

**ST JOSEPH'S – OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL – ST MATTHEW'S, KILMARNOCK
JOINT PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

1 June 2026

MINUTES

Meeting: Kilmarnock Joint Parish Pastoral Council (JPPC)
(St. Joseph's, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Matthew's)
Date: Monday, 1st June 2026
Location: St. Joseph's Church Hall

Present: Fr Stephen McGrattan (SM) *Parish Priest/Chair*
Fr Kevin Rennie (KR) *Assistant Priest*
Sr Marilyn Juliet Obiorah (JO)
Sr Mary Mabel Chukwu (MC)

Saint Joseph's

Maureen Andrew (MA)	Eileen Cunningham (EC)
Laura Hand (LHa)	Patrik Janok (PJ)
Janice Lennon (JL)	Margaret McGrath (MM)
George McIntyre (GM) <i>Minute Secretary</i>	Paul Nicholson (PN)
Mary Walker (MW)	Judith Wilson (JW)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Stuart Clark (SC)	Charlie Harper (CH)
Suzy Hollywood (SHo)	Kathleen Jones (KJ)
Jean Murphy (JM)	Agnes Starrs (AS)

Saint Matthew's

Frances Boyle (FB)	Maureen Bradley (MB)
Philip Brown (PB)	Catherine Brown (CB)
Stephen Duff (SD)	Fred Stacey (FS)
Cherry Stacey (CS)	

Apologies: John Goodwin (JG)(St.M), Sally Hamill (SHa)(St.J), Linda Hefron (LHe)(OLMC),
Sr Mary Rose Confidence Maduka (MRM), Hugh Matthews (HM)(St.J),
Celia McQueen (CM)(OLMC), Lea-Anne Wilson (LW)(St.J).

Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Opening Prayer and Sederunt:</p> <p>SM welcomed everyone and formally opened the first meeting of the Kilmarnock Joint Parish Pastoral Council (JPPC) comprising the parishes of Saint Joseph's, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Matthew's.</p> <p>The Prayer to the Holy Spirit was used for the opening prayer.</p> <p>SM initially commented that the meetings were to allow us to build real harmony and real purpose, to enable us to work together and help each other to be better missionaries, to</p>	

	allow us to grow and remain strong and bring people together. As this was the early beginnings it was expected that the meeting may evolve over time to help our combined efforts and mission.	
2.	<p>Minute Secretary:</p> <p>GM was nominated and appointed as the Minute Secretary.</p>	
3.	<p>Skills analysis of the group:</p> <p>A survey of the skills of the meeting participants was compiled looking at both individual skills concerning the church activities but also identifying other parishioners who could potentially provide additional expertise and knowledge.</p>	
4.	<p>Purpose of the Joint Parish Pastoral Council and JPPC Core Group:</p> <p>SM presented on what the purpose and tasks of the Parish Council are, namely:</p> <p>A Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a recommended leadership structure in the Church • for priests and people to share responsibility • for building a vibrant parish community that reaches out beyond itself. <p>The purpose of a PPC is to build a Parish Community focused and characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith • Prayer • Hospitality/welcome • Mission • Evangelisation. <p>A Parish Pastoral Council “discerns what is best for the parish, in light of the Gospel, church teaching, diocesan policy, and what the Holy Spirit is saying through the People of God”.</p> <p>The tasks of a PPC involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: Listen to needs, involve community in responding • Faith Development: Enable baptised to discern and use gifts for mission of the parish • Action: Develop structures to effectively use gifts and resources for growth of parish • Communication: Ensure effective dialogue withing the parish, diocese and community • Evaluation: Review life, plans and activities of parish in light of the mission. <p>SM also provided a reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew 28:18-20 to describe the mission of the Church:</p> <p>And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son And of the Holy Spirit,</p>	

	<p>Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’.</p> <p>For future Joint Parish Pastoral Council (JPPC) meetings and in order to help prepare, plan and deliver some aspects to assist the priests, a JPPC Core Group will be established. SM requested that this should comprise of two representatives from each parish and to be communicated to him at the end of the meeting.</p>	<p><i>JPPC Core Group nominees to contact SM</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Parish Review: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, concerns - Group discussion and action planning</p> <p>Following on from the recently published strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and concerns/threats identified in each parish (in 17th May 2026 newsletter and Appendix 1 below), SM initiated a group discussion on the strengths and then the opportunities for growth with a view to generate action plans in due course.</p> <p>Focusing on the strengths in each parish, the first task was to identify something from another parish to discuss more about and better understand. The following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint services with other traditions/faiths (St. Joseph’s) • Freespace- men’s spirituality group where as part of a faith sharing group, a reading is discussed and then the movement in the church is looked for (St. Matthew’s) • Youth ministry, for example, altar serving being a great way to involve youngsters in the Mass by giving them some responsibility and allowing them to be more involved (St. Joseph’s) • Bags of messages with essential supplies available (St. Matthew’s) • Ecumenical activity through the Fellowship of Kilmarnock Churches has a monthly core group meeting as advertised in the newsletter albeit participation from the Catholic parishes has been limited. <p>Regarding the opportunities for growth output from the parishes, the following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth engagement and involvement in the Church in the face of challenges from other distractions and activities • Adult education • Focus on the parents of the children • Lay development and how to coordinate what more can parishioners do to ease pressure on the priests • Solar panels and reducing costs • Collaboration between parishes <p>The potential for holding a bible group for children after school was suggested by LHa and could be developed further with a pilot activity.</p>	<p><i>LHa, MM, MW, AS, KJ to develop an action plan</i></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Adult Education talks:</p> <p>The mission presentations held at St. Matthew’s over previous years were well received and it was agreed that these should be continued. There are four presentations currently available and SM suggested that monthly Adult Education presentations would likely work the best with October 2026 being the target for the first in the series.</p>	

	Volunteers were requested to assist SM in restarting and maintaining the Adult Education activity.	MB, LHa, CB to assist SM
7.	<p>Aeolian Choir- Tuesday 29th September:</p> <p>The choir has been in existence for about 50 years and intimated that they would like to come to St. Joseph's to perform on Tuesday 29th September 2026. They don't request a fee for performing but ask that ticket sales go to benefit good causes. It was agreed that the ticket price would be £10 and proceeds would be split between SVDP, Ecuador Trust and Hillhouse with teas and coffees served in the hall afterwards.</p>	
8.	<p>Update on clergy appointments:</p> <p>SM informed the meeting that there is the potential for an Indian priest to come to the Deanery in August 2026 and be in residence for an initial six months period. If this works well the hope is that Deanery will have a complement of four priests.</p>	
9.	<p>Sunday Mass timetable when fewer priests available:</p> <p>SM discussed the Mass provision and confirmed that with three priests available in the St. Joseph's Deanery, all nine Vigil/Sunday Masses can be covered. With only two priests available due to sickness or annual leave then a reduced number of Vigil/Sunday Masses would only be possible. SM presented a proposal to the meeting and asked if the Council members were in agreement with one Mass in each of the three clusters (Kilmarnock, Hurlford-Galston, Cumnock-Auchinleck-Muirkirk) being suspended. The priests believe it would be helpful to let parishioners know in advance what the agreed arrangement would be in the scenario when only two priests are available for Vigil/Sunday Masses. Following a vote, the Mass provision proposal was agreed by a majority with one opposed and one abstention.</p> <p><i>Following the discussions of other Parish Pastoral Councils in the deanery, and to allow time to know what priestly personnel will be available, it was agreed to postpone this proposal to September for discussion at the Deanery Pastoral Council.</i></p>	
10.	<p>Stewardship (brief overview):</p> <p>SM provided the 2026 Financial Summary at 30th May 2026 for the individual parishes and the overall position for the Kilmarnock Catholic Mission with a breakdown of imminent exceptional expenditure and income.</p> <p>St. Matthew's Youth Hub funds</p> <p>The St. Matthew's Youth Hub funds were highlighted and were generated to employ a youth worker about 3 years ago based at St. Matthew's. As this project was not progressed the question on what to do with the residual funds was raised. SM asked if there was a constitution created for the project and if there was a clause covering what to do if the project was disbanded. This will be checked by St. Matthews' representatives. The Council agreed that if there was a need at St. Matthew's to support youth activities, for example, a pilgrimage, then this is where it should go towards.</p>	St. Matthew's representatives to confirm project details
11.	<p>St. Matthew's 50th anniversary:</p> <p>JG provided a number of suggestions prior to the meeting such as:</p>	

	<p>Apart from Special Masses and Church celebrations, I would possibly organise some concerts starting in January 2027, Loudoun Musical Society, Crossroads Community choir, Aeolian MVC A Burns Evening maybe even a Burns Supper with Entertainment, Songs and Readings Children's Parties Parish Lunches and Dinners. Depending on numbers possibly at St Joseph's Hall.</p> <p>A day trip to Mount Stuart House in Bute with a Mass celebrated on the island was added as a further proposal.</p>	
12.	<p>Fabric matters (brief overview and matters to pass to PFFC): New church boiler in St Joseph's – in hand and installation to take place soon. Restoration of stained glass at St Joseph's – ongoing, grant applications needed. Completion of sacristy extension at St Joseph's. Statue of Our Lady at OLMC in grounds – bricklayer to tidy it up. Upgrade of kitchen at OLMC convent. Restoration of outdoor mosaic at St Matthew's.</p> <p>To include parish review A survey on the condition of buildings across the whole diocese is currently underway. The Kilmarnock estate will be visited on Wednesday 3rd June 2026.</p>	
13.	<p>Social Events/Minibus outings/transport to and from Mass for the infirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intercultural gathering around food <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saint Andrew's Night (now 4th December 2026)- This has been moved from November to 4th December 2026 due to the availability of the entertainer; 2. Mini-bus trips- the 2026 plan has been confirmed and the trips are open to all; 3. Transport to and from Mass for the infirm- the possibility of requesting volunteers for Sunday pick-ups for Sunday Mass was discussed and had a favourable response. A request will be added to the newsletter for volunteers to come forward. However, one important caveat would be a need to inform your car insurer to make sure the charitable/care activity is covered and should be applied with no additional cost anticipated; 4. Intercultural gathering around food- A suggestion from the recent parish surveys to help welcome people into the parish community was to do this through food. A buffet style gathering with food from different places would be a relaxed way to allow people to mix, talk and learn more about each other. A Sunday afternoon after Mass in early November 2026 was thought as a possible time to hold this event. 	
14.	<p>Parish Golf Tournament:</p> <p>A parishioner has proposed to hold a golf tournament for the three parishes at Rowallan Castle. About sixty participants of various expertise could be accommodated and also any non-golfers who wanted to attend could enjoy an afternoon tea in the Glasshouse restaurant adjacent to the course. A request for expressions of interest will be posted in the newsletter.</p>	

15.	<p>Future PPC and JPPC meetings- benefits and improvements:</p> <p>SM requested feedback on the meeting format and if there were any changes needed. It was agreed to continue with the current format for the next JPPC meeting.</p> <p>SM added that there would also be an open-to-all PPC held once per year with all welcome.</p>	
16.	<p>AOCB:</p> <p>CH shared the topics contained in a draft parish survey template that could be developed and potentially sent out to parishioners in the future. It was agreed to leave further discussion of this until the next meeting in November 2026. SM asked if this had been used in other parishes.</p>	<p><i>CH to check if the survey has been used in other parishes</i></p>
	<p>Date and time of next meeting:</p> <p>Next meeting: Tuesday 3rd November 2026 at 6.30 pm in St Joseph's church hall.</p> <p>Opening prayer at next meeting: The Prayer to the Holy Spirit will be used for the meetings in 2026.</p>	

	<p>APPENDIX 1- PARISH ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH, THREATS</p> <p>ST JOSEPH'S PARISH</p> <p>What are the strengths of St Joseph's parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is welcoming • Saint Joseph's has become more of a community • Music as this helps the liturgy and provides a great sense of occasion • Community café • Organ recitals • Pipe organ and people community singing • Car parking availability • Priests • Youth and young adults ministry • Liturgical with Ministry of Eucharistic Ministers going out to visit the sick to allow them to continue to access the Sacraments • The way Mass is celebrated here and its unity with the Universal Church • Choir and congregational singing • Sick being collected in the mini-bus is really worthwhile and allows a sense of community • Tea and coffee after Mass • Priests and Sisters with the level of pastoral care provided can be held as good example • Youth programme • Altar serving • Location of parish- great for accessibility • SSVP and being able to share resources with the wider community • SSVP Foodbank • Daily Mass - we are very fortunate to have this at Saint Joseph's • Live stream of the Mass • The people of Saint Joseph's – considered as family and friends 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote things outside church and at work • Joint services with other traditions/faiths • Church hall – a facility for the parish and other groups • Mass at the cemetery <p>What are the weaknesses of St Joseph’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-communities of attendees at Mass on different weekend days (Saturday 6pm and Sunday 11 am Mass) with little chance to mix • Ageing congregation • Reduced opportunities to attend Mass (not parish specific but more general) • RCIA- when people come into the Church, what happens after the course to help retain them • Attendance at events sees the same people supporting the activity, how can this be opened out to encourage others to attend <p>What are the opportunities for growth in St Joseph’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCIA – developing post-reception programme • Encouraging participation in children’s liturgy • Series of talks / Adult Education / Faith-sharing groups • Could we review the groups which have fallen away? • Are there activities we should suspend in order to focus on more important things? • Demographic in the parish with so many nationalities. Can we do something to recognise and celebrate the different cultures with food, singing and dress to enable them to feel a closer part of our community • Events/rewards for altar servers • Continue to expand youth activities • Sacramental preparation for children to complement what is being done in school plus allow them to mix together • Sacramental preparation for parents requesting baptism of children- have a baptismal group who meet maybe once a month • Benediction on feast days • Youth retreats • Parish retreat and mission <p>What are the threats/concerns for St Joseph’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet/Live stream- if it is a reason not to attend Mass when able to do so • Lack of a certain age group/missing generation seen through their non-attendance at Mass • Apathy • Distractions such as other Sunday activities • Secular society • Shortage of priests, do we need to find more priests or redistribute tasks a priest undertakes to the laity • Priests on a part-time basis and spread too thin • Priests don’t get a level of response on appeals in the newsletter • Ageing estate and when to cut your losses • Amalgamation and possible closure of churches 	
<p>OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH</p> <p>What are the strengths of Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of community 	

- A predominantly retired congregation often brings loyalty, consistency, and deep-rooted relationships within the parish.
- Warmth and welcome of the community.
- Strong and active ministries: music, Children's Liturgy, SVDP, RCIA, Foodbank, visiting the sick, senior club, sacramental preparation.
- Diversity of congregation.

- Established faith foundation
- Longstanding traditions, regular Mass attendance, and committed volunteers help maintain parish stability.

- Shared priest across three parishes
- While challenging, this can foster collaboration and unity between the three Catholic communities in Kilmarnock.

- Youth engagement initiative already underway
- The fact that youth groups are being actively promoted is a major positive signal of forward planning.
- Proximity to Primary School.

- Volunteer availability
- Retired parishioners may have more time to contribute to ministries, events, and parish upkeep.

What are the weaknesses of Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish?

- Ageing congregation
- Heavy reliance on older parishioners raises concerns about long term sustainability.
- Mass attendance.
- Limited pool of young parishioners to enable succession planning for ministries.
- Inability to retain youth beyond Caritas/Secondary Education. Limited active engagement with 30-60 year olds.
- Late Mass time on a Sunday.

- Limited priest availability.
- One priest serving three parishes can lead to:
- Reduced pastoral care
 - Fewer Mass times
 - Burnout/ill health risk/no resilience to cover for ill health
 - Potential resistance to change. Older congregations may be less receptive to new formats of worship or outreach aimed at younger people.

- Limited appeal to younger demographics
- Without consistent youth presence, it can feel less relevant or welcoming to families and young adults.

- Volunteer dependency imbalance
- Over-reliance on a small group of active members can lead to fatigue.

- Finance
- Currently running at a loss.

- Age and fabric of the building places an additional burden on available resources. Limited opportunities to create additional revenue.
- Former imbalance of shared costs between parishes – now resolved.

What are the opportunities for growth in Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish?

- Growth through youth ministries
 - Expanding youth groups, social events, and faith-based activities could build a future congregation and attract families
 - Proximity of Church to Primary School and good relationship with teachers could assist with parent engagement.
- Collaboration across the three parishes. Shared events, resources and ministries could strengthen all communities and reduce duplication.
- Fellowship of churches
 - ecumenical group: OLMC as venue?
- Lay leadership development
 - Training parishioners to take on roles (e.g., liturgy coordination, pastoral support) can ease pressure on the priest.
 - Assist with the development of Adult Faith formation programme.
- Digital engagement with the use of:
 - Social media
 - Livestream Masses
 - Online communication to reach younger people and those unable to attend physically.
- Community outreach
 - Partnerships with local schools, charities, and civic groups in Kilmarnock could raise visibility and relevance.
 - Provision of welcoming spaces for discussion groups, evangelisation, retired priests, a hub for community services/events.
 - Opportunities to engage and evangelize with 30-60 age group through Alpha courses/discussion groups.
 - OLMC is situated in an area of private housing development with potential for evangelisation.

What are the threats/concerns for Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish?

- Declining church attendance (wider trend)
 - Secularisation across Scotland poses a long-term challenge.
- Priest shortage worsening
 - Future availability of clergy may decline further, potentially leading to parish mergers or closures. OLMC Closure.
- Aging volunteer base
 - Loss of key contributors without replacement could weaken parish operations.
- Competition for young people's time

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work, education, and social commitments can make regular attendance less likely. Competition from other churches or community organisations. • Perception challenges - If the parish is seen as “for older people,” it may deter new, younger members. Negative reputational challenges affecting the Catholic Church in general. - ‘Do Nothing’ attitude and we fail to discharge our responsibility as a missionary church. Ongoing secularisation and alleged declining interest in organised religion. - Perceived threat of church closures. - Church not seen as diverse, for example perceived to be unwelcoming for certain social groups, e.g. LGBTQ. Resistance to change involving female clergy for example. • Finance - Rising church maintenance and utility costs. 	
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<p>ST MATTHEW’S PARISH</p> <p>What are the strengths of St Matthew’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive and vibrant– always welcoming, personal. • Strong links with the wider community (Hall) • Singing • In and at the heart of the community. • Growing weekly attendance and ministry involvement. • Long established spirituality which feeds mission. • Willingness of parishioners to be involved. <p>What are the weaknesses of St Matthew’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of developing connection with schools– missed opportunities. • Low number of young people – secondary age and < 25. • Weakness of number of volunteers: always the same faces. • Decline in number of First Communicants. <p>What are the opportunities for growth in St Matthew’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together newsletter. • Sense of openness, transparency, professionalism. • Collaboration between the parishes and movement between is good to see. <p>What are the threats/concerns for St Matthew’s parish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in clergy numbers in Kilmarnock. • Many other concerns around the joining of the parishes’ pastoral care have been addressed and abated. 	
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