

Meeting: St. Joseph's Parish Pastoral Council
Date: Monday, 27th January 2025
Location: St. Joseph's Church Hall

Present: Sr Mary Mabel Chukwu (MC) Eileen Cunningham (EC)
 Sally Hamill (SH) Margaret McGrath (MM)
 Fr Stephen McGrattan (SM) *Parish Priest* George McIntyre (GM) *Secretary*
 Paul Nicholson (PN) *Chair* Sr Marilyn Juliet Obiorah (JO)
 Fr Kevin Rennie (KR) *Assistant Priest* Judith Wilson (JW)

Apologies: Desmond Cunningham (DC), Amélie Davidson (AD), Laura Hand (LH), Ruairidh Heron (RH), Janice Lennon (JL), Sr Mary Rose Maduka (MRM), Hugh Matthews (HM).

Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Opening Prayer and Sederunt:</p> <p>PN welcomed everyone and as PPC Chair formally opened the meeting. JO provided and read out the Jubilee prayer as our opening prayer for the first Parish Pastoral Council in the Jubilee Year.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising:</p> <p>The previous minutes were proposed by SH and seconded by JO.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p>Ministries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers- SM reported that there was a good turnout for the retreat for Readers held on the 2nd December 2024. The focus was on the background to the formation on the New Lectionary, why it was needed, why this version, the process involved in the formation and some useful tips for proclaiming of the Word. The update session appeared to have been well received. The retreat for the Eucharistic Ministers is planned to be held during Lent on Tuesday 11th March 2025 from 7 to 8.30pm; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)- The process to support and share faith and Catholic teaching with those who are preparing to join the Church started on 29th August 2024 is continuing. SM reported that there are nine candidates at different stages (two already members of the Church, two coming into the Church on 23rd February 2025 and five going through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion by the Easter Vigil. A further two or three candidates are looking to join in Eastertide with a possible further two later. The numbers involved are very encouraging. 	SM/KR to progress
4.	<p>Finance:</p> <p>Previous action: PN proposed that: a) the Parish Finance Committee be convened to review the current situation</p>	

<p>b) a sub-committee to be formed to review the specific projects and necessary timelines to create a calendar of events</p> <p>c) communicate back to the Parish to enable a better understanding of the current and future challenges.</p> <p>KR commented that this feedback could be timed along with issue of the January Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>SM confirmed that the Parish Finance Committee will be convened before Christmas 2024 and a summary of the income versus outgoings to be prepared as above.</p> <p>Action completed for this initial stage.</p> <p>Action update: SM reported that a successful Parish Finance Committee (PFC) meeting had been held in January 2025. Two individuals have been identified with grant-funding experience and the meeting highlighted some initial improvement actions, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the weekly bulletin more to advertise special collections in advance; • publish monthly expenditure to allow a wider appreciation of the ongoing costs; • consider the Church when preparing your will; • Dedication of the Church- some improvement activities that would be good to complete before this event could potentially be achieved through targeted donations; • Grant funding- create a matrix of funders and conditions to be met then keep this list up to date. <p>SM added that the Committee is now active again. It is planned to hold an open annual general meeting this year to allow wider discussion of the issues of the parish.</p> <p>SM presented the current situation of the parish finances broken down to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Accounts 2024; • Income and Expenditure Analysis 2024; • Statistics on Running Costs 2024; • Comments on Running Costs 2024; • Maintenance and Management Plan 2017 to Now; • Proposals for the Future. <p>Over the last eight years about £550,000 has been spent on various updates to the estate. SM commented that it was a tremendous reflection on the generosity of the parish over this time. This has been very positive and much has been achieved however further consideration is essential now to allow for future-proofing. While Church collections (including associated Gift Aid) and hall income has increased the total balance of parish funds of £38,767.33 is the lowest in some years. The average weekly income versus expenditure (basic, operational and repair/maintenance) is running at a loss of £901 per week. This has been defrayed by withdrawal of funds from the Parochial Investment Fund but is not unsustainable. Big ongoing cost activities such as the external repointing of the church and parish house will require an estimated £50,000 per year over 5-6 years. The various requirements all add up to a shortfall of £30,000 per year if repair and maintenance needs are to be met. Delaying activities will most likely incur further increased costs.</p> <p>The proposals for the future being considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase annual income by £25,000 by requesting an increase in the weekly collection and maximising gift aid to achieve an extra £500 per week; • Maximise grant funding where possible, for example, stained glass preservation and replacement of the hall roof (since is used by the wider community). The PFC has started to look at this specifically on a funding strategy for the stained glass. KR 	<p>Action Completed</p>
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	<p>commented that hall roof quotes are currently being sought from four potential vendors plus solar panels are being considered as may also be grant funded;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major fundraising effort to replace the hall roof including replacement windows but deferred into 2026. <p>In preparation for the Dedication of the Church on the 18th May 2025, a couple of improvement activities have been identified that could be done including replacement of the Altar/Sanctuary carpet and consecration candle sconces.</p> <p>KR presented the new card payment machine for the Church to enable cashless donations to be made for parishioners who prefer this means of making contributions. The unit is relatively easy to use but some instructions will be prepared and located nearby. Action Closed.</p> <p>KR commented that about £400 per month is coming in via the contactless donations.</p>	Closed
5.	<p>Fabric:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hall renovations- The roof of the hall needs replaced and is the main task requiring a fund-raising project and grant funding. The fascia board around the hall will also need repaired. An inspection of the fascia below the slates around the perimeter of the hall is required. It may require replacing the old fascia with new PVC panels. Action carried forward; Cupboards in Green Room (hall)- MM confirmed that new cupboard units for the Green Room just need to be purchased when hall funds accumulate with labour being provided free. Action carried forward; Display board with past priests- A contractor has been identified and now just needs a sign-writer. The potential location is above the Holy Water font and donation boxes in the porch. Action carried forward; 	<p>SM to consult contractors</p> <p>MM to consult contractor when funds available</p> <p>SM/KR to progress</p>
6.	<p>Social Events:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-bus trips (2025 plan): KR commented that all the trips have been provisionally planned for the year plan. The first is planned for the 31st March 2025 going to New Abbey and the Dumfries Aviation Museum; Additional mini-bus drivers (for collection and return of housebound for Sunday Mass): KR reported that he is looking to recruit some more drivers with this to be added to the weekly Bulletin; Review of 2024 events: These were considered a great success; Burns Supper (25th January 2025): This was considered a great success. PN noted the big effort made by the organising team and volunteers and extended his appreciation; 	KR to progress

	<p>5. Saint Patrick's Day (Friday 21st March 2025)- The planning for this celebration will begin after Christmas but due to availability issues last time, Sean Kelly has been booked to provide the entertainment and hot food (soup and steak pie) is also being planned. Ticket prices will be £15 per person.</p> <p>6. PN proposed that a social calendar would be useful to show the plan for social events through the year to allow dates to be held. The possibility of having a social convenor will be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	<p>GM to add to next PPC agenda</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Deanery Pastoral Council:</p> <p>The Bishop was keen to establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council with input coming from Deanery Pastoral Councils created to foster collaboration between the parishes. The initial Deanery Pastoral Council for our area, led by SM, was held in Saint Joseph's on 3rd December 2024. As part of the Diocesan Jubilee Celebrations, the Deanery Pastoral Council was assigned one of the four documents from the Second Vatican Council, namely, Lumen Gentium. A presentation on "Christ the Light of the Nations: the Mystery of the Church" and day session are planned for Saturday 29th March 2025.</p> <p>Jubilee 2025- The Year of Jubilee 2025 commences from 24th December 2024 through to 24th December 2025 and will be marked with a Mass at the Cathedral on 29th December 2024. SM shared a copy of the Pastoral Letter-Jubilee 2025- Pilgrims of Hope issued by Bishop Frank. In the letter it states that Pope Francis has invited us all to be pilgrims of hope and to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another and with all of creation. The Bishop has asked that we look around us for signs of God's love here and now in our local community and to be thankful for what God has already given us plus to pray one simple prayer more than we have before: the Glory Be. It asks for nothing, praises God and declares our faith in the Trinity.</p> <p>Action completed.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Pilgrimage Review:</p> <p>The possibility of arranging a pilgrimage in 2025 (potentially Iona) was briefly discussed and further details are required. From an international perspective, SM proposed that Salamanca be considered for 2026 but since a new Rector has just started then this may delay preparations initially.</p>	<p>PN to contact Alba Tours</p> <p>GM to add to next PPC agenda</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Dedication of the Church:</p> <p>SM confirmed that Bishop Frank will preside over the Mass of Dedication of St. Joseph's Church and Altar on Sunday 18th May 2025.</p> <p>Previous action: It was previously agreed that a Papal Blessing would be suitable way to commemorate the 175th anniversary. The original aim was to achieve this by the end of the anniversary year but it is more appropriate now to coincide it with the formal dedication of the Church. Following the Ordination of the new Bishop, this will be actioned when a date for the</p>	

	dedication is arranged. This will not occur before Easter 2025. Action update: Now planned for Sunday 18 th May 2025.	<i>SM to progress</i>
10.	Bishop Frank's Pastoral Visit: This is planned for Saturday 8 th and Sunday 9 th February 2025.	
11.	Youth and Young Adults: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Walking the Camino: KR reported that so far eight young adults have signed up with a potential six more. There was some interest from older parishioners and there may be scope for a Diocesan Camino in future although there is no one assigned for this type of activity; b. Young Adult (18-30) Evenings: KR commented that these are going well with twelve attending the dinner plus another four who were unable to attend; c. Youth (P7 -S6) Evenings: The first evening is planned for 16th February 2025 and will be run by S3 students with supervision. It is anticipated with exams coming up soon will impact the S4 to S6 potential attendance; 	
12.	Sunday-led Singing: PN commented on feedback from some parishioners where English is not their first language that it would be useful to have congregation singing led by someone at the front of the Church. The meeting attendees did not see a great need for this but SM agreed to consult with Dr. McCluskey.	<i>SM to consult with RMcC</i>
13.	Previous Open Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Periodic Review of Parish Council membership: SM previously commented that the membership of the Parish Council was designed to be around 12 individuals at any one time and then have a periodic refresh with three members stepping down where appropriate to allow new members to join without impacting the balance of the group. SM requested that the decision to renew the Council membership be postponed until the summertime. All the meeting attendees were happy to continue in role. A further check is required to determine that there is a willingness for others to serve on the Council. Action carried forward. 2. Society of Saint Vincent de Paul: SM commented that the current demand for food parcels is greater than the income being received putting pressure on supply. It was agreed that the recent financial details included in the Newsletter were welcomed as it allowed a clearer understanding to the wider Parish of how many food bags were needed weekly plus the associated funds involved. This may bring added donations in time. SM also commented that a possible solution would be to partner up with the Trussell Trust, however some concern was raised regarding the possibility of the Trust only supplying to referrals which may deter others from requesting aid. 	<i>SM to assess interest via a newsletter item in May 2025</i>

	SM/KR to suggest this to SVDP with a view to them discussing it and investigating it further if appropriate. No feedback for SDVP. Action carried forward.	SM/KR to contact SDVP
14.	AOCB: 1. Scottish Catholic International Aid Foundation (SCIAF): SM commented that SCIAF representatives would be willing to provide a presentation on their mission to the Parish.	
	Date and time of next meeting: Next meeting: Monday, 17th March 2025 at 6:30 pm in St. Joseph's Church Hall. Opening prayer at next meeting: Jubilee Prayer will be read out together at each of the 2025 meetings.	All