

## To be agreed by CPC Committee at June 2021 Meeting

### Birtley St Joseph's Church Pastoral Council Meeting

#### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021

##### Present

Mick Davison,	MD	Michelle Irwin,	MI
Peter Lavery (Deacon),	PL	Fr Mark Millward (Parish Priest),	FrMM
Peter Monaghan (Minutes),	PM	Tom Quigley (Chair)	TQ
Margaret Taylor,	MT	Sophie Taylor,	ST
Catherine Tumelty,	CT	Fr Martin Wheaton	FrMW

##### Apologies

Bernadette Bartlett,	BB	Doreen Cantwell,	DC
Hilda Fraser,	HF	Margaret Stafford,	MS

TQ opened the meeting with a prayer by Pope Francis dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

FrMW was not present at the start of the meeting due to a problem with Zoom but attended later.

#### Matters arising from the Minutes of Previous Meeting on 11th April 2021

##### Elizabethville Cemetery

See Agenda item

##### Mass for St Joseph

MT said that the Mass on May 1st had gone very well. She said that she had been concerned that there may be some problems placing people but in the event there had been no problems.

##### Installation of TV Cameras in St Joseph's Church

There had been no progress on this. MD said that this would be discussed at the meeting of the finance committee on May 16th.

##### Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last CPC meeting on April 11th 2021 were agreed.

##### Dates and Times of CPC Meeting

TQ said that there had been a good response from the members of the council on this but the consensus was to keep the meeting on the second Sunday of the month at 7pm. The council agreed with that.

##### Elizabethville Cemetery

TQ said that he had received a 4 page response from Jean Atkinson of the Birtley Heritage Group who specialised in military burial grounds. TQ said that he would send the report along with the other information which he had accumulated to Historic England in the attempt to register the cemetery with them as a garden of Special Historic Interest.

##### Maintenance

TQ said that he had contacted Shaun Marley who tended the graveyard at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate (OBLI) to see if he could maintain the cemetery as a short term measure. Mr Marley had visited the cemetery and said that he would be able to maintain the cemetery. Mr Marley said that the cemetery required 15 cuts but as 2 had been missed he gave a

quote for 13 cuts which the council thought was very reasonable. TQ said that Mr Marley realised that this arrangement was an interim one. FrMM said that there was no current alternative and that it was important that the maintenance looks respectful.

MI said that she had been told that there were rotten trees at the bottom of the cemetery and asked whether the maintenance would include the removal of them. FrMM asked if St Joseph's was insured against a tree falling on a person or car. MD said that there was normally an annual H & S inspection which included assessment of the trees but that the last one had been done well over a year ago. FrMM suggested that the trees were inspected by a tree surgeon and TQ said that he would ask Mr Marley if there was one he could recommend. FrMM said that there may also be a H & S issue over tall headstones and recommended that an assessment be undertaken as soon as possible.

### **CAFOD**

#### **Live Simply**

TQ said that he had spoken to Kevin Haigh (KH) who had now handed over the responsibility of parish representative for CAFOD to Rachel Prior (RP). TQ said that 15 months ago he had asked CAFOD for a Live Simply inspection so the parish could apply for a Live Simply award but then inspections had been suspended due to the pandemic. He said that we would probably need to revisit this to see if anything had changed during the 15 months. MD said that it may be more effective to look at this from a partnership level and bring in Chris O'Neill who was the CAFOD representative at Washington. TQ said that he would be happy to revisit this from a partnership level and said that he would arrange a meeting with RP and Aaron Tucker to discuss it.

#### **Laudato Si Week (16th - 25th May)**

TQ said that KH had asked if the streamed Mass on Friday May 21st could be a Laudato Si Mass. FrMM thought this a good idea and MD and PL thought that it would be a good way of promoting the Friday 10am Mass as the numbers attending had been low. PL suggested that Fr Jim concelebrate the Mass with FrMW and that RP could attend and possibly bring some children along from the school. PL said that RP had been in touch with Chris O'Neill at Washington so she could possibly attend too.

### **Confirmation and Baptisms**

MD said that there were lots of ex St Joseph's students now in Year 11 who were candidates for confirmation. He said that it was hoped to arrange an intensive preparation course so that they could be confirmed this summer. He said that it would be necessary to arrange a celebrant which may be the Vicar General or possibly Bishop Robert.

MD said that once the Year 11 candidates have received confirmation then it should be possible to start the process of arranging confirmation for groups from Year 7 onwards. He said that this would only apply to children from Birtley but FrMM indicated that he was quite happy for Birtley to make arrangements for their children.

### **St Benedict's Partnership Development Group - Report Back**

MD said that the PDG had recently held a meeting and had discussed full reopening of churches and activities. He said that ST and Deacon Frank O'Neill had been tasked with devising a strategy for reopening. He said that there had also been discussions about re-energising the parishes and recruiting for lay roles such as reading at Mass and writing bidding prayers. He said that there was a plan to contact all the stewards so that they could share their experiences of lockdown and emphasise the positive aspects of it for reopening such as the Ministry of Welcome and recognising people and names.

#### **Future activities**

MD said that for future activities it was hoped to recognise the Feast of St Benedict and he thought that there may be a possibility of using the school and grounds at St Robert's for an open air Mass. He said that as a default it may be possible to use the grounds of St

Joseph's. He also thought that it may be possible to arrange a partnership pilgrimage to Holy Island.

### **Restarting of Rotas for Readers, Bidding Prayers etc.**

MD said that the parish should start involving people again with these and the more people we could get the better. CT thought that it may be a good idea to get the Saturday and Sunday readers together and also the people who have been volunteering to read at weekday Masses. PL said that Christine Brennan coordinated the writing of the bidding prayers and Wyn Thompson organised the readers. PL said that the priests currently composed the bidding prayers and asked if FrMM would be happy to reinstate from May 17th the system where parishioners were involved in the writing of bidding prayers. FrMM said that this would depend on the Government announcement of May 10th of allowing people to meet up and how the diocese interpreted it.

### **Parish Post Lockdown**

#### **YMG discussion**

CT drew the attention of the meeting to the outcome of the discussion at the YMG meeting on 2nd May:

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Ann Marshall (YMG) has asked me to mention the following at Sunday's meeting, and I quote :-

- "Express thanks to Peter & Pauline and the team for all the work in Church during lockdown and to everyone in the organisation of the outdoor Mass. The outdoor area at the Grotto is looking amazing."
- "My main concern after lockdown is contacting all parishioners, especially those who have no technology. I worry that there are a lot of people who have had no contact with Church and may feel nervous about returning."

At the November CPC Meeting it was agreed that once we are able to meet in person without restriction, an extended parish meeting will need to be arranged with everyone concerned, (ie Families, Parishioners, Choirs, Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Children's Liturgy, Coffee Morning Organisers, Welcomers, Offertory Procession, etc) to sort out the best possible weekend liturgy for everyone. Maybe Anne's second point could be incorporated at that meeting?

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CT said that the YMG thought that the best way to approach post lockdown was via a discussion with the focus being the intention of making the Saturday 5pm Mass the best one that we possibly could.

### **Relaxation of Covid-19 Restrictions**

#### **Holy Communion for the Sick and Housebound**

PL said that Holy Communion for the Sick and Housebound was a necessity as people felt starved of the Blessed Sacrament. He said there was need to empower Eucharistic ministers to take Holy Communion out even if it had to be distributed on the doorstep. He said that he was worried about people dying without having received Holy Communion. MD agree with PL and said the sooner the better but that it would have to wait for the Government announcement on May 10th. FrMM said that the response to the Government announcement from the diocese was usually very quick but thought that it may be possible for ministers to take Holy Communion out from May 17th. PL said that spouses/relatives of the sick and housebound could be allowed to take them Holy Communion. FrMM thought this a good idea and said that in emergencies the clergy would be able to distribute Holy Communion to the very sick.

#### **Booking for Masses, SVP - Mass for the Housebound**

FrMM said that it may be possible to hold Mass only for those who were shielding. PL said that there were currently some frail people attending Mass. It was hoped that it may be possible to arrange a Mass for the Housebound at some stage.

### **Increased Capacity for funerals**

FrMM said that there had been some misleading news recently on this and the Government guidelines were that numbers for funerals should depend on the capacity of the building. MD said that wakes were still limited to 30 but this may change with the Government announcement on May 10th. MT said that although the capacity of St Joseph's was in theory limited to 50 people, it could be increased with groups sharing pews

### **Sacraments**

#### **First Holy Communions**

MD said that a lot of parents had been contacting the Parish Centre about First Holy Communion parties and asked what the situation was. PL said that parishes were facing unprecedented challenges post Easter. He said that each parish was inviting children in groups which wouldn't exceed the capacity of the church. St Joseph's with approximately 30 children in each First Holy Communion and a limit of 15 families was allocating 1 day for each school with 2 Masses in each of the Holy Communion days. He said that the parish had previously provided a breakfast for the children and that everything else e.g. parties was up to the parents. He said that every parish was trying to get things done before the summer break. FrMM said that St John XXIII parish was doing everything in smaller groups and that he would like the same situation in Birtley. ST asked if FrMW would be saying 2 Holy Communion Masses on Saturdays followed by a Vigil Mass and FrMM said that on those occasions, one of the other priests would say the Vigil Mass.

### **Outdoor Spaces - including Lourdes Grotto and Garden of Remembrance**

#### **Further Improvements**

PL said that the work had gone well and there were further improvements would include an external power supply, memorial wall plaques, rose beds, interment of cremated remains, cleaning of grave headstones and repair to the brick and stone boundary walls. He said that he wanted people to be creative in using the outdoor space in an organised way.

### **New Opportunities**

Suggestions for these had included school visits, an Echo project, a partnership of Parish and the 3 schools, May Procession on 30th May with the restored statue of the Madonna and Child. There were also suggestions that the space could be used to mark the Year of St Joseph as well as other occasions such as garden parties, Invitation to Birtley Christian Churches, Remembrance Sunday, Stations of the Cross or the Parish summer/autumn Fayre. PL said that he wanted people to be creative in using the outdoor space in an organised way. He said that each of the 3 schools had a lot to teach us in our appreciation of nature. MD said that May 31st may be a better suggestion for a May Procession than May 30th as it was the Feast of the Visitation and also a Bank Holiday.

### **Schools Update**

#### **St Benet's**

BB was unable to be present so there was no report on events there.

FrMW joined the meeting at this point.

#### **St Joseph's**

MI said that a meeting was planned on May 10th which would be between Governors and Staff. She said a further meeting was being held on May 24th and the purpose of this meeting would be to confirm the resolution to join the Bishop Wilkinson Trust.

TQ said that parents and pupils had been disappointed that there were few places available at the SVP Ozanam Camp at Holy Island last year and that he had passed Rebecca Nutton's email to PM who had explained the situation in a comprehensive email. MI said that she would be interested to know the details and PM promised to send her a copy of the email.

**Prayers for Next Meeting:**

CT offered to provide the prayers for the next meeting.

**Any Other Business:****Resignation of ST**

TQ said that ST intended to enter the Novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia in August 2021 and had tendered her resignation from the CPC and the PDG. TQ thanked ST for all the work that she had done across the parish and the partnership and said that although he was sorry to lose her, he was happy that she was following her vocation. He passed her all the best wishes of the CPC and said that a special Mass would be held on 6th July with FrMM as chief celebrant with Fr Chris Jackson preaching the homily. He asked her if she knew of anyone who may be able to take up her role of the CPC and ST said that she would endeavour to find a replacement.

**Middle Lodge**

PL said that it was hoped to partially clear the site at Middle Lodge of some of the sheds and horse boxes etc. He said that it was hoped to sell some of these items but although there had been interest in the items there had as yet been no firm bids. PL and TQ said that they would still attempt to get buyers for some of the external items. It was hoped to make a "soft" internal clearance but the building could not be demolished as the utility companies needed to disconnect their services.

**Next meeting:**

It was decided that the next meeting should be on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7pm

TQ closed the meeting with a Prayer to St Joseph which was the Concluding Prayer in Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis on Year of St Joseph.