

Summary and main points from Parish pastoral Council meeting 12th of July 2022

Good morning/evening

The Parish councils of St Francis and St Clare's and St Marys Cathedral have amalgamated, and we met on 12th July as one Parish Pastoral Council. Our aim is to encourage everyone in our parish community to get involved in building up our Church. The parish finances, health and safety reviews and safeguarding will be presented and considered at these meetings. Finances are to remain separate between the parishes. There is a safeguarding representative at each Parish. We will now meet quarterly in one of our parish Halls.

Fr Xavier and Fr Anil were welcomed and thanked for their work. They have been appointed as assistant priests by the Bishop until Summer 2023.

A question was raised about feedback from the synod process -Areas discussed included the need to set up an effective PPC in each parish to establish clergy and laity working together. Training has started for this, and we will soon hear more from the Diocesan Synod Group.

The financial Reports

from the Cathedral:

- As at the end of June the Cathedral had £28,000 in the bank. However, this is due to withdrawal from Legacy funds. The Cathedral is running a monthly deficit currently and will have to make additional withdrawals in around a year on current trends.
- Offertory contributions are significantly below pre-Covid levels. Even though starting to recover slightly, they are still down around 40%, which is almost £30,000 less income per year to support the running of the cathedral.
- Costs of running the Cathedral are increasing due to the rising cost of living, as they are for families in the parish. These are likely to continue to rise into 2023, making the drop in income even more challenging.
- Gift Aid returns are also below pre-pandemic levels (multiple reasons as to why this might be). If people who currently don't use Gift Aid relief, but are eligible to, make use of this, then this is a way to increase the Cathedral funds without parishioners making additional contributions out of their own income.

And from St Francis and St Clare's

St Francis & St Clare's have a joint bank account.

Income

Since Covid, the weekly Gift Aided Offerings have decreased from £32,000 in 2019, to £19,000 pa in 2020 & 2021. The Gift Aid Offerings for the first 6mths of 2022 have improved mainly because parishioners have kindly increased their offerings or have signed up to Gift Aid scheme. (The Parish can claim back 25% of the offerings made by Gift Aid).

The Loose plate offerings again have decreased from £26,000 in 2019 to £8,000 pa 2020 & 2021.

Loose plate offerings for the first 6mths of 2022 have only increased very slightly.

Expenditure

The costs for the maintenance of the churches continues to rise for day-to-day maintenance.

Over the last two years new LED lighting, sound systems, painting and decoration and new boiler etc. have incurred significant expenditure. Before covid we were going to look at fundraising to afford these necessities. The parish still needs to think about fundraising.

St Francis Presbytery is now occupied by our two new priests which will incur additional costs but without these priests we would not be able to keep all the churches going.

In 2019 Income exceeded Expenditure by £3,000. 2020/2021 Expenditure was £6,000 pa greater than income. For the first 6mths of 2022 expenditure is exceeding income by £7,000. We need to think about increasing our giving and start again to look at fundraising.

St Francis & St Clare's account is currently in the black because of the balance brought forward from 2018 and a legacy left to St Francis in 2020.

A summary of how to make donations is available today if you missed this a few weeks ago. We are encouraged to use the pay points and a dongle will be provided to improve the speed of these transactions.

Justice and Peace

Our parishes now work together in one justice and peace group. Current projects include our present causes for the Bowl, the feast of fun holiday program now supporting 81 local families. Over this summer we were at last able to meet up with the families in three daytrips and activities in the Hall. Support for the homeless, music for the mind, provision of hampers for seafarers in Middlesbrough through the Apostleship of the Sea, supporting asylum seekers and refugees with befriending and donations and CAFOD campaigns are also supported in the Parishes.

Issues from the Parishes were discussed and included these decisions

- Water stoops to return to all Parishes
- Regular Family Mass can be celebrated at each Church coordinating and discussing this with the schools.
- The Piety Stall can be extended at the back at St Francis's to give more room.
- The location of the defibrillator should be clearly indicated at the Cathedral and BLS training offered again.

Correspondence re starting an SVP group within the parishes was received and discussed.

Considering the present availability of volunteers and the work happening already in the parishes, it was decided that this is not an appropriate time to start an SVP group, but we will revisit this.

Issues you wish to be considered at our next meeting in October can be raised with Mgr. Gerard or any member of the Council. The members of the PPC will be updated on the parish notice boards.