

Parishioners' Open Meeting

11th August 2020 conducted via Zoom

19 participants at start of meeting

Including Fr Simon, Fr Bob, Deacon Geoff, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes)

Apologies: Charlotte Woodford, Ginny & Rupert Russell, Ron Haynes

The meeting was opened with a prayer, followed by a brief reminder of how to join the conversation for those who hadn't attend an online POM before.

The minutes of last month's meeting on 15th July were accepted as a true record.

1. Introducing the new Parish Secretary

Fr Simon gave a brief introduction to the new parish secretary, Reece King, who has been in post for about a week. Reece said that he was happy to be working at St Laurence's. He is available in the office from 10-1.30pm.

The Chair welcomed Reece to the Parish and thanked him for joining us at the meeting.

2. Latest on Mass arrangements – discussion

Fr Simon started the discussion by saying that the arrangements seemed to be holding up well. We haven't needed to turn anyone away so far, although we have come close at 11am. Various individual topics were then discussed as they arose from general discussion.

Cleaning: Fr Simon wondered whether the stewards' instructions could be amended slightly to omit the cleaning of kneelers in general except for where families with young children have been sitting, as this is not an area that is likely to be touched by people.

Jim O'Sullivan agreed that the risk of catching the virus was vanishingly small in connection to kneelers.

It was asked whether the kneelers are being cleaned on a regular basis by the cleaner. Fr Simon said that he would check. He also confirmed that the cleaner arrives 8am and cleans the church. She has an hour to do this before morning prayer starts at 9am followed by Mass.

Mary Jane O'Sullivan pointed out that it is more important that the top of the bench which borders the aisle (including the closed benches) should be cleaned as people sometimes use these to lean on as they go to their seat.

ACTION:

- I. Steve W to amend the stewards' instructions to say that the cleaning of the kneelers can be relaxed except for where small children have been sitting, and to add in the detail about cleaning the tops of the end of the benches.
- II. Fr Simon to confirm that the cleaner includes the cleaning of kneelers as part of her regular clean.

Stewards: Nora Darby asked whether the number of stewards could be reduced at some Masses. The Chair thanked Nora (and Jo Wager) for the work they are doing on the steward rotas. Christine Knight said that she had stewarded the Friday lunchtime Mass twice on her own and found it perfectly manageable. People who come regularly to Mass do know what to do. A brief reminder to sanitise and to sit at the end of benches is all that is needed. However, people do scatter themselves more around the church and there is more of a burden on one person to clean although others have volunteered to help with cleaning at the end of Mass. There was about 30 attendees at the 12.30pm Friday Mass prior to this meeting.

ACTION: now that Parishioners are used to the routine, we have reached the point where we can ask them to help with cleaning at the end of each Mass – Deacon **Mike Smith** to add to pre-Mass announcement.

Track and Trace slips: Rob Beckwith asked if we could avoid the bottle neck in the porch created by people filling out the forms, and sharpen the pencils regularly. Richard Birkett suggested that we could use a QR code which people could scan and fill in a form online.

ACTION:

- I. **Rob** will come equipped with sanitised pencil sharpener this forthcoming weekend.
- II. Encourage people to complete slips before Mass or take slips to bench and complete and then hand in at end of Mass. Baskets for return of slips should be put into Narthex for those exiting there. Pencils that have been used should also be put in these baskets for sanitisation/quarantine. About 95% of parishioners are completing the slips.
- III. **Richard** to take the idea of a track and trace QR code to Tech Group. Data will need to be deleted every 3 weeks.

Exiting after Mass: Joan Brierley asked that stewards encourage people to exit the building as quickly as possible. People get to the door and start chatting and the exit is blocked.

ACTION:

- I. Stewards to encourage people to move outside to chat.
- II. Fr **Simon/Reece:** A note to be added to the newsletter to reinforce this message.
- III. **Mike** to add this to the pre-Mass announcement.

Children's Liturgy: Miriam asked about when children's liturgy sessions will return to church as there are concerns that some people might not be returning because there is no children's liturgy. Fr Simon said there were huge safeguarding and social distancing issues and that he would need a lot of reassurance that it can be done safely. He couldn't see it restarting in the current situation but it might be an idea to consult with those who run these sessions.

As someone who has run sessions in the past, Mary-Jane O'Sullivan said that with between 20-30 children in the parish room it would be impossible to social distance. In addition, children cannot manage this unsupervised and many parents who should be accompanying

their children do not do so, so often the leader is managing large numbers with a small amount of help.

We need to find a different way to serve this area. Some suggestions were:

Perhaps a family-centred Mass could be put on and perhaps places booked in advance;
Additional page in the newsletter, explaining the gospel and providing a link to resources;
A separate activity sheet for children to use in church – they would need to bring own crayons/pencils;
Zoom session for children with catechists leading it;
Radio Maria England broadcast a children/s liturgy session on Sunday's at 9.15am and 2.30pm using CAFOD children's liturgy resources.

ACTION: research what other parishes are doing in the area of ministry and report back to next meeting.

Liturgy: Fr Simon asked whether, despite the request to keep the liturgy as short as possible, we could start to prepare to recover the richer texture of Mass both musically and ritually starting by encouraging altar servers to come back.

Richard Birkett noted that over the last few weeks, since the return of Deacon Mike being a regular fixture on the Sanctuary, the distribution of Communion has settled into a strongly safe pattern and the order that people are doing things like hand washing and taking the ciborium out of the tabernacle is working well. The Chair thanked Deacon Mike.

ACTION: Fr Simon to contact Stephen Chapman to discuss arranging this.

Facemasks: on the whole people have been wearing masks and if they have forgotten to bring them have been asking for masks to be supplied. We can remind people of the legal requirement to wear a mask but not be heavy handed in enforcing this as not all disabilities are visible.

3. Work in the Parish garden

Fr Simon has been looking into developing the garden area with the installation of a patio about 6 x 12m suitable to put a large marquee on and to have tables and chairs outside to increase the possibility of having the space to hold socially distanced tea and coffee after Mass and other social occasions. He believes that it is possible to find an alternative storage spot for the non-stacking black chairs currently removed from the church. He has received a quote for the work of £25-£30,000, included in this quote is the removal of 10 tonnes of earth at the charge of £1,000 per tonne.

He is waiting for a further quote from Christian company, Zion Landscaping.
Reece also suggested getting a quote from a flat mate of his who is a professional gardener.

This project would have to be stacked up against other projects and expenditure that we need or would like to do.

James Dore said that our Diocesan 5-yearly survey of buildings had recently taken place and a list of works which should/could be done has been produced. He will prepare a presentation on this for the next meeting. He also added that the Parish's financial position, taking lockdown into consideration, is not as bad as feared and we do have some reserves built up over the years.

ACTION:

- I. **James** to prepare a short presentation of works that need to be done and would like to be using the 5-year survey recommendations.
- II. **Reece** to ask his flat mate to quote on these works.

4. CAFOD update – Serga Collett

CAFOD are concerned that its usual fundraising – through Family Fast Days – will not raise the normal amounts of support as fewer people are able to attend Mass at the moment.

Serga is planning a couple of fundraising events:

31 August (Bank Holiday): Historic church bike ride – groups of six going from church to church looking at historic churches.

20th September: Cambridge church walk – walking from St Laurence's to Blackfriars to OLEM to St Philip Howard. People can join the route as they want, doing the whole or part of the walk.

She would also like to get together a group of Parish sewers who could sew reusable masks to sell to raise money for CAFOD.

If people would like to donate to CAFOD, which has also joined the Disaster Emergency Committee in connection to the Beirut explosion, they can do so online. We also have a Parish contactless scanner which can be used to take CAFOD donations as well as regular donations and there is a [Parish donation link](#) on the website (currently under the [COVID19 updates tab](#)), which could be adapted to accept CAFOD donations. Standing orders can also be completed for those who would like to make regular donation.

Richard confirmed that there is a Parish CAFOD email address and anything addressed to cafod@saintlaurence.org.uk will reach Serga.

ACTION:

- I. **Serga:** check if CAFOD have a donation button which could be added to the Parish website or a QR link for donations.
- II. **Serga:** publicise the bike ride and walk and how they will be used to generate funds for CAFOD.
- III. **Sarah:** add these fundraising events to the Parish Facebook page.

- IV. **Richard:** consider how to update online parish donations link if CAFOD are unable to provide one for the website.
- V. **Serga:** advertise for sewers and set up a team to make reusable masks to raise money for CAFOD.

5. AOB

Sunday Zoom coffee & chat: there was a plea to make sure that the link to the Zoom meeting (along with the invite and password) is included in the newsletter. However, it was pointed out that the link is very long which makes it cumbersome to include. In addition, links in the newsletter are not currently clickable – it would need to be manually copied and pasted. This is something Richard hopes he can resolve in the future. However, it should be possible to join the meeting on the Zoom website by clicking ‘Join a Meeting’ at the top of the webpage and entering the Meeting ID and password in the appropriate text boxes which then appear.

ACTION: update the Zoom coffee & chat newsletter text to make how to join the meeting clearer.

Parish Library: Miriam Santos Friere, who looks after the Parish library, will be unable to do so for some time and would like someone to stand in for her. She has developed an electronic file record of the books in the Library which she will pass on. Reece volunteered to take on this role.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A meeting will take place in September but at the time of this meeting a date had not yet been set.

However, following the Parish Meeting the Facilitation group met and decided on the following dates for the next two month’s meetings.

Tuesday 15th September 2020

Tuesday 20th October 2020

The meetings will both start at 7.30pm and are likely to be held via Zoom.