

# **St Francis of Assisi Parish Council**



**Annual Report**

**2015-16**

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## **Introduction**

Since last year the number and nature of the subgroups within the Parish Council has been changed. The Mission Evangelisation and Faith Formation group, which is new, will evolve over the next few years to take the parish forward following Pope Francis' exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. This group will, in time, take over some of the roles of the liturgy and spirituality group as well as Pastoral care and community group. The nature of the groups within the parish council will thus be relatively fluid for the moment.

Stephen Spooner, Chair, St Francis Parish Council

May 2016

## **Liturgy, Spirituality and Sacramental Preparation**

There is a lot of overlap with the Evangelisation and Faith Formation group and once that group is fully functional a separate Liturgy and Spirituality Group may not be necessary.

The sacraments must always remain central to the life of the parish. The group aims to provide additional means of furthering the spiritual life of individuals or the parish.

Greg Ryan has run Taize evenings in Advent and Lent which were well attended.

A day on Music and Spirituality was held during the past year and this was well attended.

The group hopes to hold further events looking at how art and music can help prayer.

In the autumn there will be a Parish retreat. More details will be available soon.

## **Mission, Evangelisation and Faith Formation**

This is a new group formed this year. It recognises that “Mission” is something fundamental to the church, not just an activity in far-off lands which we can support (although that may be part of it.) In particular we recognise that the Parish has a role to play in the larger work of evangelisation which is the focus both of Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and the programme set up last year by the Bishops of England and Wales known as “Proclaim 15”.

Part of the Proclaim initiative is to “equip” parishes for mission. To complement the Liturgy & Spirituality events, and the diocesan adult formation programme, we have included faith formation in this new area. The express aim of adding faith formation to the council responsibilities is to develop, support and enable opportunities for developing an **adult faith** at the parish level, as well as our ongoing commitment to sacramental catechesis for youth. Adult faith formation is not restricted to formal catechesis, and will look to include opportunities for questioning, discussion and engagement with contemporary issues.

The Parish Council sees faith formation as an important foundation for effective evangelisation, so this area addresses both inward facing (formation) and outward facing (evangelisation) aspects of mission.

Since starting up this year,

- Parish representatives (Rose Krzyz) attended the national Evangelisation Conference for Proclaim '15 in Birmingham, and shared her experience with the parish council.
- Lindsay Reynolds and Susanne Staub took part in the first of three diocesan [Proclaim 15](#) initiatives in April 2016. Greg Ryan was invited to give the keynote talk at this event.

- The Parish has been promoting the [Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies \(CCRS\)](#) for the last couple of years. This is a national qualification awarded by the Bishop's Conference, but taught in each diocese. From Sept 2016 in St Francis we will cover the cost of course fees for parishioners who commit to completing the CCRS and sharing the fruits of the course in the Parish (through involvement in e.g: catechesis, reading, bible study, sacramental preparation, parish council). If anyone is interested in registering for 2016, see Greg Ryan or any council member.
- Starting in May we will host a short course exploring [The Joy of the Gospel](#) and Pope Francis's call to Spirit-filled mission. All are welcome, parishioners or not.
- During Crosspool Festival week, we will hold a Taize service and a jazz evening (not at the same time!) which creates new opportunities for people to come into the church building, perhaps for the first time.
- The Parish catechists have continued their essential work in youth sacramental preparation.
- We have started working with the communication team on how the website and other channels can be instruments of mission to people inside and outside the parish.

As Pope Francis writes : *"Mere administration" can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be "permanently in a state of mission" ...*

## **Justice and Peace Group**

The St Francis Justice and Peace Group continues to meet three or four times a year. We always welcome new members. Our main focus is on co-ordinating awareness raising and fund raising activities both for overseas organisations such as CAFOD as well as local organisations such as St Wilfrid's Centre and the S2 Foodbank.

The Parish Panto continues to be a major fundraiser for CAFOD and raised over £1300 last year. The Dance Club raised over £4000 to support CAFOD's work with refugees. This amount was doubled by the UK Government and went towards CAFOD's Lenten Water Appeal. The CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day raised £2625.22 which was doubled by the Parish Council to give a total of £5250.44. This amount was doubled again by the UK Government and went towards the CAFOD Lenten Water Appeal. Also during Lent, to support the Water Appeal, there were facts about the use of water in developing countries in the bulletin every week as well as water related bidding prayers..

St Francis continues to support the S2 Foodbank through regularly donations of food and financial support. Regular updates are shared with the parish and focussed appeals are advertised as necessary. For example, there are special food donations at Christmas.

The cake sale held to raise funds for the St Wilfrid's Residential in April raised £125. The summer book sale also raised funds for St Wilfrid's Centre. Collections of tea, coffee and sugar continue for St Wilfrid's.

During Advent an appeal for the Hallam Bethlehem Fund raised £100 by selling stars after Mass. Parishioners again gave Easter eggs and Christmas presents to young people in Roundabout.

At the height of the refugee crisis last year, a leaflet was distributed with the bulletin outlining ways parishioners could support refugees. Future work for the Justice and Peace Group will include sharing exploring ways to support refugees. This will include both those arriving in the UK and in camps in Europe and the Middle East. One major area of focus will be working with City of Sanctuary.



## **Pastoral Care and Community**

2015 was a busy year for the Hallam Churches Together group and 2016 promises to be another eventful year. A number of events took place and were fairly well attended especially by parishioners from St. Columba's Crosspool and The Beacon at Stephen Hill and Nethergreen. In April 2015 an event was held at St. Johns Anglican Church, Ranmoor to raise funds for Christian Aid and their work for the plight of women in Ethiopia. Some students gave a talk and showed a film of their work and some of the women they had met. A variety of Ethiopian food was offered after the talk and was enjoyed by all. This was well attended by members from all churches. In May 2015 "A Good Sing" was held at Nethergreen Methodist Church. This was a celebration of the hymns, mostly of John Wesley. It was very jolly and we made a good sound! In November "Music from around the World" was held at the Congregational Church, Crosspool. This is a very small, old church with a diminutive organ. We all sang robustly along with the leader of the event who encouraged us to sing some very unusual sacred songs in the languages of the countries from which they originate. Needless to say we all struggled with the words!

St. Francis's main contribution to Hallam Churches Together over the last three years, has been our Taize evenings which have generated a lot of interest and have been enjoyed by all who have attended them. In February 2016 Hallam Churches Together put on a Lent course entitled "The Way", a six week course based on the film "The Way" which observes a group of pilgrims walking the Camino of St. James to Santiago de Compostela. The course was well attended particularly by parishioners from St, Columba's and the Beacon Churches at Nethergreen and Stephen Hill. I found it a truly worthwhile spiritual experience. In April the regular Hallam Churches Together meeting was held at St. Francis. We had a lively evening with many interesting events planned for the coming year and beyond. Among these are:

A joint Ascension Day celebration at St. John's Ranmoor to be held 6.30 on 5<sup>th</sup> May. All are welcome. The Crosspool well dressing which will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> June outside the

Crosspool Tavern at 7pm with lanterns. The Crosspool Festival service to be held on Lydgate Green Park on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 12.30 when everyone can bring a picnic. On 14<sup>th</sup> August there will be a Hallam Churches Together picnic at 12.30 on Carver Field just off Hagg Lane.

There is a lot going on and hopefully some of our parishioners will be able to take part in some of the activities.

## **Communications**

The communications area is one that underpins and supports the other areas of parish activity. This year the focus of communications activity has continued to be the Franciscan and the parish website. The Franciscan newsletter has continued to be produced on a weekly basis.

The parish website has continued to be regularly updated. As the number of website visits made by mobile phone or tablet has increased (now accounting for two-fifths of all visits), it has recently been overhauled to implement a responsive design which should make it easier to use on mobile devices. The number of website visits has remained at around 85 per week.

During the year we began the process of reviewing the parish's full range of communication channels and identifying opportunities to improve the ways they can use used to engage the parish members in the full range of parish life. For the year ahead, we want to draw together a group of volunteers to help develop some new initiatives particularly on social media.

## **Maintenance**

There have been a number of projects which have been completed during the past year. The hall has been repainted and the floor recovered. The kitchen and both toilets have been refurbished. The organ stool has been repaired.

There is an ongoing problem with the roof. The church is in a very exposed position for wind and rain. Some tiles had to be replaced just before Christmas. In the New Year there was some major work done on the roof and all the tiles were glued down so that the wind hopefully cannot lift them.

Three car parking spaces have been converted into two disabled car parking spaces.

The maintenance team are now signed up for the Diocesan toolbox. This is an online tool for monitoring health and safety issues within the church and the hall. It is also a way of keeping a record of various necessary inspections such as gas and electricity. This is ongoing work.