

Minutes of the Parishioners' Open Meeting

Held 8pm 28 January 2020 in the Parish Room

Chair: Stephen Warde

Minutes: Sarah Sykes

In attendance: Fr Simon, and 32 parishioners

Apologies: Mary Watkins, James Dore, Stephen Chapman, Christine Knight, Pat Cook, Martine Walsh, Fr Bob, Serga Collett

		<u>Action by</u>
1.	Minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.	
2.	<u>Sanctuary plans</u>	
	<p>The plans for the re-ordering of the Sanctuary have been on display for a couple of weeks in the Parish Room. Fr Simon opened the discussion by informing the Meeting that plans and costings had been sent to the Diocese for approval and he would present these at the April meeting with a view to beginning the work this summer. Then using a PowerPoint display, he explained some of the features of the design. He explained that the Sanctuary at Newmarket is a good indicator of what he is aiming to achieve at St Laurence's and that the design has been put together to tie in with the look and feel of the rest of the church building. The stone to be used for the new priest/deacon chairs and the lectern is coming from the stone of St Laurence's original altar and credence table. The altar stone will provide the backs of the priest and deacon's chairs and the top of the lectern. The credence stone will be used to make the base of the chairs. He is planning to replace the tabernacle with a donated square-shaped one. It will be placed on its own pillar and will be a little higher than it is currently. The crucifix would move to be suspended by wires above the altar and the tapestry could come down on either side of the tabernacle. The new steps and flooring will be made of stone (Ancaster limestone) and will not be carpeted, but the steps will have a non-slip tread. On either side of the sanctuary, access would be up a stone ramp rather than steps and brick would be added around the wall up to dado level to match the brick in the body of the church. The current door into the sacristy and confessional will be blocked up and a new glass door to the confessional would be created from the Narthex area; the new layout would provide for a properly screened off confessional including the addition of a sign indicating when confessions are being heard and a red/green light to show whether the confessional is occupied.</p> <p>Fr Simon would also like the church to be redecorated, including adding a layer of plasterboard across the ceiling to cover the tiles and a layer of insulation (in addition to the insulation added during the retiling of the roof last year) put in. He suggested that this could be done in 3 phases with costs spread over 2 years.</p> <p>Fr Simon informed the Meeting that the plans had also been sent to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission – headed by Monsig. Tony Rogers – who will be considering the plans at their February meeting. He plans to also invite them for a site meeting.</p> <p>Questions from the floor included:</p> <p>Where would the keyboard set-up move to?</p>	Fr S: Host Liturgical Commission on site

Fr Simon answered that the keyboard would ideally move to the area where the black chairs currently sit in front of the front bench. The keyboard player would face the cantor. However, he indicated that it would be possible to build in plug in point by the newly positioned lectern to use if necessary, i.e. the keyboard could move temporarily to the side of the sanctuary for a particular Mass but not remain in that position all week. Fr Simon also believes that the PA system could be slimmed down and put in a purpose-built cupboard underneath the statue of St Laurence along with the mechanics for the live streaming.

Do the benefits of moving the crucifix forwards outweigh the benefits provided by the crucifix on the wall together with the tapestries?

Fr Simon answered that the relationship of the cross to the altar is an important correlation in the arrangement of the sanctuary. There was extensive discussion on this issue, with opinions for and against bringing the cross forward off the wall. Frances Stafford commented that at a meeting in the church about this many years ago the idea had been discussed and the conclusion drawn that this would not be a popular move. Mary Walsh expressed that she liked the idea of the suspension representing the resurrection. In reply to a query about the visibility of the wires, Veronica Harvey commented that the wires suspending the cross in the church at Newmarket cannot be seen. Another parishioner questioned whether with the Sanctuary not being particularly deep that the cross did not need to go forward.

There was some discussion about the tapestries currently hung on either side of the cross and how they would fit into the new design. Some of the comments were:

Could alternative or seasonal tapestries be used in the design?

The tapestries are complimentary to the cross and work well with it, but the painted arch above was not popular with those at the meeting, particularly the colour.

It was considered that moving the tapestries lower down to the level of the tabernacle would not work well as the tapestries are too big. Fr Simon pointed out that if the tapestries were placed there they would be partly hidden by the altar.

Some parishioners expressed their opinion of the sanctuary design in general:

Mary Walsh: The new design is cleaner, crisper and plainer with few distractions from what should be the focus of what is happening (i.e. the Eucharist). It doesn't have a staged feeling and she felt that it is better not to have personal art on / around the altar. The new design feels more prayerful, but the tapestries are a distraction.

David Brierley: Liked the new design and said it would be nice without the tapestries. In the same way as the icon of The Trinity had replaced the cross for a time, maybe the tapestries had had their day and could be used/displayed elsewhere.

Karen Rodgers: likes the tapestries but wondered if their current positioning was the right place for them?

Susan O'Brien: welcomes the use of the materials and likes the simplicity and harmony of the design. Would welcome a change in the paint colour at the back of the sanctuary to something more neutral.

Fr Simon said that he would accept the guidance of the Liturgical Commission about the design as an objective voice.

There was then some discussion as to whether ramps were needed on either side of the sanctuary or whether just one ramp to the right would suffice as we have limited space in the sanctuary area. Fr Simon explained that ramps on both sides of the sanctuary will bring symmetry to the area. It will also facilitate the flow of movement around the altar. It was queried as to whether there would be space for chairs to be placed for the Readers to sit while waiting to read.

Stephen Chapman who heads the team of altar servers, but who was not able to be present, sent the following comment read by the Chair: He is not against the renovation but only if there is value in it long-term for the Parish. We need to get it right as we will have to live with it for years to come. Clergy will change but parishioners stay a lot longer. Altar Servers' Changing Room – at present the confessional area is used. It is a good and safe place providing privacy. If the confessional will have doors that are glass and open into the Narthex would this mean people could watch the servers changing? Access from Sanctuary to Sacristy – when this first went in it was a relief to no longer have to go through the congregation to set up and clear up. It's very useful for quickly fetching forgotten items or take things out of the way (like at Easter). If you try to get through the Narthex to the Sacristy on a Sunday it is very difficult. So please can the direct access from the Sacristy to the Sanctuary be kept.

An additional comment to Stephen's was that the changing area is already very tight and would not be practical if more space was lost.

James McQuillan queried why brick was to be used as a pedestal for the altar and why the shape of the altar needed to change. Fr Simon replied that brick is more substantial and in line with the design of the rest of the building. He could see that there is an argument for using some of the existing limestone but brick will make the whole structure stronger with simpler lines. There was some discussion of this issue, with some comments in favour of the current altar.

Looking more closely at the new seating arrangement, the question arose whether there was a need for such a substantial priest's seat and what would happen when there were more celebrants than just priest and deacon. Would there be room for extra chairs when there were additional priests, deacons, readers, singers using the sanctuary? It was also pointed out that there might be a lack of space to move between the stone seats and altar, with potential pinch-points developing there.

It was questioned how the extra steps up and down to the altar, seats, and lectern would work (these are included in the scheme to compensate for the lowering of the level of the floor required to accommodate the ramps). There was

	<p>some concern that these might complicate the appearance of the Sanctuary and movement around it during the liturgy. It was suggested that these levels might be looked at again.</p> <p>Jeanette Milbourn asked where the cantor would lead the singing from and Fr Simon explained that the cantor would use the same lectern as the Readers. Jeanette wondered whether there would be room for the music sheets and books and lectionary on the same lectern, how the interaction between cantor and readers would work, and also queried the wisdom of having a stone lectern which cannot be height adjusted for shorter/taller people. And pointed out that communication between the cantor and the priest would be very difficult with them being on opposite sides of the altar. Fr Simon believed that a large, Perspex ledge attached to the lectern would give enough space for both. There is remaining concern, particularly from those involved in the music group, about the impact of the scheme the functioning of music during the liturgy.</p> <p>As the discussion drew to a close, it was asked whether these many changes were necessary – apart from the renewal of the flooring, which had been the original plan, agreed before the arrival of Fr Simon?</p> <p>It was suggested that an additional meeting should be arranged for when samples of materials, colour charts, final costings and more detailed drawings were available before the next Parishioners’ Open Meeting in April. The opinions and questions could then be further explored.</p> <p>The Chair took a quick show of hands on 2 aspects of the discussion: The suspension of the cross got a 50/50 split on whether this would be a welcome change and the retaining of the tapestries showed no strong feeling either way with only a few hands going up.</p> <p>For those who are unable to attend the planned additional meeting but who might like to comment there will be a comment sheet provided in the porch.</p>	<p>Fr S: set a date for meeting before April POM</p> <p>Fr S/office: provide comment sheet in porch</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Parking Scheme – 6 month review</u></p> <p>Fr Simon reported that as Saturday evening is not included in the Sunday exclusion, that making sure that visitors and non-regular attenders of 6pm Vigil Mass have registered their cars for the evening has been a challenge. Rob Beckwith has been doing a sterling job of checking that cars parked in the carpark are on the registered list, making a note of those who are not, entering them for that evening and passing the numbers on to Fr Simon to add to the permanent list. This means that we now have a lot of occasional users on the carparking database. We are asking the provider whether it is possible to exclude Saturdays in the scheme.</p> <p>Feedback received in advance from a parishioner unable to attend was read out by Nora Darby: lack of consultation with the Parish was disappointing, signs unwelcoming and bewildering for visitors. What kind of message does this send to the local community? Are we making money for the scheme? Would like it to end but appreciates the annoyance of not being able to access parking especially for funeral services.</p>	<p>Fr S: can we exclude Saturday evenings?</p>

	<p>Further comments from the floor were of a consensus that the car parking scheme was necessary, simple and appropriate. It avoids the stress of priests being made to act as parking attendants. We are now able to use our car park as intended to attend Mass. Before the scheme came in the carpark was always full to overflowing, parishioners who had arrived for Mass have been unable to park and returned home having not gone to Mass. Cones have not been effective having simply been moved out of the way by people parking to go shopping or to work. Parking restrictions in the area are being steadily increased and allowing non-parishioners to use the carpark will quickly lead to the space becoming overwhelmed again.</p> <p>Fr Simon stressed that the Parish makes no money from the scheme; that if someone genuinely gets caught-out they can apply to him to arrange for a cancellation of the Parking Charge Notice by supplying an explanation and copy of the PCN to him. He has available the possibility to apply 3 cancellations a month, if needed. He was asked how many people had been issued PCNs but explained that the company would not provide this commercially sensitive information, but that the scheme would not be viable if people hadn't been caught.</p> <p>Overall the Meeting felt the benefits of being able to use the car park to attend Mass and other church business without fear of being unable to park or being blocked in outweighed any negatives.</p> <p>Also mentioned during the discussion of the carpark was the manner in which some of the bike racks have been attached to the wall of the church: the bikes cannot be comfortably stood up against the rack. They tend to fall over because there is not enough rack protruding against which to rest the handlebars and the crossbar/frame. This arrangement is extremely awkward and slightly dangerous. Other cyclists at the Meeting agreed with this. Fr Simon explained that this had been done because the racks had not been properly cemented into the ground and were being torn out and bikes stolen. He would consider concreting them into the ground if there was a strong opinion that this should be done.</p>	<p>Fr S: reconsider attachment of bike racks to wall</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Catechesis and Youth Activities</u></p>	
	<p>Veronica Harvey (joint head of St Laurence's Primary School) introduced herself to the meeting. She has taught at St Laurence's for 18 years and wants to forge closer links between the church and school and plans to attend more Parishioner Open Meetings.</p> <p>Helena Judd informed the meeting that the Diocesan Youth Team (Ignite) will be leading a retreat for teenagers (Glow Retreat) in the Parish on 15th March. It will be held at the school starting with Mass at 9.30am. She also said that there are plans for youth groups at St Laurence's to connect with those at St Andrew's Church Chesterton in the new school year. The children who are preparing for First Holy Communion will be making their first reconciliation and praying the Stations of the Cross in March. Fr Simon thanked Helena for all her hard work with the young people of the Parish and said how much he appreciated her skills and energy.</p> <p>Leonie Isaacson spoke about Children's Liturgy. The group have recently put together new guidance for new and current volunteers. She said that due to safeguarding requirements and practicalities it was imperative to have more than</p>	<p>Fr S: schedule announcement</p>

	<p>one adult in each session. Jeannete Milbourn added that, for those children attending the Children's Liturgy group for the younger children, all children must be accompanied by an adult or sibling over 12yrs. Although this has been announced more than once over the years, Fr Simon said he would arrange for this message to be brought to the attention of the Parish once again via announcements at Mass, in the newsletter, in Pilgrim magazine and on the Parish website. He also added that additional cctv cameras and signage are due to be installed around the corridor area accessing the toilets.</p>	<p>and put in newsletter Pilgrim Eds: add to next edition Richard B (webmaster): add to website</p>
5.	<p><u>Liturgy</u></p> <p>Lent and Easter – Fr Simon announced that house Masses could be booked on either Tuesday or Thursday evenings during Lent. Easter Vigil Mass would start at 9pm.</p> <p>GianLuca Savini said that a pilgrimage Stations of the Cross would take place, probably on 27 March, with others from the Cambridge Catholic community joining us at St Laurences.</p> <p>Helena Judd asked whether an international Mass followed by a picnic could be held on Pentecost (31 May). She and the youth would help to run and organise it but she would appreciate help from other parishioners. The Meeting agreed that this would be a good idea.</p>	<p>Fr S: notice in bulletin inviting people to book in for House Mass during Lent</p>
6.	<p><u>Finance and Parish Management</u></p> <p>Joint Treasurer, James Dore, sent in a short report which the Chair read in his absence: Provisional figures for 2019 showed that receipts exceeded payments by £8-9,000. The final figures will be available next month once we have information from the Diocese. The roofing work will come to a total of £55,000 once final bills are paid. The cost will be covered by accumulated funds built up over the years and supplemented recently with Alive in Faith donations, which together stood at over £200,000 at the start of 2019. We therefore have £145,000 in reserve. The Parish Finance Committee has approved a budget for this calendar year, which anticipates a small loss on day to day activities of a few thousand pounds. One of the main reasons for this is the expected increase in maintenance for the church and presbytery resulting for work that needs to be done as advised by the quinquennial survey of the church. The estimated cost of the proposed changes to the Sanctuary have also been considered by the Finance Committee and it was felt that these were affordable given the high level of reserves still available to the Parish.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Buildings and grounds</u></p> <p>Roof: the tile replacement on the roof of the main body of the church has been completed and there are no longer any more leaks.</p> <p>Extension of CCTV: (see under minute no. 4)</p> <p>Electrical distribution: some electrical wiring is currently being updated.</p> <p>Garden Clean up: the next date for gardening work by the parishioners will take place on 17th May 3-5pm.</p>	
8.	<p>Updates from Parish Groups</p> <p>Serga Collett, CAFOD rep was unable to attend but had sent a short report read by Sarah Sykes: In October we contactless donation machine was trialled and worked perfectly. It was greeted with enthusiasm by many. There is an evaluation taking place as to its national success and we will be informed in the future</p>	

	<p>whether this will be a possibility for the Parish to use in the future, so for the forthcoming Lent appeal only cash or cheques can be received. The total raised for the Harvest appeal was similar to that raised by other appeals at just over £1300. The Unwanted Xmas gift sale held over two weekends early in January raised £502 in total. This is shared with SVP, therefore £251 will be sent to CAFOD. There will be a Lent preparation meeting taking place on Sunday 16th February at 3 pm for volunteers from across the Diocese at St Laurence's – all are welcome to attend who would like to help with the Lent appeal. Family Fast day is on 6th March. Pre-appeal announcements will take place on the weekend before (29 Feb/1 March) and the collection at all Masses on the weekend of 7th/8th March.</p> <p>Last Saturday saw the launch of our 'Hands on Colombia' project. This was an information evening with a speaker who told us about the problems Colombia faces. This was followed by a Colombian meal beautifully cooked by Petra Tucker. The evening was well attended and a lovely social occasion. It was wonderful that we also managed to raise £98.87 for CAFOD funds. Finally, Serga asked whether the Parish would support a 'Live Simply' week in the summer. The meeting were happy to agree in principal would like to have more details given at the next meeting.</p> <p>Frances Stafford also reported that the art sale she had organised last year had raised £140 for CAFOD.</p>	<p>Serga: provide more details of Live Simply at April's meeting</p>
9.	<p><u>AOB</u></p>	
	<p>Deacon Geoff spoke about ecumenism and mentioned that the week of prayer for Christian Unity had recently ended marked with a prayer in the Parish's bidding prayers. He was pleased to hear of the work planned with St Andrew's youth, but felt that the North Cambridge Council of Churches was pretty much in hibernation. In order to perhaps galvanise it back to life he asked that we organise an informal social at St Laurence's inviting all ministers from the NCCC. Other parishioners at the meeting also mentioned that although there wasn't much shared worship there was a lot of shared action with projects such as the Foodbank and the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project.</p> <p>Fr Johane: thanks were expressed for Fr Johane's work at the Parish while on sabbatical. He will be leaving us on 5th February and returning to Zimbabwe. Fr Simon plans to concelebrate with him this Sunday at 11am Mass with drinks and nibbles to follow. A leaving collection for him had been organised.</p> <p>Fr Joe Inguanez: Fr Simon introduced Fr Joe from Malta who is staying with us for a few months while studying and who will be helping Fr Simon out with celebrating Mass.</p>	<p>Facil grp: to find people to organise this get together</p>
10.	<p><u>Dates for the next meetings (all start at 8pm)</u></p>	
	<p>Thursday 23rd April Tuesday 7th July Thursday 8th October</p>	