

Parish Finance and Property Committee
St James and St William of York

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 10th March 2008 at 8.15pm

Present: Ken Coveney
Anthony Fenn
Fr Dominic Golding Parish priest
Graham Johnson
Tom Nickson Chair
Helen Robertson

1. The meeting began with prayer led by Fr Dominic.
2. **Apologies:** Gerard D'Cruz and Jackie Welton
3. **Minutes of the last meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2007 having been circulated were accepted as a true and accurate record.
4. **Matters arising**
St James external signage: Reading Borough Council has asked for more drawings to show the front and side elevation of the signs, the height from the ground and how they are fixed to the posts. The parish secretary has contacted Hayes & Finch twice and been told they can help but to date we await further action.
Action: Parish office

St William's signage: Graham Johnson suggested the wording for the proposed signs be either 'please respect church property. No ball games or skateboarding' or 'this car park for church use only.' The committee preferred the former and Graham will continue to pursue this matter.
Action: Graham Johnson

Forbury Gardens Day Nursery Lease: no definite news but we understand the new lease is being considered by the tenants and the diocesan solicitors.

St James Church and presbytery lighting: Fr Dominic reported that lighting in the church and presbytery had flickered over several days at the start of the year. The Forbury Gardens Day Nursery had had a similar occurrence. He had asked the local electric board to investigate and they had ascertained that the fault lay not with our systems but further down the chain. They had undertaken to repair the fault and there had been no repetition of the flickering since.
5. **Accounts**
Ken Coveney reported that there had been no feedback from the Diocesan Finance Office so we may presume the annual return was satisfactory. He reported that the parish accounts are in a satisfactory state and agreed to prepare a summary of the return for distribution among parishioners.
Action: Ken Coveney

6. Major finance and property concerns

Works complete:

a) *Presbytery boiler*. Fr Dominic reported that the boiler had broken down recently. G.H Marshall Limited, who service the boilers of church and presbytery, have repaired it but advised if it breaks down again it would be sensible to install a new boiler.

Works imminent:

a) *St James site boundary walls*. Discussions continue between the diocesan surveyor, English Heritage and Reading Borough Council as to how to proceed with urgent works to the boundary walls. The diocesan surveyor has informed Fr Dominic that he hopes work on the Church/prison wall can resume in June/July at the latest.

b) *St William of York Church grounds*

Pete Winterbotham, who has maintained the grounds at both churches for many years informed the parish he would be unable to continue this work from the end of February. Archie's Gardening Services, a local firm, was approached by Fr Dominic to begin maintenance of the grounds from the start of March. They have begun well and agreed to carry out repairs to several of the paving slabs at St William's, this work to be separate from their gardening work.

Works proposed:

a) *Presbytery*. Fr Dominic advised the committee of the need to redecorate the kitchen. They confirmed this, were supportive of his plans and Anthony Fenn agreed to work with Fr Dominic in taking the matter further.

Action: Fr Dominic/ Anthony Fenn

7. Staff salary review 2008

The committee considered the salaries of parish staff and were agreed that an increase in light of inflation was appropriate. Since this had not been reviewed for 3 years it was agreed to offer to both the parish secretary and presbytery cleaner a gross increase related to rate of inflation effective from 6th April 2008.

8. Gift aid appeal review

The committee reported that lots of parishioners had taken away gift aid forms following the appeal at masses on 9th March. Fr Dominic thanked the committee for the appeals they gave and the support they had offered parishioners in completing the forms. It was agreed that there would be a follow up notice in the newsletter after Easter and that members would stand outside after mass to further encourage parishioners to gift aid. It was further agreed that the day this was done should correspond to the publication of the summary of accounts.

Action: Parish office/Ken Coveney

9. Parish disability group report: Graham Johnson

Since completion of the parish survey on disability various items have been highlighted for action. Many are minor, have been implemented and need not concern the committee. Items requiring capital expenditure to varying degrees and as such of concern to the committee are:

a) *The provision of parking at St James.* At present there is a car parking space between the church and one of the pieces of abbey ruins that can impede pedestrian access to the Lady Chapel. The parish disability group propose the space be removed. The committee agreed to this and recommended a bollard be placed to prevent parking.

Action: Parish office

b) *The ramp at St James.* Within a restricted space the ramp is too steep and the gradient needs to be reduced and handrails adjusted. The parish disability group propose that this area be made user-friendly. The committee agreed to seek the advice of the diocesan surveyor.

c) *Disabled toilet at St William of York Church.* The parish disability group propose that the existing toilet space be modified to accommodate a disabled toilet and include baby-changing facilities. The committee agreed that such provision is appropriate and requires further consideration.

The parish disability group have undertaken to obtain proposed costs of all the proposed works for the further consideration of the committee. The committee recorded its thanks to the parish disability group for their considerable efforts thus far.

10. Any other business

a) *Energy saving measures:* Graham Johnson reported that there had been much positive support from parishioners for the Live simply campaign. The parish social justice group have asked that the parish finance committee consider cost effective energy saving measures. These might include ascertaining whether the roof of St William's could support a renewable energy installation, the installation of double-glazing in the annexe at St William of York and energy saving bulbs in the churches and presbytery as appropriate. The committee were supportive of the idea and it was agreed to engage the diocesan surveyor in discussion of this.

b) *Fire certificates:* Fr Dominic reported that the Diocesan Trustees have decided that henceforth such certificates will be issued centrally to all diocesan properties. A performing rights licence will also be issued at the same time to all parishes to ensure legal compliance.

11. Date of next meeting: 2nd June 2008 and 1st September 2008.

12. Concluding prayer