

# ST COLUMBA'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010

at 7.30pm in the GP Room

An invitation to all parishioners to attend this meeting was made at Sunday mass.

**1. Sederunt:**

2. Patricia Carroll – Episcopal Delegate for Pastoral Resources  
Owen Dudley Edwards – acting chairperson.

Terry White, Gwynneth Wright, Rosalind McKenzie, Colin McKenzie, Anne Havard, Teresa Gourlay, Arthur McIvor, Agnes Watson, Maureen Jones and Siobhan Dunn – Acting Secretary.

3. **Apologies:** Peter Wright , John Havard and Austin Flynn.

Thanks to retiring council members: Phil White - chair and June Halliday - secretary for all the dedicated good work they did whilst serving on the Parish Pastoral Council.

4. **The minutes of the Previous Meeting:** Approved.

**Matters arising:** We will wait until the work on the Church is finished for the plaque, given to us from the parish of St. Peter's Harare, to be blessed and erected in the church.

**Volunteer Musician:** Annamaria Brecz, Harpist, has offered to give a solo concert to raise funds for St. Peter's, Harare. This will be on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm in Parish Hall. The Social Committee will organise refreshments.

**Quiz night:** Terry White and Social Committee will arrange another Quiz Night in spring. Date to be arranged.

**Newington Council of Churches:** Agnes Watson updated us about the meeting in Mayfield Salisbury Church Hall, 12 noon Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January where Geraldine Gallagher will be speaking on the Supervision of Serious Offenders in the Community.

Owen then asked Patricia to address us saying we are in need of her inspiration!

Last year Patricia came into the diocese as Episcopal Delegate for Pastoral Resources and developed the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Handbook as a training package. This Handbook is part One of the Norms for the whole diocese.

Next, Patricia asked us to look at the Parish Constitutions. Do they reflect on today's life of the Church? Priest numbers have gone down significantly. This is the point of the PPC. Document "Now is the favourable time."

These vision statements are not real until we live them out. We have a lot of work to do to come to a shared understanding of what this means. Our call to be in collaborative ministry comes from our baptism.

Patricia handed everyone a copy of the PPC Handbook and asked us to look at the prayer on page 2.

Lord Jesus Christ  
you have gathered us together  
to put our gifts at the service of your Kingdom.

May we answer your call to discipleship  
by listening to each other with respect and reverence  
discerning the needs of our parish  
fostering a sense of mission  
enabling participation in our parish community  
reviewing our lives and ministry  
promoting dialogue and good communication  
opening our hearts and minds more fully to the  
action of your Spirit in our lives.

St. Andrew PRAY FOR US  
St. Columba PRAY FOR US

This prayer sets up a phrase work of being “in council” – **not** a committee or a talking shop! Everyone on the PPC has answered a call to discipleship. This is a call to listen to each other, to ongoing discernment, to outward mission, to widening participation. Are we a parish of ‘inner ring’ workers and ‘outer edge’ looking in? The outer edge must be brought into the daily pastoral life in the parish. Some PPCs who have reached stagnation may have done so because they have ceased to communicate with the parish. All we do in our parish is the work of God.

**Page 4** of the Handbook maps out **the general responsibilities of a PPC**. It is not about fabric or finance. The Code of Canon Law says every parish must have a financial council and a pastoral council. These are two very different bodies. One can give advice to the other. Both Councils are required to be a group of people, one group with fabric care and financial skills and the other group with an overall awareness of the concerns and ideas for pastoral development in the parish.

**Page 5 Office Bearers.** What is the pastoral life of the parish? What does it entail and involve? The Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary work in conjunction with the Parish Priest. The subgroups support these. A good council reviews these roles every few years. The real work of the PPC happens in between the meetings. E.g. one group may choose Adult Faith Formation to work on and bring their results back to the next meeting. The PPC should enable widening participation.

The PPC needs to know everything going on in the parish that relates to parish life. Where is the strategy for growth, enabling people to be part of the Church? PPCs must try to be more proactive and strategic. Where are the strategies in the parish?

One member in the group said the parish has never had ownership of the PPC. “We do not know these people on the council and we don’t know what they do.”

Shortage of priests and living out our baptism invites us onto the PPC. The way we nominate our PPC must be public. There must be a time of prayer and discernment. There are nomination sheets to be left at the back of the Church. People are nominated for their qualities and gifts. Those who nominate others must tell them before their name is put in a sealed box at the back of the church.

Putting up everyone's picture at the back of the church is very helpful in getting to know the PPC and other groups who have a mission in the life of the parish. This enables rotation, new life to keep the PPC healthy. Ownership is massive.

Another member of the group said that we have not been called a Parish Pastoral Council but a Parish Council which included fabric and finance.

What is the Pastoral Life of the parish? How do we call people to ministry? – welcoming, Eucharistic, visiting the sick, drivers, readers, children's liturgy, organists, choir, church cleaners, sacristans, flower arrangers, SVP, club organisers, fabric maintenance etc.? All parts of the parish where we are caring for each other and building each other up. Do we have a strategy set up to meet the needs of all members of the parish? What does pastoral life of the parish entail? Many lay people can and do participate with the priest. Every member of the council represents some of the needs of the whole parish. Another member of the group asked what size of PPC we must have to do all these things. Are 12 members enough? Patricia answered that we have 12 members of PPC plus as many subgroups as we need. Not every group in the parish needs to be represented on the PPC. Patricia then gave us a copy of the Norms of the Diocese to help us in our process.

**There are Big Issues:**

- worship and liturgy,
- faith formation (crucial in relationships to adults skills training)
- service
- evangelisation (primary mission of the church) – how newcomers are welcomed – RCIA
- communication to every single parishioner

(NB keep the notice boards fresh and free of clutter!)

- working alongside the Financial Committee for charitable giving, building up small surpluses to give for extraordinary circumstances.

When things work out well, the parish is a vibrant body.

Patricia gave us a very useful copy of 'Sample Parish Survey' to guide us in our process. She was asked: "How do we do it?" Answer - Name three priorities to focus on in a year. (See another handout) To prioritise is crucial. A prayerful, practical way forward. We recognise that we have a great many things going well in our parish and a great many groups that are meeting the needs of the people in our parish.

In general, there is an issue with priestly ministry. Priests were trained for **one** parish and parishioners were used to their **own** parish priest. Our future is that a priest will have **multiple** parishes. The PPC must be clear about its role in enabling the parish priest as much as possible. We have a voice to encourage our parish priest. Widening participation enables others to come on board in the future. It is crucial to 'pull others in beside us' in order to continue the good works in the parish. There will be new generations of parishioners adding their energies to the older generations. We need to welcome new life continually. How can we become a more welcoming parish?

It would be helpful to build up the pastoral knowledge of the parish by putting 'pithy pieces' in the weekly Newsletter. Announcements at parish Sunday mass, is another effective way of communicating. It is crucial to communicate slowly, clearly and allow parishioners to own and opt in!

The priests take the initiative. The Parish Priest is the main driver and the Parish Pastoral Council is there to support and strengthen his ministry. Ordained ministry and Lay ministry working together. Where can we be of use? Free the priest to do the essential things that only a priest can do.

Owen thanked Patricia for her energetic and enthusiastic input.

**A.O.B.** Fr. Frank Kerr's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the Priesthood.

Celebratory Mass in St. Peter's Falcon Avenue at 7.00pm  
Followed by a social gathering at Gillis Centre, buffet and wine.

Fr Kerr has invited his brother priests and parishioners in both his parishes to celebrate with him.

There are 57 places for St Peter's and 57 places for St Columba's parishes at the Gillis reception.

Those who wish to be at the social gathering at Gillis Centre after Mass are asked to put their names on the list at the back of the hall, (where we will be celebrating Sunday Masses for the next few weeks.) Those going only to the 7.00pm Mass in St Peter's, do not need to sign up to attend the mass.

This information will be announced at the Sunday masses on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

Both parishes will take up a collection at the masses on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

The meeting closed with everyone saying the parish prayer or page 2.

**Footnote:**

St Columba's Parish Pastoral Council was set up 1991.

The First meeting took place on 4th March 1991

Parish Priest was Mgr Daniel Foley - who appointed

Chairman - Arthur McIvor; Vice Chairman - John Havard; and Secretary - June Halliday.

There have been 3 successive Chairmen since, namely John Havard, John Irvine and latterly Phil White.

There has only been one secretary - June Halliday who resigned together with Phil White on 16th September 2009.

