

Report of St Mary's Parish meeting, 26th April 2015

Approximately 30 people attended the meeting on Sunday 26th April 2015 in the parish hall.

Fr Philip began the meeting asking for items of business to be discussed. The first item was the Parish Council, which has not met for more than a year. There was strong feeling that this had been a good forum for discussion and support for the life of the parish and many felt it should be resurrected. Fr Philip agreed and said that he had always had a Parish Council in other parishes where he had served and would take steps to start a council again in St Marys'. Fr Philip said that he would take steps to form a Finance Committee for the parish as well.

Fr Philip said he had a list of items and everyone agreed that we should work through them. So next was Sacraments and Sacramental preparation. Fr Philip asked if there is anything that people would like to have, Exposition, Benediction etc. He did ask people to remember that he is running two parishes and so events might have to be led by lay people. He noted that new Eucharistic Ministers are urgently required for Sundays and for ministry to our housebound people. He will do something about this as soon as possible. There was some discussion about Sacramental preparation, preparing parents for baptism, help with First Communion and Confirmation preparation. The past situation was outlined, which was all news to Fr Philip, so it was agreed for Fr Philip to meet those who had been involved in this work.

The next item was the hall which is in desperate need of some redecoration and renewal so that it can be used by parishioners and other groups. We are very limited with our finances at present, but Fr Philip felt that something could be done to improve the hall without spending too much money. Some ideas were shared and the meeting felt that some of our community could help with the labour. Fr Philip will speak to the Historic Churches Committee and see how much we can do without requiring permission.

Fr Philip said that the most urgent work needed is on the east end of the Church and the paintings and stained glass windows inside the Church. He said that this could only be done with a 100% grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and that English Heritage are very keen and supportive that this work should be done. Is this something that the parish want to happen, if a grant is achieved? All present said it was, even with the upheaval that this would mean.

The next item was to do with social events and some kind of social cohesion. Again all supported the idea of some social events, the KSC said that they used to run some such events and would be willing to help again with events which help to build up our community.

Fr Philip had received a letter from Caister community outlining some work which needs to be done there on the Church, outside decoration, the notice board and some work on the car park. Fr Philip will follow up with this to see what needs doing.

The re-instatement of the Prayer Group was raised. This used to meet in the hall on a Tuesday evening and was much appreciated. They would like to start meeting again. Fr Philip pointed out that Tuesday is his day off, but he is very happy for them to meet without him and take charge of the Prayer Group themselves.

The next item considered the interaction of different groups within the parish, including our Portuguese and Polish speakers. We would hope to have representatives from both groups, and others if they wish, to be members of the Parish Council. Some Portuguese ladies who attended the meeting asked about the possibility of forming a flower group to provide real flowers for the Church. This met with general approval and some offers of support.

As the meeting drew to a close there were two final items raised from the floor. First, there is a very urgent need for new volunteers to help with cleaning the Church, this is done on Saturday mornings at present, but other teams might be able to do it at a different time. The second item concerned a mission to the lapsed in the parish. This also gained much support and we will try to take this forward in the future.

Fr Philip thanked everyone for coming and for their time and commitment to the life of the parish. The meeting closed at 13.15.