

English Martyrs and St Augustine of Canterbury
Minutes of the Joint Parishes Pastoral Council Meeting
Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 7:30

Present:- Father Gerry (Parish Priest), Nikki O'Neill (Secretary English Martyrs'), Veronica Hollingsbee (Secretary St Augustine's), Karen Dinsmore (EM Member), Liz Tomkins (EM Member), William Pearce (EM Youth Member), Jen Gardner (AoC Member), Ann Beer (AoC Member), Ann Kingshorn (AoC Member)

Apologies:- Tony Sharpe (Vice Chair AoC), Mali Nichols (AoC Member), Ufuoma Bakpa (AoC Member), Babu Aliyath (Syro-Malabar Representative).

Meeting Chaired by Nikki O'Neill; Minutes taken by Karen Dinsmore

1. Opening prayer and thoughts on 'Liminal Space' took place in the church followed by a 7-minute reflection.
2. Apologies are shown above.
- 3.. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th March 2023 were accepted.
4. Discussion on Matters Arising not covered elsewhere
- 4a. We welcomed a new prospective member from English Martyrs, Mrs Dee Gardiner.. The position of Vice-Chair of English Martyrs' is still vacantl.

ACTION : Father to speak to the prospective New Member of English Martyrs'

- 4b. Ashes Burial Grounds at both parishes were discussed at length and Jen Gardner kindly showed members the place where her parents and grandparents ashes reside in South Africa, which everyone agreed was lovely. The question of security was discussed and even if an area was placed at the back of English Martyrs', access could still be gained through or over the hedge. It was decided that the existing areas should remain where they were but work to be carried out to make them more of a pleasant, reflective place and the existing cover at EM would be replaced with one that does not have handles, so removing the trip hazard and a smaller committee would look into small walls where ashes could be placed and memorial plaques could be placed. At St Augustine's, a new fence between the presbytery garage and the area for their ashes burial ground would provide increased security and limit uninvited access to the garage roof by children
- 4c. Pentecost Vigil: Due to several issues Fr Gerry said there would be no Pentecost Vigil this year at either Church. St Peter's would be having one and this would be advertised so those who wish could attend

4d. Deanery Mass Times and New Deaneries:

Father Gerry informed the committee that there had been a lot of discussion over mass times at Deanery Clergy level and further discussions would take place at a clergy meeting to be held on 23rd May. As far as he was aware it was still the plan to consult parishioners of all parishes before new Mass times were implemented.

A lot of discussion had also been held at Diocesan level about possible new deanery structures for the Diocese. A meeting is to be held at St. Brendan's in Bristol on 17th June to ensure the widest possible consultation on these. Father Gerry also said there were still two places available if anyone would like to attend this meeting which would mean leaving Gloucester at 9.30am and would finish about 4pm arriving back in Gloucester for approximately 5pm.

Currently the Forest of Dean, Fr Steven/Mgr Liam from St Peter's are helping at Newent/Lydney on alternate Sundays whilst Fr Frank does the other 3 Sunday Masses in the area. This is to ascertain which 3 of the 4 Churches in the long run should have a Mass for Sunday weekly.

5. Ongoing Pastoral Matters

First Holy Communion: Saturday 6th May saw 15 young Girls and Boys take their First Holy Communion at English Martyrs', two of whom would also be taking it in their native Poland - please pray for Julia who will take hers on 14th May and Olivia who will take hers on 21st May. Sunday 7th May saw 1 girl and 2 young boys take their First Holy Communion at St Augustine of Canterbury. Fr Gerry thanked all those who had been catechists.

Confirmation: Father Gerry stated that there were 6 young people who had been preparing for their Confirmation and that they would be Confirmed on 26th May at English Martyrs' by Monsignor Liam (Victor General) from St Peter's, as Bishop Declan was unable to attend due to illness. Father Gerry gave his thanks to Flit Rogers and Nikki O'Neill for their help on this programme. Fr Gerry asks Members to please add these young people to their prayers.

Youth Group (YG): The group currently had 10 members and two new prospective members but William said there may be more soon as he had been spreading the word at school. When asked, William stated that the YG was going well and he was happy with the way it was going. Nikki then said that Karen and Liz should be congratulated for their work and Liz commented that it should also thank Nikki because she also attended the sessions. The YG had been running since October 2022 and it was now apparent that the YG had regular members but YG leaders would like to encourage more adult male volunteers. There was currently an issue with a youth who had been invited to attend but it turns out that they were no longer in full-time education but were at work, thus, they were not within the rules of the group, Father Gerry was going to check with the diocese with regards to those aged 18 plus but who were not at school and the position on sage-guarding issues, but the group was set up for youths in full-time education and we particularly invited the children at St Peter's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College years 7-13/14. Dee suggested that Father Gerry might like to attend some sessions with the youths,

Liz suggested that Father Gerry might like to hold confessions at some sessions and Karen suggested that particular feast days might also be an ideal time for Father Gerry to attend and talk about the feast day and the Saint connected with it and the reasons.

Those present from St Augustine's had no issues to raise.

6. The meeting to be held at St Brendan's, Bristol on 17th June would be discussing with both lay people and the clergy about rearranging mass times and the Deanery. As previously stated there were two places open and available should anyone want to attend along with Father Gerry, Nikki O'Neill (EM) and Paul Taylor (AoC).and there would also potentially be a lift available.

Father Gerry then informed everyone that currently, within the Diocese we have 13 Deaneries and the current plan was to reduce this to 8.

Currently in 2023 among the Diocesan Priests there are:

43 Priests under 75 years of age
36 Priests under 70 years of age
27 Priests under 65 years of age
7 Priests under 50 years of age

By mid-2027 the numbers are predicted to be as follows:

36 Priests under 75 years of age
27 Priests under 70 years of age
17 Priests under 65 years of age
5 Priests under 50 years of age

By mid-2032 the numbers are predicted to be as follows:

27 Priests under 75 years of age
17 Priests under 70 years of age
13 Priests under 65 years of age
3 Priests under 50 years of age

We currently had 13 deaneries within the Diocese of Clifton, the current thinking was that this needed to become 9 due to the lack of priests and those entering into the priesthood. This would require changing the current Deanery boundaries.

To enable us to continue utilizing priests, deacons and laity effectively each Deanery would require several common roles, some of which may need to be paid roles. These would take the form of:

Clergy
Administrator

Business Manager
Director of Catechesis/Sacramental Preparation Outreach
Worker
Director of Music/Liturgy Pastoral
Assistants

Fr Gerry said there was one person currently trained in our Parishes to be a Pastoral Assistant, however, they were currently not in a position to be active in the role until 2024. As it stands, English Martyrs' and Saint Augustine's will remain in the new Deanery 4 Group which would include the whole of the current Gloucester Deanery and the Western half of the Stroud Deanery plus the Parish of Thornbury. The Churches of the Deanery, except St Patrick's Brockworth are all found on OS Map 162 Landranger Map which Fr Gerry had marked up to show the location of the Churches in the proposed Deanery.

Items 7 & 8 had to be carried over to the next meeting as the meeting ran out of time. Items 7 & 8 on the Agenda, shown below :-


7. Volunteers - Recruitment, Retention and Training
8. Spiritual Accompaniment

The JPPC needed to ensure that we actually got around to discussing these two items as they were raised at the Synodal Conversations at English Martyrs and are interrelated.

With respect to Spiritual Accompaniment more people were required to visit those who are housebound and support those with illnesses and there was a particular need to look at pairing up parishioners anyway.

9. The next Meeting will be held at St Augustine's on Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 7:30pm, refreshments will be served from 7:00pm till 7:25pm. The meeting after that is at English Martyrs on Thursday 7th September

SIGNED


Fr Gerry Walsh
Parish Priest


Nikki O'Neil
Chair of Meeting – Member English Martyrs