

St Francis of Assisi Parish Council



Annual Report

2017-18

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Introduction

This annual report presents reports from each of the St Francis Parish Council sub-groups outlining activities undertaken over the past year (2017-18).

Liturgy, Spirituality and Sacramental Preparation

The liturgy and spirituality of the parish centres around the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist at Mass. The sacramental life of the parish depends almost entirely on our parish priest Fr. Thornton. The deacon Stephen Parker is able to help with baptisms and funerals when his work as hospital chaplain allows.

In the last year Mr. Greg Ryan has left Sheffield and the new music group at 11 o'clock has grown from strength to strength. An interesting new development was the songs of praise to the Holy Spirit after mass on Pentecost.

Our great catechists continue their sterling work of preparing children for the sacraments and I am sure would be happy to receive any offers of help at any time.

There were two parish retreats organized. One happened on February 3rd ran very successfully by Stephen Parker. The second one was due to be run on 16th and 17th March by Father Kevin Hayden OSB from Ampleforth Abbey but had to be postponed because of appalling weather. He has agreed to come next lent.

This autumn we will be running a CAFFE programme on 'Life in the Spirit'. Details will follow. This is a series of talks which are downloaded and then shown to an interested group to promote discussion.

The group would be very happy to receive suggestions as to what the parish would like in the programme.

Stephen Spooner

Mission, Evangelisation and Faith Formation

Catechesis and Youth Ministry

Following a discussion at Parish Council about assisting Father Kevin it was decided

- i. To find a team of volunteers to prepare parents wanting their children baptised and
- ii. To find volunteers to for the First Holy Communion preparation as Rose Krzyz (RK) and Marysia Placzek (MP) have been running this for sometime and would like to pass it on eventually.

Baptismal Preparation There is now a baptismal team in place led by Geraldine Houlton.

First Holy Communion catechesis

On the one hand the search for First Holy Communion catechists has been less fruitful in that only one volunteer has come forward on the other hand it has led to some reflection on the state of Youth ministry in the parish. This has been driven by discussions with Jonathan Yewdall who has a unique view of this in his role with the Altar servers. With this in mind Jonathan Yewdall (JY) and Lindsay Reynolds (LR) met to look at where we are now in our encouragement and development of young people and what could be done to develop this ministry.

Youth Ministry

Where we are now:

- Altar servers (JY)
- Music at the 11am Mass supported by Steve Davis (SD)
- The First Holy Communion programme (RK and MP)
- Children's liturgy is run by Clare Byrne (CB) with the support of other parents
- Little fishes for Pre-school (CB)
- Individuals acknowledge the service of the altar servers by gifts at Easter
- JY in addition helps his altar servers with CV writing support and writing references

What we could do:

- Involve more families in roles at church
- Link First Communion and confirmation preparation to school curriculum
- Actively seek engagement of young people (not all are involved on altar or music)
- Parishes do their own 'thing' regarding catechesis – could we share resources?
- Annual Mass for the primary school at St Francis
- Annual Mass for the secondary school at St Francis
- Host St Marie's/Notre Dame carol concert
- Parish based opportunities for DoE
- Parish based activities for 6th form expectation of volunteering
- Acknowledge our young people – eg birthday cards

- Church based colouring books for pre-school children
- Parishioners more welcoming

Progress

Regarding the connection between school and church – meetings have been held with Mrs Twomey at St Marie's and Mr Davis, Head of Notre Dame. These discussions resulted in the following:

- St Marie's have given access to their 'Come and See' Programme which is used in all Diocesan schools
- Invite catechists to celebration of First Holy Communion at school
- Virtual prayer partners
- Invite St Marie's singers to Afternoon Tea
- List of parish activities to Notre Dame
- Organise brain storming with young people for their ideas

In addition to this JY has put in motion children taking up the gifts at the 11am Mass with the help of Anne Shepherd.

Lindsay Reynolds

Justice and Peace Group

The St Francis Justice and Peace Group continues to meet three or four times a year and we aim to support a range of Justice and Peace issues. 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.

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. Difficulties are expected from November 2018 when Universal Credit (a new procedure for paying out welfare benefits) is rolled out in Sheffield; more need for donations is anticipated.

The Justice and Peace Group is supporting the CAFOD "Share the journey" campaign, an initiative from Pope Francis. As part of this campaign, parishioners took part in the recent May Day Trek on 7 May as well as walk of solidarity to support refugees. The walk took place on 12 May from St Vincent to Sheffield Town Hall, where other Sheffield parishioners met them. Future plans for the Share the journey campaign include an e-mail petition.

The Parish Panto continues to be a major fundraiser for CAFOD and raised over £2100 last year. The CAFOD Lenten Family Fast Day contribution from the Parish was doubled by the Parish Council., supporting work in Zimbabwe. In other work for CAFOD in the Parish, the Dance Club raised money to support CAFOD's work with Rohingya refugees and in East Africa.

Other future plans are to support the Panto again this year and themed events in Advent and Lent. A particular focus this year will be a fundraising campaign to buy a well or latrine on behalf of the Parish.

Collections of tea, coffee and sugar continue for St Wilfrid's. Parishioners again gave Easter eggs and Christmas presents to young people in Roundabout.

The Justice and Peace Group always welcome new members and our next meeting is 5 July 2018 (Tuesday) in the Presbytery.

Eva Kaltenthaler

Pastoral Care and Community

The Pastoral Care and Community Group were involved in the following activities in 2018

- Elderly parishioners have been given lifts and have been brought to Mass on Sunday
- Teas and coffees continue to be organised each Sunday after 11am Mass
- Housebound parishioners have been visited and have received Holy Communion
- Afternoon teas continue on the 3rd Tuesday of each month
- Support has been given to Parish Social events including fund raising events and Games nights
- Extra help was supplied after First Holy Communion Mass with teas, coffees and biscuits
- New families have been welcomed and provided with information about the Parish
- Young parishioners are being encouraged to take part at Mass by bringing up the Offertory Gifts

Julie Hughes

Anne Shepherd

Communications

The Franciscan and parish website

The Franciscan newsletter and the parish website continue to be key elements of the parish communications. Many thanks to Jayne and Paul Middlemass for their ongoing work to produce the newsletter and update the website each week.

Website visits are down from 108 per week last year to 92 per week this year (1 June – 31 May). Christmas Eve continues to be the day with the most users visiting the site. As Paul has now managed the website for around 10 years, he has asked for volunteers to take on the maintenance and develop duties. Alan Wenham has agreed to help or take over these responsibilities. Looking to the future, both Paul and Alan are in agreement that the website should be converted to run on Wordpress. This will make longer term site management easier. And once this work is complete we should recruit a few more volunteers to share the updating as fewer technical skills will be required.

Poster designs

For some parish events such as the pantomime we've been able to achieve a great quality of design. We've done this through a combination of borrowing favours of friends who are professional designers, and for others such as the parish social making use of Canva.com, a free graphic-design tool website. It includes hundreds of pre-designed templates and uses a drag-and-drop format that can be used by non-designers to achieve a professional looking result.

Email correspondence

We have had a steady inflow of email enquiries throughout the year, including rather encouragingly people looking to move to the area and join the parish.

Facebook

We've seen encouraging levels of engagement and reach of our Facebook posts throughout the year. It's a channel that we could develop more and has potential to build community bonds and encourage engagement in parish life. To achieve this potential, we need more volunteers to be involved in creating and posting content.

Following the AGM, I will be stepping down from parish council having served a three-year term of office.

Dave Stanley

Maintenance

The following actions were completed by the Maintenance Group in 2018

As regards to maintenance of our church/hall/presbytery, 2017/18 has seen numerous actions of ongoing maintenance work. Our movable wall had not been serviced since it had been installed in 1989 and the door handle had been pulled off, this has now been repaired and the door serviced with the closing mechanism renewed.

The church access swing door closes X2 have been replaced. In order to keep the church clean the vacuums have been serviced and repaired. Side lighting has been repaired in the hall. The electrical and gas certification is now up to date. Burst water pipes in the men's toilets have been repaired after last frosts of last winter. Finally, the diocesan online safety management system (safety tool box), the computer programme which assists with maintaining the church in a safe way is currently up to date with just one outstanding task, lightning protection.

In case we are struck by lightning the stainless steel cross on top of our church roof acts as a lightening conductor which directs up to one billion volts to earth via bonded earth straps and external earth rods. These connections require testing and certification to make sure they can withstand the voltage strike and keep the building safe from potential fire/damage. It will be comforting to know if we had a strike the system will work well.

Risk assessments were completed as follows:

- Premises inspection check list
- Fire safety risk assessment, hall/church/presbytery
- Safe access and egress
- Food safety
- Lone working
- Working at height
- Youth activities
- Sliding and folding doors
- First aid

Thank you to our church flower arrangers and cleaners. I'm sure you would agree the church always looks lovely with the varied arrangement of cut flowers and displays of seasonal foliage etc. Combine this with spotless floors and pews, this is a church you'd be proud to be a part of.

David Hughes