

St Joseph's Birtley Church Pastoral Council
Notes of the meeting held 12th April 2026 in the Presbytery.

The meeting opened with a prayer was provided by CT and read by PP.

Present: Doreen Cantwell, Jan Rafalski, Hilda Fraser, Pauline Pestell, Margaret Taylor, Peter Monaghan, Mick Davison, Michael Jacques, Bosco Anthony.

Apologies: Shirley Ennis, Tom Quigley, Catherine Tumelty, Fr Martin.

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and there were no matters arising.

Correspondence. PP had received correspondence from Bernadette Bartlett to say that she was resigning from the Parish Council. PP had replied on behalf of the CPC thanking her for the work she had done in her role, especially with regard to St. Benet's School, and that she would be missed. CT had raised several items in her absence which would be covered in the agenda.

Feedback from the Diocesan Pastoral Strategy consultation meetings.

MD reported that two meetings had taken place and that a third meeting aimed at the younger adults had been organised as the Bishop had especially wanted to involve the 25-50 age group. This had been held on Thursday 9th April and been attended by 12 people.

MD felt that all of the meetings had very similar outcomes. PP, MT and MD had looked at the feedback collected at the meetings, by email and written responses. MD will complete a draft response which will be presented for discussion at an extra parish council meeting to be held on Sunday 19th April at 7p.m. in the presbytery. MD would hope to send a draft to the parish council members by Friday 17th April.

There will then be an opportunity to discuss this at two meetings in the parish hall on Tuesday 21st April at 1p.m. and after the 7p.m. evening mass.

MD informed the meeting that partnership chairs have been invited to a meeting on 6th May.

Parish Hall.

Alan Sexton has carried out work to divide the building to create space for use by the parish. This includes the youth wing, toilets, kitchen and meeting room. The building will require a refurbishment over time with some urgent work where there is water accessing the building adjacent to some electrics.

MT has spoken to Julie Drury and assured her that the youth club are able to continue to use the building with some discussion about tidying away their equipment etc to allow the space for other uses when necessary.

There will need to be a group of committed people prepared to manage the Parish Hall e.g. as keyholders, accessing funding.

Garden Wall.

John Stewart had emailed his concerns about the fallen wall at the rear of the church property. Fr Martin had responded to this.

At present the diocese and Gateshead council are in discussion about responsibility for repairs.

Live streaming.

Jim Taylor had been in contact with Lisa Armitage and had arranged to pick her up and bring her across to St Josephs on Tuesday 14th April in order to progress setting up a Youtube channel in order to restart live streaming.

Planned Giving Envelopes.

These have now been ordered. Pauline Lavery had provided temporary envelopes at the back of church to bridge the gap until they arrive. They should be ordered at the end of the year to ensure their arrival in future.

Photographs.

MT took photographs of the new members present at the meeting. When all necessary photos are taken they will be added to the noticeboard at the back of church.

A.O.B.

PM informed the meeting that the mass for the elderly and housebound, organised by the SVP, would take place at St. Cuthberts, Chester-le-Street on 27th June.

MD spoke about the grotto which would be 100 years old in 2026. There was a suggestion that we might celebrate this with a picnic/tea on the weekend of August 15/16 – this needs further discussion.

DC said she had been in touch with David O'Neill about the coins found in the meeting room – he collects these for the Little Sisters. She also asked about labelling the cupboards/drawers in the meeting room. **She would discuss this with PL.**

There was a short discussion about an AGM and it was suggested that the meetings held on 19th April could replace the AGM this year.

The meeting closed with a prayer read by PP.

Next meeting – Extra meeting 19th April.

Sunday 10th May. Prayers MT.

Rota for Saturday Mass – 18th MT, 25th TQ, May 2nd PP, 9th PM, 16th PL.