

Open Parish Council Meeting Thursday, 1st October 2015

Present: Fr. Arthur Nearey, Terence Sweeney, John McHugh, Rob Cranston, Mary Wright, Angela Bradley, Kath Pollard, Sheila Byrne (CAFOD/J & P representative,) Derek Davies (SVP representative,) St. Mary's parishioners

AGENDA

- 1) Overview of Parish Council activities of 2014/15
- 2) Parish group representative speakers
- 3) Break for refreshments
- 4) Questions

- Chair of the Parish Council spoke briefly about Parish Council activities and matters which are currently in hand – the new boiler appeal, loan repayment to Salford Diocese, repayment of bonds to parishioners, the taxi office, activities in church.
- Representatives of the SVP and CAFOD/J & P groups spoke about their work both within and outside of the parish and of the commitment of members to the work they carried out in the community. Both representatives pointed out the size of their task in comparison to the ageing and ever-reducing numbers saying that there was only so much that they could do with the resources (human) that they had. Chair thanked both representatives for their contribution to the Open Meeting and suggested asking for help/support, etc. through the Parish website and on the newsletter as a way of empowering people to help themselves.
- Fr. Arthur brought up the issue of people talking in church, especially before Mass and a rather lively discussion followed. Points made were (i) Like all Church communities the congregation is ageing and for some elderly parishioners Mass is the only socialising that they do and the only time when they see people to whom they want or need to talk. (ii) The Church is a gathering place and there should be some tolerance of people wanting to talk even though other people are in church to pray. (iii) It is unfortunate that the way St. Mary's church is designed there is no natural space for conversations, but that is the way it is. Fr. Arthur said that over the coming weeks he will speak more about the issue of talking, especially before Mass, at the weekend Masses.
- Fr. Arthur also asked how the parish could become an evangelising parish, a suggestion was made that the 'Proclaim '15' prayer could replace the Parish Prayer at the front of the newsletter and recited at the weekend Masses for a short period.
- Other questions were – (i) how is the Parish newsletter circulated other than in church? (ii) new Parish Council members? (iii) more readers and Eucharistic Ministers at Mass?
- Closing prayers were said.