

St Clement's Ewell
Open Parish Meeting
7pm on Sunday 22 May 2022

Fr Graham Bamford

Julian Hall Chair

Alvin David (finance team)

Jackie Gill (minutes) and 40 parishioners

Apologies For Absence

Robin & Ann Hannan; Kay Brian; Brian Stone; Gill Strange; Margaret Purcell; Charlotte Gregory; John Strafford; Helena Walker; Ruth Farrell

Opening Prayer and Welcome

Brief Introduction related to The Sycamore Course & Synod meetings. Reflecting on the discussions and ideas that arose from these experiences.

Fr Graham - Thanks:

- **Veronica Herbert** RIP - Sacristan, a dedicated volunteer providing support behind the scenes for so many.
- **Mary Schneider** Due to an ongoing illness (last 2 years), now living with her daughter in Sussex - proposal to have a card for Parishioners to sign. Thanks for all her work seen and unseen.
- **Sylvia Fitzgerald** RIP for her work in RCIA and in Ecumenism.

A Review of the activities and the volunteers that provide support.

- Do the current volunteers need more support and are there new potential volunteers?
- People may be put off as they do not know extent of time commitment and responsibility in any role.

Treasurer - Louis Pelosi has been the Treasurer for the Church for over 20 years, organising the money and submitting the accounts very promptly to A&B each year. Louis is aware of need for changes driven by the A&B online accounting system. **Josephine David** has very kindly agreed to put time aside to understudy with Louis's assistance in order to take over the accounting and to use the online system. A big thank you to Josephine for volunteering to take on this very importance administrative role.

Thanks to Louis for his many years of service.

Baptisms - Catherine & Nigel Philips No issues to report. Around 15 – 20 per year. An observation raised was that it is a pity when the children's liturgy removes them from the Mass service on the very rare times when there is a baptism during Mass – It was agreed, when possible, it would be good for them to be present.

Communion Preparation - Dympna Higgins - New volunteers required, ideally new mums and dads could provide valued input in the sessions. Father Graham said that some Parishes now have parents present with children in sessions as parents are the 1st teachers of children in way of faith. **Mark Schembri volunteered** to help 1st communion preparation. Parents think it is a job for catechists and special training is needed. Schools should provide back up. **Ahu Guray** is also willing to assist. Learn by doing is allowed!

First Communion Programme - thanks to **Pauline Groves** for 35 years of volunteer work.

Proclaimers - Tracey Silvestro organises the various rotas for the Masses. There are plenty of volunteers for reading, with new volunteers coming forward. Go forward the readings are to be shared to get more people involved. We are keen to encourage young people to read.

It was agreed that '**training**' could be arranged to get a feel for the lectionary and the mechanics of the microphones. Tracy agreed to organise a session. This will assist with the audio in the Church which can be a problem. Some people in church cannot always hear the readings.

The poor sound quality in the Church and online is under review with the assistance of **Mark McLoughlin, Rod Artiss. Brian Stone** who met with the treasurer of a local Methodist church to discuss the technicalities and funding requirements. A budget is to be established.

Altar Servers and Bidding Prayers - post COVID volunteers are needed, another opportunity for young people to be actively involved in the Masses.

Children's liturgy. Tammy needs more helpers with 40+ children to deliver faith-based activity. She needs support from the wider community as young parents also working full time.

Adult formation - John Farrell Sycamore group organised on Zoom. This is an effective group discussion with 30+ people exploring aspects of faith in a confidential setting. Ongoing information is needed to involve a wider group.

Synodal process - Pauline Groves advised that this was the first time in history for lay people to be involved. There is interest in forming a group to consider how to translate and apply it to this parish.

Create committee for the future - Linked with the discussions on adult formation and the desire for groups to continue to meet following on from Sycamore and Synod discussions.

Andrew Perks offered to draw up a proposal to help with the functions and roles within the Parish supported by a 'Parish Committee'. The proposal is to be presented to Father Graham.

Volunteer for Ecumenism - Tina O Connor agreed to assist.

Book stall and library. The church has a good library with access to all.

Website editor - John Lodge - John advised that the website is very flexible and can be edited for many causes and messages to Parishioners. He feels that the website is possibly under used at the moment

Jackie Gill is willing to lead a group in the autumn for 'Living faith'.

Administration questions were raised about the need for a **paid parish administrator** to support Fr Graham. At present Lesley Squibb volunteers in assisting Fr Graham in the many tasks that go un-noticed and yet are fundamental to the day-to-day running of the Parish.

- What is covered by administration that needs to be drawn together.

- What needs to be paid and what is voluntary?

Fr Graham - will be resigning early 2023 in accordance with Cannon Law 538 but with the bishop's blessing Father would agree to continue. Fr Graham advised that he was unsure as to what will happen. Fr Graham explained that in the future there will be a reorganisation of various Parishes. A 'Cluster' plan has been considered whereby several Parishes may be supported by just one priest.

Parish data - John Lodge provides access to an online registration and Lesley Squibb assists with the Office registration list. Data protection guidelines must be adhered to in order to

access the information for communications. **Parish registration forms** are available for all new parishioners. The forms are to be updated in accordance with data protection requirements. The need for improved email communications was requested by **Ahu Guray**.

The 200 Club and Gift Aid systems maintain data protected registration systems.

Finance - Alvin David - provided updated figures. Whilst not in debt a 'sink fund' must be maintained to address large costs that can arise from time to time. A recent Legacy received does in effect create an artificial financial landscape. Net of the legacy the donations received cover ongoing costs but will need to be supported by fund raising to address potential large costs.

Covid has impacted donations which have been down by almost 30 %. Fr Graham acknowledged that the ongoing pressures due to the increased cost of living puts further pressure on many Parishioners ability to donate.

Fundraising – Rod O'Connor offered support. Need to get people involved using all tools available - Online website/ Newsletters / from the Altar/ Church notice board.

It was agreed St Clements cannot be on the 'back foot' when planning for the future. Ewell Parish would act in partnership with St Joseph's, Epsom, if a 'Cluster' was formed.

The Open Parish Meeting was arranged in order to discuss planning for the future.

Next Open Parish Meeting proposed for Sunday 7pm 25th September 22