

Minutes of P.P.C. A.G.M. 30th October 2013

Held in Star of the Sea School Hall at 7.30 pm

1. The meeting was opened with a welcome and introduction by Chairperson, Finian Loftus, followed by a prayer led by Fr. John McDonagh.
The Minutes of the 2012 AGM were read by the Secretary, approved by Tony Reid and seconded by Eleanor McClorey.

Follow-up:

A number of people present were unhappy that they only received the minutes at the meeting and requested that copies of the minutes be made available in a few weeks time and also a few weeks prior to the next AGM. It was agreed to put them on the parish website and have hard copies available in the Parish office. Notification will be put in the bulletin when they are available.

2. Chairperson's Report:

My report this evening covers the period from May 2012 to October 2013. In my report as Chair I am going to go through

- the changes in membership and transitions we have been through since our last AGM in May 2012
- the work of the child protection sub group
- the work of the communications sub group
- the ongoing programme of work that the incoming Council will need to progress as we go forward into 2014

Council Membership and Transitions

This AGM should have been held in May but due to a significant reduction in Council members for a variety of reasons together with Fr Peter O Connor's transfer to Malahide parish the Council decided to postpone the AGM to the autumn.

The current PP Council was convened in May 2012 with the election of one new member Martin Sheridan. Liam Daly, Peter Dunn, Jonathan Escott, Anne Evers, Finian Loftus, Gavin McGrath and Eleanor Devitt remained on the Council. Elizabeth Rowlette resigned from the Council and we extend our thanks to Elizabeth for the work she performed during her time on the Council. The last 18 months period was a challenge as two chairpersons Eleanor Devitt and Gavin Mc Grath resigned. Council members Martin Sheridan and Jonathan Escott also resigned – Martin for personal reasons and Jonathan because he no longer resided in the parish.

In February 2013 as I mentioned Fr. Peter O'Connor was transferred to Malahide. Fr. Martin Murnahan was transferred into the parish and is now a member of the Council. We wish to formally welcome Fr. Martin who has made a strong contribution to the parish since he arrived in March.

Also in March the Council hosted a celebratory liturgy and parish social to mark Fr. Peter's contribution to Star of the Sea and at the social he was presented with a striking photograph of the church in wintertime, under snow, together with a generous donation from parishioners as a mark of their appreciation for Fr. Peter's work during his years with us.

On behalf of the Council I would particularly like to thank Deirdre Seaver, Mary O'Neill, Phil Keogan, Peter Delany, Anne Keating, Eamon Mc Ginley and the parishioners for their contribution to the success of the celebration. On the occasion of this AGM we wished Fr. Peter every success in his Malahide parish. In September 2013, just last month, I was elected as chairperson of the Parish Council and my first task has been to convene this annual general meeting. I am delighted that at this AGM we have six nominations to the council which means we will have a strong Council with close to a full complement of members going forward.

I now want to report on the work of our two sub-committees – child safeguarding and communications

1. *Child Safeguarding subcommittee:*
Parish Representative – Dr Liam Daly

There were a number of policy updates during this period as follows:

- Sinead Mc Connell, Deputy Child Protection Officer for the Diocese was added to the policy
- The title of the policy was amended from Child Protection to Child Safeguarding
- There was a reference added at the end of the policy highlighting the Diocesan Policy
- An Appendix was added to include all applicable forms used within the parish for consents, Code of Conduct, Volunteer Application, etc.
- Work was done on incorporating the Choir Membership form with the Parental Consent form.

Garda Vetting

The following areas were focused on for completion of Garda Vetting forms:

Eucharistic Ministers

Gospel Choir

Adult Choir

Musicians

Basket Collectors/Volunteer Sacristans

Legion of Mary members

Parish Pastoral Council

Regarding the Children's Choir

- Elma Holohan met with some parents on Monday, 9th September, 2013 and a number of parents agreed to be included on a rota to attend the monthly choir rehearsals. Garda Vetting forms were distributed to them after the 10.30 mass the following Sunday. Some have been returned.

Regarding Altar Servers

- Elma Holohan and Kathy Etchingham attended an altar server Training course on Saturday 20th October, 2012
- There is a sign in book for altar servers, when servers are available to serve mass

It has been agreed

- That a notice be included in the Parish Bulletin notifying parishioners that the Child Safeguarding Policy is available from the Parish Office.
- That a note be included in the Parish Bulletin that parents must accompany small children to the toilet
- That a sign be placed in the church alerting parents to the fact that they must accompany children to the toilet
- That a child safeguarding notice referring to our Parish policy is publicly displayed in the church

2. Communication subcommittee:

Parish Representative: Finian Loftus

A meeting was held on 30th July 2012. Two matters – the church notice boards and the newsletter came to the fore. Due to practicalities, changes to the church notice-boards were not progressed.

At **its** meeting in September 2012 the parish council agreed that a parish website, which had been flagged on several occasions over a number of years by various parishioners, was a key priority for the Council. The following work was undertaken to progress the website:

- Researching different website formats
- Finding a reputable firm to develop the website

- Deciding on relevant material
- Liaising with website designer and with parishioner Eamon Sweeney who has expertise in this field
- Sourcing material from the various parish liturgy groups and
- Reviewing the work as it progressed

The website went live less than a week ago on Friday October 26th - a significant achievement by those who contributed to setting it up in particular Eamon Sweeney, Deirdre Seaver and Mary O'Neill. Our thanks also to Janet Daly a parishioner who has volunteered and has been trained in updating the website

Work of the Council going forward:

A number of recommendations have been made by the outgoing PPC to the incoming committee regarding the Council's programme of work. These include:

- Working to develop a new structure which has worked in other parishes where an Operational Committee takes charge of the practical functioning of the parish and the Pastoral Council concentrates on attending to the pastoral and liturgical life of the parish
- Within that new structure to develop a Baptism Team
- To look at sustainable ways of engaging lay people in the pastoral life of the parish and in particular to look at the involvement of young people
- Ongoing training in website updating and the development of the website
- A programme of Radharc films which will be made available for parish viewing by parishioner and Council member Peter Dunn.

As chair of the council I would like to take this opportunity to thank our priests Fr John, Fr Martin and Fr.Peter for their support during this period – both their spiritual support and the time and work they put into our Parish. I wish to thank our Parish Secretary Mary O'Neill for the help she provides to the Parish Council.

I would also like to thank you the parishioners for your input into the church community whether as a Eucharistic Minister, a musician or choir member, church Collectors/Volunteer Sacristans, Legion of Mary members who run the Church Bookshop, the rotas of cleaners and flower arrangers and any other valuable services provided to the parish. I particularly want to thank my fellow council members who have given so generously of their time and experience over the last eighteen months. Thank-you.

Last time 7mths from previous AGM, this time 17months have elapsed. Within a few week's of the last AGM on 23rd May 2012, the Eucharistic Congress was held at the RDS, with the closing ceremony in Croke Park. I thank all who entered with enthusiasm into the spirit of that week and a very effective sub-committee of the PPC who facilitated our participation very well. Their visiting homes in the parish with the Eucharistic Congress Candle in weeks leading to June 10th-17th was very much appreciated. A highlight of our week in the parish was that we were host parish to pilgrims from Slovakia. With their bishop, Bishop Galen- from NE Slovakia, close to the Polish border, about 60 pilgrims gathered each morning for Mass followed by Benediction, before they made their way to the conferences and prayer gatherings at Ballsbridge. A special word of thanks goes to Paddy Kavanagh who collected the Bishop each morning from his hotel. Seminarians, including some due to be ordained the following week in Slovakia, travelled with their priest professors from Maynooth each morning and were joined here by laypeople who stayed with volunteer families along the dart line. The pilgrims were very appreciative of the refreshments provided after Mass on the Monday morning of Congress week. The altar was beautifully decorated with a garden in the Slovakian colours-much appreciated. Their closing Mass on Saturday afternoon was attended by Slovak families, who travelled from all over the country, and the Slovak folk group provided very lovely liturgical music. At the end of Mass, we gathered on the lawn, where Bishop Galen planted a fine mountain ash, procured for us by Martin Sheridan, newly elected to the Council at the last AGM, from the National Tree Council. All present, including the Slovakian ambassador and his wife were very appreciative. Earlier that week, after the Wednesday Eucharistic procession, which a large group from the parish attended, there was a social evening with our guests at Crowe's Pub across the road and we thank again the Crowe family who entered so well into creating such an occasion for our visitors. The closing ceremony in Croke Park was a very memorable liturgy for all who attended.

'What you believe is important but even more important is the One in whom you believe.' On Oct 11th the Year of Faith began and continues until three weeks from next Sunday, Nov 24th. We provided parishioners with opportunity to join in the English programme, based in the Birmingham Archdiocese, entitled 'Doorway to Faith', a four part series matching the four sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published in 1994 and the youth version 'Youcat', published in 2010. It involved daily readings, reflections and prayers based on a journey through the four sections of the Catechism. A proposed Fun Day for Sept was deferred to June next, although the approval of the Finance Committee was given in August.

Eucharistic Liturgy is the 'source and the summit' of the Christian Life. Our thanks to everyone, who in any way contributes to the liturgical gatherings, especially at weekends. Our estimated attendance is down as 14.7%. Difficulties are presented by the increasing reality of children's sport commitments on Sunday mornings. We're delighted with the progress of the choir at the Family Mass.

Sometimes the critical developments in a parish come from outside the parish rather than from within. I'd instance two that touch on our situation.

The first is in the historic development of Pope Benedict's resignation from Papal Office last February and the election of his successor, Pope Francis, in March. The Second Vatican Council taught that the Church would always be in need of reform. It is to be expected that a change of papacy can be an occasion for a fresh address of the reform challenge. So far, the Pope from South America seems to be bringing a fresh impetus to the life of the church that will hopefully help us all even down to parish level. With one seminarian entering Maynooth for the Dublin Diocese this year and a total of 8 seminarians preparing to serve us in the Dublin Diocese, parish life and diocesan life will necessarily be different into the future.

The second is a 'word on the wind' that a sixteen teacher school is planned for Sandymount, which will be a non-denominational Educate Together School. There has been no communication with the existing schools in the parish on this proposal and the first I heard of it was in a flyer from one of our local Labour Councillors, a couple of weeks ago. In the event of Catholic boys and girls attending, it will directly impact on enrolments in our Catholic Schools but it will also oblige us to provide after school classes for children whose parents wish them to receive the sacraments. In America, this is a major undertaking at parish level-providing classes at night for all school grades up to Confirmation age. It is also likely to prove costly, a cost which we will have to ask the parents concerned to carry.

I wish to thank the members of the Parish Pastoral Council for their generous service of us all.

Eleanor Devitt, who was chairperson until her retirement from the Pastoral Council on 12 Dec last after 4 years on the Pastoral Council.

Gavin Mc Grath who retired on Sept 16th because of job promotion to a London office at the end of summer.

Finian Loftus, who kindly took the reins of the chairperson temporarily on Sept 16th.

Anne Evers, our secretary

Liam Daly, our liaison member with the Child Safeguarding Committee and the Child Safeguarding Representative Elma Holohan

Peter Dunne

Jonathan Escott, who liaised with the Finance Committee, and retired last month because of his move to another parish

Martin Sheridan who retired because of illness. We're delighted that Martin has made so good a recovery and with gratitude for his commitment over a short time with us, we wish him well into the future.

All four of our present committee were elected in Nov 2011.

Thanks also to members of the Parish Finance Committee

Peter Delaney, chairperson.

Tadhgh Twomey

Deirdre Mc Grath

Bob Harewood

Fr Martin Murnaghan

Fr John Mc Donagh

Fr Peter O'Connor -up to 7 months ago, when Fr Martin arrived.

3. Financial Report :

Parish of St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Sandymount		
Accounts 1st July 2012 to 30th June 2013		
Parish Management Account		
<u>INCOME</u>	2013 2012 - 2013	2012 2011 - 2012
	€	€
Family Offering (standing orders and envelopes)	56,879	64,079
Tax Rebate (traceable donations over €250)	11,931	15,640
Donations (Bequests, funerals, weddings, baptisms)	15,325	17,303
Shrines	36,477	36,767
Other (Bank Interest, Rent, Bookshop, certificates)	11,216	9,821
Fundraising (Golf, Bingo, Sale of Work)	<u>11,409</u>	<u>8,119</u>
	143,237	151,729
	€	€
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Wages, Fees, PAYE, PRSI	61,972	62,922
Heat / Light	18,065	16,156
Altar Supplies	5,986	7,632
Maintenance	34,193	12,350
Stationery, Phone, Post	8,751	6,241
Bank charges	1,492	1,437
Insurance	6,925	6,287
Other (Parish Pastoral Council expenses, Confirmation expenses, Training Day for child protection, Church Music Licence, Gospel Choir, Deanery expenses, sundry functions)	<u>4,536</u>	<u>6,573</u>
	141,920	119,598
Surplus	1,317	32,131
Transfer to Capital Reserve Account	1,317	32,131
	30th June '13	30th June '12
Capital Reserve Account	€	€
Reserve for future needs	362,247	360,930
	2012 - 2013	2011 - 2012
Dues and Sunday Collections	€	€
Common Fund		
First Collection	110,733	115,611
Christmas and Easter Dues	80,212	86,213
funerals, weddings, baptisms	<u>5,210</u>	<u>4,336</u>
	196,155	206,160
	€	€
Share and other Collections		
Share Collections	71,709	73,409
Other Collections (Peter's Pence, Crosscare, Accord, CYC, St. V.de P., Trocaire, Vocations, Missions, Eucharistic Congress)	34,443	56,251

Follow-up:

Peter Delaney gave an analysis of the financial statement and recommended that any further queries on it should be made to Mary O'Neill, parish secretary. He will then collect them and try to respond to them. Some general observations made were that there was a reduction in income, including that of the priests, which is down by 35%. However, changes to tax relief on self employed contributions > €250 would now go to the parish also. Fr. John explained that overall costs had increased. Heating in particular had increased significantly.

Suggestions:

- To look at having a budget
- That the diocesan office negotiate better discount rates.
- That a box be put in the church for the upkeep of the church. Fr. John said it would present a security risk
- Need to pull in wider community
- Sale of Work needs to be better supported by all incl. PPC members
- Get more collectors for the contribution envelopes (Catherine O'Reilly offered her services for this)
- Encourage more contributions via standing orders and direct debits

4. Appointment of new Council Members :

Six new members were elected to the Pastoral Council. They are: Deirdre Farrell, Philomena Keogan, Treasa McInerney, Gearoid Byrne, Gerard Hession and Fran Reid.

Finian proposed that they all be elected and welcomed them to the Pastoral Council.

Open Discussion:

After a short break for reflection in small groups, contributions were very positive and constructive as follows:

- Are parishioners doing enough for the Parish
- Has the church enough Ministers of the Word, Ministers of the Eucharist, collectors and altar servers
- Are the priests secure when locking up the church
- Should a defibrillator be available in the church
- Should there be a mass specifically for the African community

- Mass times, priests telephone numbers should be included on the bulletin
- Parish Bulletin should be put on the Church notice boards.
- Carry out a survey on what parishioners want
- Other churches hold a 'Sunday Sausage Service'. Would it be possible to hold something similar
- Parish bulletin should be in colour maybe at Christmas /Easter etc.
- Sign for toilet should be put on side door of Church
- Sub-committee needed for upkeep of Church problems with lighting, transepts, loose tiles, side door glass not matching, cement on front of Church etc.
- Webcam is needed for people abroad.
- CCTV needed and more frequent meetings
- PPC should explore the possibility of having women deacons
- Asked to remember Joan Murray who did so much for the Parish

Fr John was thanked for his involvement in Ecumenical work

Finian thanked all for attending and for their contribution to the meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Refreshments were then served