

**St James & St William of York  
Parish Finance Committee**

**Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 8pm**

**Present:** Christine Gordon  
Graham Johnson  
Nelly Langer  
Tom Nickson                      Chair  
Canon John O'Shea              Parish priest  
Helen Roberton

**1. Opening Prayer and welcome**

The meeting began with prayer led by Fr John. Nelly Langer, who administers the Parish Gift Aid scheme, was welcomed as a new member of the Committee.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Jackie Welton, and Graham Johnson agreed to take the minutes.

**3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 having been circulated were accepted as a true and accurate record.

**4. Matters arising**

*Duplicate keys for safe and tabernacle at both churches:* Fr John will follow this up with Jackie Welton

**5. Parish Finances**

*a) Update on Parish Finance Report to Diocese:* Fr John has been having difficulties in finding a parishioner to do the finance report for the Diocese. Ken Coveney a former parishioner has kindly agreed to do it for this year as he has done it in the past. The books are currently with him, and so the Finance Report to the Diocese is not yet available. Looking to the future, Nelly Langer suggested that keeping track of our finances and budget comparisons would be made much simpler if we were to use some specialised software. Fr John will follow this up with Jackie Welton.

*b) Report on Parish Finances to parish:* Once we have completed the Financial Report to the Diocese a synopsis will be prepared for the information of parishioners in due course.

*c) Request for increase of contributions:* It was recognised that the total of weekly offerings for the Parish is on the low side compared with the size of the congregation. The possibility of requesting people to consider giving more will be considered at a future meeting when the accounts are available and when the new Stewardship group has begun its work.

**6. 'Living Our Faith' campaign**

Fr John reported that the latest figure for pledges is £157,255, which when the £33,381 claimable via Gift Aid is added brings the total potential receipts to £190,636. This exceeds our target of £155,000. Some 28 Direct Debit forms have

not yet been returned, and these will be followed up. It is possible that some completed forms may have been sent direct to the Diocese.

### **7. Employment of Youth Ministry Co-ordinator in Reading**

Following on from the previous item, Fr John reported that a Pastoral Area Working Party (including himself and Ann Frank from St James & St William of York) had been set up to make arrangements for the employment of a Youth Ministry Co-ordinator for the parishes of Reading. This will be jointly financed by all 7 churches in Reading (including St Annes Caversham). A Vision Document had been prepared, and this will be circulated to Committee members for information. The aim is that the holder of the post should advise and co-ordinate a range of youth initiatives and activities in Reading. A plan is being drawn up for consultation and if approved this would require a 3 year commitment of £7,000 per year from each of the former separate Parishes to cover salary and other costs. Fr John suggested that if the plan were approved the proportion of Living our Faith money which is to come back to this Parish for local purposes might appropriately be allocated to this project. All the members of the Committee expressed themselves in favour of the proposed financial commitment in principle, subject to the plan meeting with general approval as a result of the forthcoming consultation. Fr John will publicise the proposals within the Parish at an appropriate time.

### **8. Gift Aid contributions (and financial information back-up)**

Nelly Langer reported that since the request made by her and her husband at all masses earlier in the year there had been an increase of around £1,000 per quarter in use of Gift Aid by parishioners. She will draft a paragraph for the newsletter to give further publicity to this simple means of increasing the value of weekly offerings. It was agreed that if someone could be found, it would be sensible to have someone who was able to act as back-up to Nelly on Gift Aid in case she was unavailable.

Arising out of this discussion, Tom Nickson will contact the Diocesan finance team to ask about Diocesan arrangements for the back-up of Parish financial information held on individual parish computer systems.

### **9. Update on properties**

a) *Boundary Wall with Forbury Gardens*: Fr John circulated an email from the Diocesan Surveyor to Reading Borough Council strongly contesting RBC's about-turn on the principle of equally sharing the cost of repair of the collapsed retaining wall which appeared to have been destabilised through the raising of ground levels by RBC in the gardens. The Committee agreed that the present unsafe state of the wall, which is particularly unfortunate for the Nursery School, and the Council's changed position on cost-sharing, is most unsatisfactory, and we await developments with increasing concern.

b) *CCTV in St James Church*: A reduced quotation has been received, and an application has been made to the Historic Churches Committee for authorisation.

c) *Plaque to James Blount in St James Church*: HCC approval has been received for a plaque in the Sacred Heart Chapel close to the burial place of James Blount and the project is now in the hands of the chosen artist.

d) *Repair of Boundary wall between Presbytery and Prison*: Fr John had alerted the Prison authorities to excessive encroachment of ivy, and it now appears that repair work is needed on the upper parts of the wall and the wooden topping. The Diocesan Surveyor is to obtain an estimate. Discussions will take place with the prison over payment, and it appears that they may pay for a buttress to support the structure.

e) *Hedges at St James, Nursery and St William of York*: Fr John has sought estimates for lowering the height of the hedges, as well as removal of ivy obscuring the historic Abbey ruins. Once the work has been carried out it may be possible to get volunteers from the parish to keep them in trim.

f) *Repair of garage doors at Presbytery*: Arrangements are in hand for the doors to be replaced, incorporating a wider opening which will accommodate Fr John's car. The Diocesan Surveyor's advice is that since this is a temporary structure Ancient Monument/ Listed Building consent is not required.

**10. Finances for young people's trip to World Youth Day Madrid 2011**

A total of £2,883.99 has been raised so far through various activities. The total needing to be raised for the 13 attending will be £10,400. This year's Christmas draw proceeds will go towards this appeal.

**11. Any other business**

A short discussion took place on the need for a committee to organise Patrons Day and the role of the Pastoral Area Pastoral Council representatives in the parish.

**12. Concluding Prayer** by Fr John. The meeting finished at 10pm.

**13. Next meeting:** Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011, 8pm, St James Presbytery.