

Parish of St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 20th November 2019

Chairperson Joseph McNamara opened the meeting with a prayer and welcomed those in attendance. He introduced the members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were put to the meeting and were approved as presented.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Joseph McNamara gave his Chairman's report on the activities of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) during the year. These included Advent prayers in November/December, Christmas Carols and a hospitality reception in the Hall after the Carols, PPC members greeting people as they arrived for Christmas Masses, a pre-Lenten Pancake Sunday celebration after 12.00 Mass, Lenten prayers, occasional Social coffee after 12.00 Mass, the Easter Morning Dawn Ecumenical Service and the Corpus Christi procession onto the lawn. Parishioners were also encouraged to share personal reflections on the meaning of Mission Sunday, these were displayed at the back of the church.

The PPC recognised the vital importance of the contribution made by the many volunteers who give their time to the Parish and supports and thanks them. These include the choirs, in particular the Family Mass, the sacristans, the Eucharistic Ministers, the Mass Collectors, the Church cleaners, the people who open and close the church, the Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary, the organisers of the Golf Classic and the assistance of Mary in the Parish office.

The PPC continued adhering to the new data protection guidelines to conform with General Data Protection Regulation(GDPR).

PARISH PRIEST'S REPORT: Father John delivered the Parish Priest's Report.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING: Elma Holohan presented a report on child safeguarding.

The Annual Parish safeguarding Audit form was received in mid-January and was completed and returned before March 31st as required by NBSCCCI.

Areas highlighted for consideration were assessing our training needs, updating the children's code of conduct, and preparing lists of all the Parish volunteers and a list of all those who have been Garda vetted.

On the 28th May 2019 a parish training evening was delivered by Gerry Kehoe. Forty-one volunteers attended. Training for Parish volunteers will be under constant review.

Garda vetting procedures continue to be a challenge and are repeated every three to five years.

September 22nd was designated as Diocesan Child safeguarding Sunday. A short address on safeguarding was given at all the Saturday and Sunday Masses. Elma also met with parents

of the children in the choir after the 10.30 Mass to encourage more parental support for Deirdre.

Elma thanked everyone concerned for their support with Safeguarding activities and can be reached through the Parish office for any questions.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Gearoid Byrne presented the financial report for the year ended 31st December 2018.

In the year revenues exceeded expenditure (before depreciation) by €108,206 in 2018. A catch up in tax refunds of €71,832 was a major factor along with some 'one off' donations. The level of income generated is a cause of concern and continues to fall in line with a reduced number of people attending church on a regular basis. The parish cost base is reasonable and internal controls on spending are strong.

Income for the year at €258,000 was significantly higher due to tax refunds. The annual golf classic raised €14,000 (net of costs).

Costs at €158,000 (before depreciation) for 2018 were reasonable. There were no significant repairs during the year. Staff costs including music expenses are in line with expectations. There was a one off payment to the Archdiocese of €6,800 in relation to IT systems.

There was minimal capital outlay during the year.

The parish has €527,068 in current and long term deposit accounts which earns minimum interest.

To conclude, Gearoid said parish finances are stable but revenue generation will have to increase substantially over the coming years. The changing nature of parish life in the context of pastoral workers/lay interaction will also require a significant level of funding in the future.

ELECTION OF NEW PPC MEMBERS: Joe again thanked the outgoing PPC members and expressed regret that such a significant number were retiring at once. Only two nominees were received for the five vacancies on the Council. After a brief self-introduction and in accordance with the procedure set out in the PPC Guidelines, a ballot was held and both were unanimously elected to the council. The new members are: Mary Murphy and Ann Bacon.

Both were warmly welcomed.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION:

A number of matters were raised for query and discussion throughout the duration of the meeting – these included:

- A prior suggestion was re-addressed from the 2018 AGM, which referred to the idea of a doorway collection at the church in addition to the normal basket collections. It was specified that this additional collection should be monthly - not occasional - as in the tradition of the VDP and others.
- The practice of children continuing to go in or out of the sacristy unaccompanied was noted, and the suggestion of someone to monitor this activity was raised. This to protect the priests from possible allegations. It was subsequently suggested that the CCTV coverage in operation was sufficient to this end.
- The matter of communication both from PPC and as regards the Parish liaising with Parishioners in general, was felt to be insufficient. More addressing and speaking from the alter was suggested. An opportunity was missed, it was felt, when no member of the PPC spoke at Sunday Mass about their personal role or commitment or the satisfaction gained from same.

The AGM was closed with a prayer by Father John.