

# Parish Forum Meeting, 8 October 2018

– Fr Simon Blakesley, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes), 30 Forum members

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	<u>Action by</u>
<p>Fr Simon opened the meeting with a prayer. Chair, Stephen Warde, welcomed Fr Simon to his first Parish Forum and thanked Serga Collett for her past services as minute-taker from which she has retired since taking on the position of the CAFOD Parish representative. He thanked Sarah Sykes for taking on the job of minute-taker and asked for other volunteers to share the task. It was noted that our youngest member of the Forum this evening was a mere 6 days old.</p>	
<p>1. <u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Nora Darby, Marion Caldwell</p>	
<p>2. <u>Minutes of last meeting &amp; matters arising</u></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.</p> <p><u>Arising:</u> Stephen reported that Fr Pat's leaving Mass and party, and the 'Meet the Parish Groups' event had taken place successfully. The Forum expressed thanks to all who helped, with a special mention to the CWL for providing the refreshments.</p> <p>The Forum also thanked Joanne Kerrigun for the organising the plaque listing the Parish Priests who had served the Parish. And all those who had helped with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass celebrated on 10<sup>th</sup> August.</p> <p>Fr Simon then confirmed that the Bishop will come to St Laurence's on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October to officially install Fr Simon as Parish Priest. Mass will be at 5pm followed by a Hog Roast Party. Fr Jay will be invited to the occasion, which will be a joint celebration of Fr Simon's installation and a farewell party for Fr Jay. It was agreed to organise a collection for Fr Jay.</p> <p>The party will be held in the Parish Room and Fr Simon also offered to open up the ground floor of the presbytery to help accommodate everyone.</p> <p>Fr Bob mentioned that Sr Pat is now living with her Order in York. He suggested that it would be a good idea to acknowledge her work over many years in the Parish, including her work with refugees and links with the Justice &amp; Peace Group in Cambridge. Sr Anna Hawk, who is based at OLEM, regularly visits York and could take a card and gift. Gift suggestions welcomed.</p> <p>Buildings &amp; gardens: being followed up in the main agenda today.</p> <p>GDPR &amp; Parish database: still to be followed up.</p> <p>The matter of Parish savings was raised. Finance Committee member, Christine Knight, confirmed that we get a fixed return of 0.5% on our reserves, which are held by the Diocese. This was felt to be a low return. The Diocese retains any difference between this and the return that it receives from investing the money. Fr Simon is open to investigating alternative arrangements – e.g., moving to a high street bank if a better rate of interest could be found and the Finance Committee are in agreement.</p>	<p>Office to organise collection</p> <p>Facil group</p> <p>Fr Simon &amp; Office</p> <p>Finance Committee</p>

3. Tech Group presentation – live streaming of Mass

Following a Forum request to look into streaming our Masses across the Internet, the Tech Group was formed and investigated companies currently providing systems and went to look at other churches who are already streaming their Masses. They decided that with in-house expertise they would be able to set up our own streaming capabilities keeping set-up and running costs minimal and keeping the control in the Parish's hands. The camera is set above the rose window and focussed directly on the Sanctuary area. We were able to see what a live link would look like thanks to a demonstration by Tech Group member, Ronald Haynes. There is still some work to be done to get all working smoothly and to activate the sound system. There will be some test runs performed during the Advent season, and volunteers who have a computer and Wi-Fi at home, and may want to take advantage of this new service, are sought to be trialists.

Ronald explained some of the benefits of streaming that other churches had found: Parish members with family abroad able to attend a wedding via live streaming, a new member of a Parish gained from the remote Highlands where no there was no nearby church, who now felt so much part of the Parish that he was willing to send financial contribution also.

At present, it is planned that live streaming will be offered via our Parish webpage. A link to this will also be shared through our Facebook page. At some future point, it might be possible to consider offering to record a special service such as wedding or funeral. Permissions with regard to altar servers will be sought and signs put up in church to make people aware of the camera and streaming taking place.

The group can be contacted at: [techgroup@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:techgroup@saintlaurence.org.uk)

Tech Group

4. Fr Simon – initial impressions and thoughts on the Sanctuary

Fr Simon talked about the Sanctuary and his ideas for its development. He explained that the flooring is currently on wooden boards, which are probably not the original flooring. It is a bit creaky and seems to have been extended at some point, particularly where the keyboard sits.

Fr Simon proposed that instead of re-carpeting the area that we consider using natural stone instead. He used the example of the Newmarket Parish church where Fr Michael Griffin had re-ordered the Sanctuary using a warm honey colour stone, which reflected the stone in the church building. It was easy to keep clean and maintain. Wax spills are easy to remove, and it doesn't stain or mark like carpet.

Fr Simon said that in the near future he would like to form a working group to look into re-ordering the Sanctuary. If it was decided that it was not needed the flooring would still need to be dealt with. He plans to talk with parishioner, Irial McGinley (retired architect) and to investigate what is under the carpeting, explore whether the wood can be removed and assess what kind of flooring is below it. Sandy Hobson and Joanne Kerrigun volunteered to be a part of this group. Other volunteers welcome.

Fr Simon to set up working group

He also explained that it is traditional that the Altar and Lectern should match each other architecturally and be made of similar material. He suggested that we could perhaps use the same brick that church is built of to make a new lectern and support for the altar.

Fr Simon also proposed that he would like to consider moving the chairs where the priests and deacons sit during Mass be moved to the right-hand side of the altar and the

lectern moved to the left-hand side for the sharing of the Word both sung and spoken.

Rough sketches of plans would be made before putting together a brief and commissioning an architect. Fr Simon said he had had a great deal of experience in building work, having organised the building of the Parish Church at Diss and building a new altar at Beccles to match the pulpit when Parish Priest at Beccles.

He suggested that we all reflect on good and bad sanctuary layouts. He looks forward to receiving suggestions of both what might be good to do and what should preferably be avoided.

The church in general is in need of repainting. The Sanctuary was last painted when Fr David Paul was Parish Priest. Fr Simon would like to choose colours that pick up and tone in with the colours that are in the existing brick and woodwork. Forum members were happy that a change was planned. No one felt that there would be a problem with changing the current colour scheme.

Fr Simon also mentioned that we are using paraffin lamps, which are throwing out a lot of soot. He said that once the oil runs out he will not re-order any more and the lamps will eventually be replaced.

#### Comments from Forum members:

Deacon Geoff Cook approved of the idea of a stone sanctuary. He thought that originally the sanctuary had been about the height of the first step of the current Sanctuary and had been built up at a later date and that originally the altar had been separately raised up. He supposed that the original base of the Sanctuary was probably the same as the rest of the church floor.

Sandy Hobson asked if we could consider having slopes up to the altar for better accessibility for all.

Helena Judd asked that input from parishioners and youth artwork be considered for inclusion in any design. Fr Simon acknowledged that the Parish should have ownership of any new design.

Ronald Haynes suggested that the colour palette of the tapestries hanging either side of the cross could be incorporated into a new colour scheme

Gas heaters: It was agreed that the gas heaters would benefit from having guards installed round them as the bodies get very hot to the touch. A quote of around £2,000 has been received from a company in Oldham to install 6 guards, which cost £328 each. Although expensive it is not as expensive as replacing all the heaters. Other quotes are being sought.

Fr Simon  
order heater  
guards

Garden: there is some general tidying up and maintenance that needs to be done to the grounds and garden. He is working with Nora Darby to arrange this, but has in mind for the fence around the garden to be cleared, mended and painted. Ivy will also be cleared from around the presbytery.

[moved from AOB] Aileen Kielinger asked whether better garden access was still being considered and it was confirmed that this was definitely still in mind.

Fr Simon also said he would be caring for the living stones of the church too. He was keen to get an overview of who is a member of our Parish, who needs home visits for communion or other needs. Everyone should remain a part of the body of Christ even when they can't get to church.

The church count had taken place just before the Forum and Fr Simon reported: 870 people attending Mass at church across the weekend, plus 181 at the 9.30am Mass at school and 63 at the Ablaze Mass

It was asked whether we have an up-to-date database. A database system exists, but needs someone to administer it. Attempts to gather data for it had been made through 2 parish wide surveys. One 8 yrs ago and one 2 yrs ago in connection to Alive in Faith. These would probably need to be repeated. Before doing this, however, we should get a properly-maintained database in place. This remains an open action.

Office: Plan needed for database at some point.

Fr Simon mentioned that he would also like to recommission Readers and Eucharistic ministers together – possibly at a Saturday morning Mass during Advent.

Fr Simon

#### 5. Finance

Deacon John Steele has recently resigned from his position as Parish treasurer, due to ill health and prayers were asked for him and his wife, Margaret. A new treasurer is being sought. There are 2 volunteers so far but would like a third person. Parish in good shape financially.

It would be good for people who are new to the Parish need to be aware of Gift Aid and Alive in Faith, as both can accept new members at any time.

Facil:  
Promote Gift Aid and Alive in Faith

#### 6. Liturgy

Christmas services – the midnight Mass will be held at Midnight. The Christmas Eve Mass for families was confirmed, after some discussion, for 5pm. The Carol Service will be on 16<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Fr Simon is considering moving a weekday Mass (possible Wednesday) to an evening slot – feedback on this suggestion is invited. The Forum attendees felt it was a good idea.

#### 7. School

Fr Simon mentioned that St Laurence's school is considering whether it should become a member of a multi-academy Trust. Fr Simon also said that he was not able to be on the governing body of the school as he is already on the board of the multi-academy Trust.

To encourage stronger ties between Church and School, a school-led Mass at Church is being considered. Once a term the school would lead the 9.30am Mass at the Church. This would be a regular event in addition to the School's contribution on Education Sunday.

#### 8. Parish Groups update

CAFOD – Serga Collett has recently taken over from Mary Watkins as the Parish CAFOD representative. Serga, in recent years, has been running the Harvest and Lent appeals and is now taking on a fuller role. Mary will however continue to run the Connect2 Peru initiative, which is applying to extend for another year. Serga reported on this year's Harvest Appeal which raised £1,226 so far, for which many thanks were expressed. Serga also expanded on her vision for CAFOD not just being about fundraising but also environmental and sustainability issues. We currently have a small group of core helpers which Serga is looking to expand. If you would like to join an active CAFOD team or if you have ideas about what CAFOD should be doing in the Parish then please contact Serga (cafod@saintlaurence.org.uk)

Fr Bob asked for feedback on the Peru communities that we work with. There is a recent update in the last Pilgrim magazine, but maybe more direct feedback would be good.

Connect2Peru  
update from  
Mary Watkins

SVP: Christine Knight on behalf of SVP expressed thanks for help received from the Parish and for the work of all the volunteers.

Mass for the Sick will take place in December.

SVP will run the Giving Tree for the benefit of both the SVP and charities around Cambridge She was happy to report that there are now SVP members at all Masses, apart from the Ablaze Mass.

9. AOB

Karen Rodgers: May Crowning – flowers and prayers lovely, but singing was not so great. Very few people knew the words of the Marian hymns. It was suggested preparing 5-6 hymns to Our Lady during the year that could be used at Mass so we are ready for next year's May Crowning. After discussion, it was decided to leave this to the Music Group – perhaps we could practice at least 1 hymn. Suggested that maybe the children could learn one simple hymn in Children's Liturgy. Also, provide words either on a sheet or using the hymn books for the May crowning.

Music group  
to consider

Children's  
Liturgy to  
consider

Serga Collett – Suggested using sign language a bit more in Mass, especially for the children

Could the Children's Liturgy look at the timing on bringing the children back into Mass at the 11am Mass – is it practical to involve children in the Offertory somehow?

Children's Lit.  
Group.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 15 January 2019, 8pm

At the meeting we agreed a set of dates for the remaining 2019 Forums that were all on Tuesdays. A request was made after the meeting that we vary the days of Forum meetings so that no-one who has a fixed commitment on a given day is excluded from a whole year of meetings. Accordingly, proposed dates for 2019 Forums (to be confirmed at the next meeting) are now:

Forum chair:  
confirm these  
dates at next  
meeting

Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 8pm

Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 8pm

Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 8pm