

St Joseph & St Patrick's Wemyss Bay

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

Thursday 9th January 2025

Attendees: Helen McMunn (Chair), Louise McCauley, Brian Blackshaw, Michael Tormey, Canon Berry, Gillian Hall, Hazel Mitchell, John Wilson, Gerry McCauley, Martin McCauley, Rob Reid, Marcus Barry, Isobel Quinn, Christine Malcolmson.

Apologies: Anne Clark, Kate Bothwick, Debbie Galbraith

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Helen (Chair) opened the meeting and Canon Berry thereafter led everyone in prayer.

2. Approval of Minutes

Helen requested a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2024. The minutes were approved by Isobel Quinn and seconded by John Wilson.

3. Martin McCluskey MP

Helen welcomed Martin McCluskey, Labour MP for Inverclyde, and Renfrewshire West also currently holds the Government post of Assistant Whip. Martin thanked the PPC for the opportunity to come to update the council on some of the work that the Labour party was undertaking since their election in July 2024.

Martin explained that the Government recognised the important work done by faith communities and informed the Council that Keir Starmer had written to all faith leaders in the UK prior to the General Election in July.

<https://www.faithaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/A-letter-to-Faith-Leaders-from-Keir-Starmer-100624.pdf>

The Government is keen to work alongside faith communities and informed us that the position of Faith Minister has been re-instated for the first time since 2016. This is Lord Wajid Khan. Parishes like ours are considered to be the first line of support for communities and the government wishes to support communities faced with the difficulties of maintaining old buildings. A key priority is to restore trust in politics, which is currently broken.

Several topics were discussed: the Criminal Justice system and recent controversial sentencing decisions, Abortion Clinics no go zones, the dangers of social media - in particular TikTok and the lack of regulation, AI, Assisted Dying Bill, Nuclear Disarmament, Climate Change and the reliance on food and clothes banks.

Many expressed frustration with the poor state of many services eg NHS, and the length of time taken to make changes. Martin explained that Keir Starmer has introduced a Dashboard Monitoring system to ensure that the targets that have been set are achieved, the dashboards are reviewed weekly.

There was a very robust and frank discussion regarding the current challenges facing the new Government. Fr Berry and Helen thanked Martin for attending our meeting and invited him to return for a follow-up visit next year, to which he agreed.

4. Matters Arising from previous meeting.

- Calander Update -The AGM has been moved to Sunday 2nd November 11am (post meeting note Julie, Sunday School Teacher has been advised of the change of date)
- St Patricks Night/Quiz Night date Friday 14th of March, tickets £5. Louise will discuss with Anne Clark and will liaise with Marcus regarding the format of the evening e.g. games, quiz questions etc.
- Suggestions for Talks- Helen thanked Gerry for posting the Parish Talk Suggestions on ChurchSuite App to which there was a good response. Fr Berry asked Bishop John for recommendations as to who would be the best speaker for the following topics: How to make a good confession as an adult, being Catholic in 21st Century, Approaching the Eucharist and the Lay Ministry in the Church.

It was agreed to have 2 dates during Lent if possible. Father Berry will contact the priests to arrange dates, preferably Wednesdays or Thursdays. Other Inverclyde parishes will be contacted and we will liaise with each speaker regarding IT requirements.

5. Thanks

Helen wished to express her sincere Thanks to everyone who contributed their time and talent to preparing the Church/ liturgy during this Festive Season. The list is endless, it was a real team effort and each and everyone's involvement is greatly appreciated. Thank You.

6. Safeguarding

At our last meeting a concern had been raised about the content of the safeguarding training not being in-depth enough to equip Church volunteers for their role. Hazel informed the Council that New Safeguarding Agency will operate entirely independently in close collaboration with dioceses and religious communities to ensure that they are meeting national safeguarding standards. Hazel will take our concerns forward.

7. Care and Kindness

Christine updated the Council on the recent activities of the group. A New Parishioner Welcome card signed by Fr Berry has been produced, as well as an information card on how to access the Care and Kindness group both cards have the ChurchSuite App postcards enclosed. We have delivered 9 Christmas gifts to housebound parishioners, which designed and made by the Sunday School Children; Christmas Cards with a prayer, goody bags and calendars. We have gifted 5 Prayer Shawls to parishioners and, we now have a group of 8 Parishioners in our knitting group. Our next project will be Easter, we will involve the Sunday School children in designing the gifts.

8. Coffee Morning 22/2/25

SCIAF coffee morning arranged for Saturday 22/2/25, 11am to 1pm in the Church Hall. Tickets £5 each, aim to raise a minimum of £300 for a water well. SCIAF are printing posters for us. Helen will do an appeal for helpers to sell tickets, donate raffle prizes, home baking and serving in the tearoom.

9. Update from Property Management Group

Helen provided an update on the progress made by the Property Management Group. They are looking at a number of potential developments and maintenance issues and getting as much information as possible to produce an action plan.

John Wilson has focussed on the joint access road with BT and is in contact with them. It is our understanding that there is a 50/50, joint ownership with BT for the access road into BT hub and John has asked them for a copy of the title deeds they hold.

Brian Stewart has been looking into heating systems.

John Watters has had a meeting with Raymond who has done many of the repairs and has provided a comprehensive update on recent works done.

Helen has been in touch with the diocese with the aim of pulling together all title deeds. She has also put together a logbook for repairs to track works.

Father Berry expressed concern about the car park when temperatures fall and potential for hazards.

Father Berry said that the church had received a kind donation of £2,000 from a parishioner to spend on the church and requested on ideas how to spend the funds. Members were asked to consider this.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 6th March at 7pm, Church Hall

11. A.O.C.B Hazel offered to take on the care of the Our Lady Garden in the Church grounds.

