

English Martyrs and St Augustine of Canterbury
Minutes of the Joint Parishes Pastoral Council Meeting
Thursday 7th September at 7:30

Present:- Father Gerry (Parish Priest), Nikki O'Neill (Secretary English Martyrs'), Babu Aliyath (Syro-Malabar Representative), Liz Tomkins (EM Member), Karen Dinsmore (EM Member), Dinica Gardiner (EM Member).

Apologies:- Tony Sharpe (Vice Chair AoC), Veronica Hollingsbee (Secretary St Augustine's), William Pearce (EM Youth Member), Ann Beer (AoC Member), Ann Kingshorn (AoC Member) Mali Nichols (AoC Member), Ufuoma Bakpa (AoC Member).

Meeting Chaired by Nikki O'Neill

Minutes taken by Dinica Gardiner

1. **Opening prayer** and thoughts on the Gospel of the Day took place in the church followed by a 7-minute reflection.

2. **Apologies** are shown above.

Jeni Gardner (AoC Member) had asked to step down from the JtPPC. The JPPC would like to thank Jeni Gardner for her years of service and in particular for her great contribution to the Mission several years ago. Her artistic work creating the joint parishes' logo is still being used today.

Everyone expressed their sincere condolences to Ann Beer following the tragic loss of her son Phillip very recently.

3. **Appointment of new Chair for EM.** This post had been vacant for a while and there was a need to appoint a Vice Chair for EM, particularly as there were times when Tony Sharpe was not available to attend and Chair the meeting. All those present were in agreement that Nikki O'Neill should become the Vice Chair for English Martyrs. Nikki thanked Dinica Gardiner not only for agreeing to join the JPPC but also for agreeing to take on the role of Secretary for EM. Nikki thanked Karen for standing in for her and taking the Minutes at the previous meeting

4. **Minutes of the previous Meeting.** All attendees in agreement of the Minutes relating to the JPPC meeting on Tuesday 9th of May. It was noted that the JPPC meeting on the 12th July had had to be cancelled for a variety of reasons.

5. **Matters Arising.** Fr Gerry had asked that all Matters Arising be covered at a later date or would be resolved in due course. He further commented that, as announced by Bishop Declan in his pastoral letter, which was read out at all masses on Sunday, 3 September, new Pastoral Areas/Deaneries had been established for the Diocese and these had been shared with the JPPC, and put in the newsletter. There are now officially 9 Pastoral Areas/Deaneries. EM and AoC were part of St Wulstan Deanery and Fr Gary Brassington, former parish priest for AoC and EM, had been appointed as Dean. The JPPC wished to send their congratulations to Father Gary Brassington.

ACTION: Fr Gerry to send congratulations to Fr Gary on behalf of the JPPC

Further, the Diocesan consultation meeting on 17 June to consider Deanery Boundaries and Mass Times had been cancelled and rearranged for Saturday, 7 October. Fr Gerry, Nikki O'Neill and Paul Taylor would still be attending this meeting but the new focus would be on pastoral councils and how to move to a more synodal church. Fr Gerry was looking for two representatives from each parish and he confirmed he now had two volunteers from AoC, Paul Taylor and one other. The volunteers did not need to be members of the JPPC.

6. **Volunteers – Recruitment, Retention and Training**

Father Gerry requested Babu to confirm how the Syro-Malabar go about encouraging volunteers. Babu confirmed that all children had catechism classes from year 1 to year 12 within their church. In their homeland most of the churches were affiliated with their own schools. Here in Gloucester catechism starts before the mass on Sundays. How does the community have the people to cover this? Previously, in their homeland it was the norm for everyone to go to church every day. It's ingrained in the home, the overall upbringing and culture. When they came to Gloucester, they requested volunteers from within their community, and lots of people signed up, and were trained via an online platform. Therefore, the children learn about their faith in the same way that their parents were taught.

JPPC members commented that there were different challenges in our parishes, and many parents relied on schools to provide the religious education. Babu suggested that we have to involve people and a personal approach works best.

As there were no AoC members present, discussions related to the situation at EM. The parish mainly had older people volunteering, which was not a bad thing, and was indicative of the fact that this demographic had more time to spare. Agreed the need to concentrate on middle age and young families for more volunteers.

Nikki suggested that potentially we needed to work on making our volunteers feel valued, with some form of 'thank you evening'. This could work to promote the various volunteer roles within the church and help people to understand what type of volunteer roles were needed.

Everyone agreed that a more personal approach, individual conversations, were more likely to encourage support.

Karen suggested a 'promise auction' using a social event to encourage promises of small volunteer contributions such as an hour of helping in the garden, or helping setting up the church before mass.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that a Saturday Afternoon Tea would be more appropriate than an evening event, as some volunteers would not want to come out in the dark. Liz kindly offered to deal with the food and asked for a budget from Fr Gerry.

A plan was agreed:

Two prong approach (1) Thank you Afternoon Tea event for current volunteers followed by (2) an event to encourage small volunteer contributions.

Afternoon Tea (1)

Dates were checked to see when it would be possible to fit this in, along with other events in the calendar. 18th November had been suggested for the 'Thank you Afternoon Tea' event, possibly 2.30-4.30pm. Fr Gerry agreed to check his calendar and make sure there was no clash. The Chair proposed that a subcommittee be formed to move things forward.

ACTION: Fr Gerry to double check 18 November to ensure there was no clash

ACTION: Nikki to set up a sub committee and talk to Marisa

7. **Spiritual Accompaniment.**
As it was just after 9pm there was no time to discuss this item, which would be considered at the next meeting.
8. **Concluding Prayer**
9. **Date of next meeting** – future meeting dates had not yet been agreed, however the next meeting would be at AoC sometime in November (To be confirmed)

SIGNED



Fr Gerry Walsh
Parish Priest



Nikki O'Neill
Vice Chair of English Martyrs