

**Parish of St. Helen's Ongar & St. Margaret's Doddinghurst
General Meeting (AGM) of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)
Date and time: 16th February 2021: 18:30 to 20:00**

Present

1. Father Emile **FE**
2. Bessem Njopa-Kaba **BNK**
3. Chloe Rowles **CR**
4. Margaret 'Peggy' Maxwell **MPM**- Safeguarding Rep
5. Anne Robertson **AR**
6. Denise Terry Roberts **DTR**
7. Bernie Wrobel **BW**
8. Christine Easter **CE**
9. Elaine D'Onofrio **EO**
10. Patrick Maher **PM**

Agenda 1: Apologies

No apologies- everyone was present.

Secretary

Parish Administrator, BNK was present to take minutes.

Agenda 2: Welcome and Opening Prayer

Meeting started on time. We are all getting so much better with the modern technology. Bravo! CR chaired as BW has a sore voice. FE gave us our opening prayer.

AGM 4: Minutes of previous meeting

These were shared electronically in November. No issues arising. Ongoing issues about the keys and the finance report.

AGM 5: Adoption of updated constitution

CE picked out a clarification about meetings on the constitution section 6 part d. This has now been amended and sent out by BW. CE wanted confirmation that this will be put on the website. All agreed on adoption of constitution. BNK will publish on the website. This is in line with the constitution.

AGM 6: Health and Safety update – Both sites:

- A. St Margaret: Russell- the new H&S rep has sent a report to BW. A few outstanding issues. One is regarding the flat roof inspection every 3 years which is overdue and also mature tree assessment. CR will forward a contact to Russell. He will need to get three quotes to show they are competitive. Happy the boiler is sorted out.
- B. St Helen: Still has no official rep as no one has volunteered for this yet. BW and Stan have picked up the reigns and tried to deal with all the urgent issues. Gas certificate has now been done- well done BW for auctioning this so well. Church opened safely in line with Covid measures. There are now weekly checks at St Helen including utility area. Monthly checks also actioned, which are more detailed including Fire and evacuation procedures. Done regularly by BW and Charlette. Some issues in the presbytery which will be looked into by BW regarding Fire and smoke alarms. Outside there is a light which needs attending to.
FE brought up a general unhappiness with the state of the presbytery- no double glazing, a leaking bathroom issue etc. Mark Leverton has assisted in small odd jobs but major work needs to be carried out. FE said he is the one living in the Presbytery and knows how badly the repairs are needed. He has had Mark Leverton and Joseph Gapasin both in their professional capacity have looked at signs of humidity in the living room and upstairs where a big hole has been seen. Upstairs FE uses the electric heater which was purchased for the Office to help. The Church is warm enough, since the Health and Safety Experts conducted the check-up and

ensured that our building is safe. The combination of humidity and the cold weather and the poor state of the building are helping to costs to increase, making the costs of heating bills expensive. The diocese does not have a list of contractors. The debt is borne by the Church and we are loaned the money by the diocese. BW volunteered Stan to have a look but BNK clarified that FE issues are more in line with a major refurb. BW will still check in line with H&S guidelines. CR offered her services on this if needed.

AGM 7: Lent and Easter Services

- 1) BW sent out mailing to local publications with services. Discussion about children doing a design for the parish in place of Easter blessings. We cannot post things through letterboxes. We can email to individuals. We encourage little or no literature to be picked up CR suggested she could run the competition as she has a list. Congratulations to CR on the Christmas activity. A selection of all pictures could be included in a collage and put on at Easter. Deadline week before Palm Sunday – 21st March 2021. This will be advertised in the newsletter. We try to discourage things in the church so perhaps a collage can be put up on display. CR offered Easter eggs but we will not be doing so this year in line with Covid restrictions. BNK highlighted the climate and adhering to the distancing in person, items, no mass books, leaflets, posters to limit touching to the bare minimum.
- 2) Still unsure as to the format of Easter services so we will not be advertising the Easter services especially with restrictions in place. A ticket system as at Christmas will be used to assign places to parishioners. BW will seek what system Brendan is using. Brendan is on the mend after some ill-health. AR asked about palms on Palm Sunday but we are unsure if this will be allowed. We watch and see the guidelines from the Church. Good Friday is at St Margaret as it can accommodate more people. No washing of feet on Maundy Thursday and sprinkling of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Charlette kindly sent the document to FE.

AGM 8: Evangelisation

Reaching out to those not attending Church

FE is concerned about reaching those who are not attending.. How do the community receive their information and how can we surmount this obstacle. BW mentioned the Lenten service, Sundays at 7pm. This is advertised to all 43 email addresses who agreed to the mailing. Also the newsletter is emailed, published on the parish website and is followed by parishioners

Reaching out to the wider community

BW noted this is challenging during Covid. Ongar news, the link in Doddinghurst (which has been suspended during the pandemic) and other local circulations are publishing our details. FE says it is challenging to reach others. MPM has compiled a list of contributors to Ongar news for the year to Feb 2022. She is proof-reading the articles and impressed with them all. A right balance has been struck. BW said the local care homes have been very appreciative of SVP efforts especially at Christmas. These are all examples of the evangelisation of the Catholic Church. AR enquired about Walk of Witness but it is uncertain at this time. We will keep an eye on the news on all these. CR pointed out by 22 March we will have more guidelines. Adrian will keep us informed on all Churches Together activities and is open to any suggestions we send his way.

AGM 9: Finance Report

There have been no Finance meetings due to the limitations in place but Rob H is keeping an eye on the finances. BW read out the balance on our account. There is a debt amount of £12174.17 as at 5th February 2021.

This is actually not as bad as it could have been as we received the Gift Aid Claim from the HMRC to the sum £10,020.45 which is submitted annually. The Standing orders have really been a lifeline for our parish and have been coming in religiously. Weekly takings are understandably down with lower mass numbers and more hardships being experienced by our parish community. Also the hall is closed and rental income is much lower. Costs associated with the pandemic are also higher. AR asked

about the position with the bank regarding the debt. The church will always try to get out of debt but this will stay on our account.

FE spoke of a monthly raffle draw to be done via zoom.

The 100 club idea was raised by AR. This was talked about before and was decided to pursue.

BW brought up that when events are closed and not open to people other than parishioners, we end up asking the same group of people for financial support.

AGM 10 & 11: Clarification of the name of the Parish and AOB

CE brought this up. She had sought advice on the name as asked by FE. Fr Stewart Foster clarified the name as Parish of Ongar. However, it was decided that the current naming was more inclusive of both our communities and would be carried forward in the same vein and spirit. Representation is still correct in the eyes of the Bishop and our diocese and wider community at large.

MPM explained about the DBS applications have been updated again 36 applications have been approved.

PM asked about any reaction to the change of Mass times. There has not been any impact registered yet. Perhaps this will be felt when lockdown is lifted and life returns to normal. Times will need to be changed at both sites of the Church, the parish website and other places to ensure our information is accurate. The new mass times was not a PPC decision.

EO brought up about the Parish Website. This will be updated- please see the website for any changes and information. EO will lead a working group for all changes. BNK will also keep an eye out for other changes. CR will action on a google page and BNK will assist as needed.

AGM 12: Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting is Tuesday 18th May 2021 at 18:30.

AGM 13: Closing Prayer

Fr. Emile said the closing prayer earlier as he had to attend to other matters. Goodbyes were said. A feeling of moving forward together was acknowledged. Meeting ended at 20:00.