 7 of the Minutes of the August Meeting] The Council was advised that a local contractor had now been engaged to review the damp problem in the kitchen area of the Parochial Church Hall and to propose a permanent solution. A further report would be made to the Council in due course.

St. Joseph's Lydney

See under Matters Arising

8. Volunteers Updates

The Council noted with pleasure a small increase in the number of parishioners volunteering at St. Margaret Mary in Coleford.

9. Social Update

The Council noted that the St. Vincent de Paul Society plan to hold monthly Bingo sessions on a Friday in the Parochial Church Hall had crystallised. The first session was scheduled to take place on Friday 1st December 2024 between 7.00 pm and 8.30 pm. All parishioners were welcome. Further details would appear in forthcoming editions of the Parish Newsletter and all Council members were encouraged to publicise the event in their local church.

10. Safeguarding Update

See under Matters Arising.

11. AOB

The Council was advised that a new Parish Registration Form had been drafted to capture pertinent information from new parishioners. A draft copy would be provided to all Council members for review and comment and then a final version would be recommended to Father Martin. A short debate ensued regarding the best production method following which the Council resolved to engage the services of a professional printer rather than rely upon Parish photocopying facilities.

The Council resolved to defer for a short period setting the date of the next Council Meeting on the basis that:

- (a) consultation with Father Martin would be necessary to establish what day and what time would best suit his schedule, and
- (b) it might be necessary to propose an adjustment to day and/or time to accommodate future Council members – with a view especially to encourage working age parishioners to put their name forward as a candidate.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1725 hours.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TO BE ADVISED (in Coleford Church Hall High Nash Coleford)

(Zoom connection available)