

Minutes of the AGM, St. Mary's Star of the Sea, Parish Pastoral Council, 15th November 2017

The meeting was chaired by Janet Daly. The minutes were kept by Thomas Moran.

Chairperson Daly opened the meeting with a welcome, introductions of the PPC members, and a prayer. Ms. Daly determined that, with the seating arrangement, all attendees could hear and be heard.

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were presented to the meeting by Ms. Daly. She responded to questions from the attendees. Following a discussion, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the minutes were approved as presented.

Chairperson's Report. Ms. Daly delivered her Chairperson's report regarding activities in the Parish, and by the PPC, over the past year. She thanked the outgoing PPC members for their service. She discussed the Church webcam, young adult film nights, the new AED installation, the Church's method of distributing written material, events at the Feast of Corpus Christi, Fr Cormac's welcome to the Parish, the passing of Frs Murnaghan and Coleman, the Mass schedule change earlier in the year, the upcoming World Meeting of Families, and other matters. She thanked many of the Church volunteers by name and position for their service during the year.

Parish Priest's Report. Fr John delivered his Parish Priest's report. He covered several issues including, among others: the state of the Priesthood in Ireland; remembrance of Frs Martin and Padraig; thank you messages to the PPC and other volunteers; time demands placed on the PP (marriage preparation and other tasks); delegation of assignments by the PP; new and complex State regulations covering the work of the Church and charities; various Parish administration matters; his own focus on evangelization; the need for infrastructure improvements in the Church, including to the lighting system; and difficulties in identifying a baptism team. Fr John issued his own thanks to several of the volunteers and organizations associated with St. Mary's.

AED Update. Thomas Moran provided an update on the effort to purchase and install an AED for the Church. He reported that the AED cabinet had been installed that morning, and that the key to the locking cabinet would be maintained inside the second confessional. He reported on the upcoming volunteer training effort, and responded to several questions about the AED.

In the absence of Anngret Sims, Ms. Daly reported on ecumenical outreach.

Child Safeguarding. Elma Holohan delivered a report on child safeguarding. She discussed a new Garda vetting procedure which has resulted in some volunteers being required to be screened multiple times if they are involved in multiple volunteer activities – in particular with different organizations. Ms. Holohan described the typical vetting procedure, and then responded to questions from the attendees. Ms. Daly thanked Ms. Holohan for her several years of service to the Church on child safeguarding.

Financial Report. Tadhg Twomey delivered a Financial Report. He described how the Archdiocese is now subject to the Charities Act 2009 which has resulted in significant changes in how the Archdiocese and parishes prepare annual financial statements. He described the common accounting platform now in place. He said that the combined Parish accounts for 2016 had been audited by Price Waterhouse with submissions made to the Charities Regulator. Mr. Twomey summarized the Parish financial position by saying that income generally met expenditures in 2016, but that there is no scope to meet unexpected contingencies. The level of income is falling in line with a drop in regular Church attendance. He detailed income, costs and the balance sheet. He concluded by saying that the finances are stable, but that revenue generation will need to increase over the coming years in order to cover maintenance, unexpected events, and other items. Fr John again mentioned the need for upgrades to lighting in the Church, and, following a robust discussion of this and other maintenance issues, there was general agreement that an investment in the upgrade of Church lighting should be made. Mr. Twomey and Fr John responded to questions from the attendees about the Financial Report and Church financial matters.

Open Question Period. Ms. Daly, Fr John, and other members of the PPC responded to several questions from the attendees. Among other things, they addressed: efforts to generate goodwill in the community; the Church lighting and video systems; a proposal to “spruce up” the weekly bulletin and the AGM; suggestions for an email notification system to interested parishioners; a suggestion that the Dublin Diocese should offer more resources to its parishes; suggestions that the website contain short updates “blog style;” and other matters.

Amendment to PPC Guidelines. Mr. Moran said that a suggestion was made earlier in the year to amend the PPC Guidelines to provide for majority voting for PPC members in the event that the number of nominees does not exceed the number of open spaces on the Council. He described proposed changes to Section 7 of the Guidelines that had been distributed to the attendees, and posted on the website, in advance of the meeting. Mr. Moran discussed the practical impact of the changes, and described the procedure for amending the Guidelines at the AGM. Following a discussion, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried by the attendees, the PPC Guidelines were amended as presented at the meeting. Ms. Daly said that the revised Guidelines would be immediately posted on the website.

Election of New PPC Member. Ms. Daly said that there was one nominee for the PPC to be considered at the AGM. She introduced Veronica Lyons, who in turn described herself and stated her reasons for wanting to serve on the PPC. Ballots were distributed to all in attendance. Following their completion and return to Karen Hickey of the PPC, the ballots were tallied and the results were announced to the meeting. Ms. Lyons was elected to the PPC for a three-year term.

Ms. Daly announced that the meeting was concluded, and Fr John led the group in a closing prayer – the prayer chosen for the 2018 World Meeting of Families. The meeting was followed by tea and a social gathering.