

St Laurence Parish Open Meeting- 11/02/2026

After leading us in the opening prayer, Fr Robin presented us with his ideas for the spiritual development of our parish as well as structural improvements and enhancements to the church and the presbytery. These ideas he has already presented to Bishop Peter and once the Bishop's approval has been given, they will be published.

Many of the structural improvements suggested in Fr Robin's vision were also presented in the Treasurer's report which followed. Domenico Cirillo provided a financial update of the accounts for the 2025 calendar year which showed that St. Laurence has a healthy bank balance that would enable us to implement the projects put forward for consideration. These included works to move the confessional to a more appropriate space, addressing the lighting and sound issues in the church and commissioning an architect to provide plans to improve the use of space in the church and presbytery and possible extensions to the buildings. The limiting factor identified was sufficient numbers of parishioners to provide leadership on these projects.

Michanne Haynes then presented an update from the Council of Laity meetings she attended in 2025 and noted that following the Diocesan parish consultations at the end of 2024 and early 2025, the Bishop was looking for ways to increase greater resource sharing across parishes and deaneries. To this end, the Bishop is promoting Deanery celebrations for the 2026 Diocesan jubilee year and in Cambridge Deanery there will be a Corpus Christi procession starting from the centre of Cambridge to end at OLEM. All parishes are asked to contribute volunteers for this event. The Bishop is also working on providing clear instructions and guidance for the establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs) that seek to explicate how laity leadership can work collaboratively with parish priests to promote the mission of the church.

Parishioners shared their ideas for promoting parish celebrations. The idea of making liturgical periods in the church more visible to those passing by the church, by putting banners on the outside of the church was warmly received and appropriate planning permission will be sought. A list of dates for parish socials were also identified and those will be put on the parish calendar. We would also be looking to have a parish retreat, and more will be done to encourage parishioners to go on pilgrimages.

There was a discussion about the suitability of the parish newsletter to appropriately reflect all the ongoing activities of the parish in a timely manner and it was decided that this this will need to be a specific parish project to explore all options, even digital/technology options.

Parishioners commented on the improvements to the parking situation brought about by the change of the Sunday 11 am to 11.15 am and the notice outside of the church will be changed to reflect this permanent change. There remain parking issues with the Saturday 6pm mass which will be looked into, and Father Robin will also consult with week-day parishioners about changes to mass times.

An update on the Neighbourhood prayer groups reflected that there are 3 firmly established groups in Arbury; Histon, Impington, and Oakington and Longstanton with regular attendance. Fr Robin has received permission from the Bishop to conduct house masses and will be looking to start those in the near future.

The parish safe-guarding team is working closely with Fr Robin to monitor and manage all safeguarding issues in the parish. An update from Mary-Jane O'Sullivan indicated that there were changes to the DBS categorizations that means that those who are doing additional duties than reflected when the original DBS check was done, would probably need to get another DBS check. Fr Robin also expressed safeguarding concerns with respect to the use of the sacristy space as a changing room for the altar servers and would like a solution to be found for that situation.

Fr Robin thanked everyone for attending and ended the meeting with a closing prayer.