St Joseph's Birtley Church Pastoral Council
Notes of the meeting held 8th November 2026 in the Presbytery.

The meeting opened with a prayer led by CT.
Present: Pauline Pestell, Margaret Taylor, Catherine Tumelty, Bosco Anthony, Tom Quigley, Hilda Fraser, Pauline Lavery. Fr Martin, Doreen Cantwell, Mick Davison, Peter Monaghan, Tony Scott.
Apologies: Jan Rafalski.
Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
Matters arising –
Parish hall – Michael Lavery took on the role of chair and led a well-attended meeting. He has agreed to contact the diocese to discuss the possibility of raising funds to improve/renovate the existing hall to ensure that it is a pleasant and safe place for users. There will be another meeting on the 1st December to which everyone is welcome.
Parish centre – FrMW is hopeful that the building will soon be leased. The defibrillator will stay in place as it belongs to the parish.
Jesse Tree - There was discussion about Jesse Tree service/carol service. MT would speak to Fr MW to discuss the possibility of dressing the tree at the mass on the first weekend in Advent and to Ellen McConnell about the involvement of the children's liturgy group.
Remembrance service - PL thanked the Men's choir and TQ for attending the remembrance service and representing the parish.
Health and Safety – TS continues to work through the recommendations from the fire risk assessment for the Parish Hall, Parish Centre, Presbytery and church. He now has a list of people who have agreed to be fire stewards and hopes to meet with them soon.
Finance Committee **–** PP spoke to Fr. MW. who confirmed that the Finance committee should be separate from the CPC. Wyn Thompson and Mary Davidson have both agreed to support Gift Aid donations.
Card machine – FrMW will look into the use of card machines.
School update – St. Joseph's are still having to deal with the removal of Japanese knotweed.
St. Benet's hope that the new building will be started next year.
Collapsed wall – Fr MW reported that someone was coming out next week to start removing trees etc.
Blessing for the sick – dates have been put in place for the next year.
21st Jan, 22nd April, 22nd July, 21st Oct 2027 and 20th Jan 2028.

Pastoral Strategy update
MD had attended the Lay Pastoral forum with Bishop Stephen on Saturday 7th November and fed back to the CPC. The bishop was extremely pleased with the responses from the diocese, with new and existing partnerships sending in proposals, with a varying degree of detail. The bishop will attend deanery meetings in Jan/Feb which will be dedicated to the next steps.
MD informed the CPC that the Benedict partnership no longer exists. A proposal had been given that St. Joseph's would become part of the Gateshead deanery and that one parish would be formed to include St. Anne's, St. Joseph's Birtley, St. Oswald's and St.Peter's. There is a long process to move through before these changes can be made directed by Canon law.
There will be further information in the New Year.

Use of the meeting room Presbytery. Concerns were expressed that the room was not always left tidy for the next group using it. PL would make a sign asking people to leave the space tidy.

Health and Safety – see above in matters arising. Also, TS discussed the need for an assembly point. He will speak to the Kate about responsibilities at school events. Generally the priest would be in charge at school masses.

Advent/Christmas - see future events. PL would order the tree for church and hopes to get it put up on Friday 27th November.

Future Parish events.
The Parish Fayre will be held on 21st November, 11-2p.m. CT asked if anyone would be happy to help with the setting up of stalls.
Nov 21st Christ the King /Youth Sunday MT would speak to Fr MW about a young person speaking after communion.
Adoration and Benediction will be held on 29th November in St. Joseph's.
Penitential service will be held at St. Joseph's on Tuesday 15th December alongside mass.

AOB - CT advised people that there sheets for the introduction at mass in the sacristy.
MT informed the CPC that confirmations were planned for 2nd July 2027.

Next meeting – 13th December 2026.
The meeting closed with a prayer.