

Our Lady of the Annunciation, Addiscombe

Minutes of the Parish AGM

Wednesday 10 May 2023

Fr Keith opened the meeting with a prayer:

He then briefly summarised the past year in our parish and our current challenges. The main points mentioned included:

- Our attendance numbers are still down by about 200
- Financially we are just about managing weekly budgeting
- Spiritually we are in a good place with very faithful laity
- We are a healthy parish with many involved in parish life, although some of our groups are facing financial and leadership continuity challenges
- We have many issues with the parish site including aging plant, church ceiling, heating problems etc.. which will be a financial burden
- The Diocese is presenting us with ever increasing financial challenges

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved, and the following matters arising were reported:

- The PPC, approved last year, is operational. A list of current members is posted in the church porch.
- The Zoom subscription for meetings was bought and is available.
- The hall has had an air source heat pump system installed - a much greener system, but it has had some technical issues which are being resolved.
- The 'Live Simply' group is up and running.
- The issue regarding John Fisher School and the author is an ongoing and 'messy' situation. Fr Keith also stated that other schools also have problems to be resolved and lots of prayer will be needed.

Fr Keith then led the discussion about the Parish Financial Statement for year ending 31st December 2022 which had been previously published. He pointed out that we had more or less broken even, but that was in a year with little major expenditure. Arthur Hughes reinforced this by pointing out that £46k was spent on repair works (mostly to no.14) in 2021 with nothing needed in 2022. The next few years will necessarily require much more outlay for repairs and major updates around the site, so we will need to ensure income is generated to support this. The Finance Committee and the PPC will obviously regularly monitor and discuss developments to assist Fr Keith in the difficult decisions that will need to be made.

Income from hall lettings was then discussed. Fr Keith pointed out that there were very few opportunities for ad hoc lets because there are now so many groups with regular bookings. Parish groups have free use of the hall. General hire fees charged and some subsidies to other groups will be kept under review. Fr Keith pointed out that having some outside groups using the hall makes us more outward looking. The suggestion of having disco nights will be considered.

It may be beneficial to re-form a halls committee to manage this going forward. We might also need to consider employing a suitable caretaker - but, of course, this would be an added expense.

Other Matters:

The round tables in the small hall are sturdy but they are very heavy and therefore difficult to move and set up. From a health and safety point of view they may need to be replaced.

There is an incident book which is kept in the office. All incidents should be reported and recorded via the office either directly or by using email when the office is closed. It was reported that all of the required actions from previous incidents had now been fully implemented.

We now have two defibrillators available. The cabinets are left unlocked for quick access. When needed, the units provide clear step by step instructions to the user and have been designed to be used by anyone. Consideration will need to be given to how they can be accessed 'out-of-hours', and also to maybe having a demonstration of a unit for those less confident.

Fr Keith stated that the process for DBS certification has been clarified and simplified. New applicants are now being processed and renewals will be dealt with in an ongoing process.

Fire safety needs to be revisited with a refresher course for fire wardens, and out of date extinguishers being renewed (maybe using the old ones for training).

Fr Keith pointed out that the effects of the pandemic closure are receding and we have re-established many committees and groups, there are still lots more yet to be restarted. All parishioners should consider what their talents could contribute to our parish.

The issue of adult education and ongoing formation was raised. There are some groups working towards this at the moment such as the Ascent group, RCIA etc.. and there have been 'one off' talks on various topics, but more is needed. It was suggested that we might do something like the ALPHA course - but with a more sacramental bias. Consideration would be given to possible informal discussion group(s) looking at the church today and the issues and challenges of modern times.

Church cleaning teams have changed and need to be re-organised as they have become rather ad hoc. Details of current members need to be confirmed, new members will be sought, and timings of cleaning sessions updated.

Arthur Hughes suggested we ensure the chairs for these meetings are arranged in the horseshoe formation that has been successful in the past.

Fr Keith closed this formal part of the AGM with a prayer.

The second part of the meeting was scheduled as an informal session allowing parishioners to find out more about the various groups operating in the parish and perhaps join with them or expand the range. Since the vast majority of those present were the representatives of the groups, most of the discussions centred around their achievements, plans and inter-group support.

The date of the next parish AGM will be set and published in the Spring.