

REPORTS FROM PARISHIONERS FOR AGM OF PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL 9TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Safeguarding Report for P.A.C. A.G.M. – 9th September 2021

For all churches in the Archdiocese this last year has been dominated by managing the Covid pandemic and many of the activities that volunteers take responsibility for have not taken place. For this reason, safeguarding representatives were instructed that the Safeguarding Advisory Commission would not be updating the churches' lists of volunteers who currently have D.B.S. clearance. This list can be found in the church porch. Many activities involving children and vulnerable adults will now be starting again and this annual audit will be updated at the end of 2021. Mary Cook, Dominic Fawcett and Isabel Fawcett have all received DBS certificates this year and their names will be added to an amended list. All volunteers on this list can now renew their DBS certificates online but new applicants are required to complete all the appropriate paperwork, receive references from two referees and meet with the safeguarding representative to check their I.D. and sign the forms.

As well as keeping up to date with D.B.S. applications for all volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults, it is the responsibility of the safeguarding representative to inform parish priests and P.A.C.s of any information about safeguarding supplied by the Safeguarding Advisory Commission. To this end I have either sent reports or attended P.A.C. meetings and supplied the P.A.C. with the newsletters produced by the Safeguarding Commission. In response to a discussion at a P.A.C. meeting regarding safeguarding issues unique to supporting parishioners in a church setting, I have written to Christopher Mullane, the safeguarding co-ordinator for the Archdiocese of Cardiff, requesting some face to face training when participants can discuss these concerns which are not presently included in the online training currently recommended by the Safeguarding Advisory Commission. I have been informed that face to face training for safeguarding representatives and volunteers will be considered as soon as Covid restrictions become more manageable. In the meantime I have participated in two Zoom training sessions provided by the Archdiocese regarding D.B.S. applications.

In addition to the above, I have supplied advice and paperwork produced by C.S.A.S. (the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service) to the altar servers regarding social events and trips. I have provided the altar servers with a correspondence box in the sacristy and all altar servers are requested to pick up their letters from Father Michael and contact forms from the box a.s.a.p.

Maggie Daron – Safeguarding Representative

2021 AGM youth report

- Covid led to a massive decrease in servers, however we're slowly going back up
- No one has received medals, belts and pin badges for over a year now so I'd like that to happen during Christmas time
- We used gloves to hold the equipment but after a few months decided it would be best to just wipe everything down after the masses
- Cancelled server's trip because it was too short of notice but have planned with the help of Maggie to go bowling in late October and Alton Towers at Easter time
- Have got Abel to replace on the PAC and since there's normally two youth ministers Adrian has said that he would join. Jerry Joseph

Telephone Prayer Line has been in existence for over eighteen years in order to offer spiritual assistance to anyone requesting it. Presently there are fourteen parishioners who pray for whatever intentions are requested of them. It could be for someone who is sick, facing an

operation, seeking a job, sitting an exam, or a whole range of other issues. Confidentiality is maintained - neither names nor specific details need be given. In the last twelve months we have had fifty-four requests for prayers.

The system works by the person in the group who receives the request by telephone passing it on to the next member of the group who does likewise, until everyone has received the request.

There are no set prayers offered as each individual prays in their own way.

Telephone Prayer Line: If you would like prayers offered for an intention, please telephone one of the names below. If you would like to join the group to pray for others we would be pleased to hear from you. See notice board in Narthex.

Eileen MacGregor – 01432 352 915 or Meg Furber – 01432 264560

July 2021

Evangelisation Report While the pandemic has put a stop to almost all of the usual evangelisation activities in the parish it has thrown up opportunities in new ways. Various online evangelisation events have taken place, not least live streaming of Mass which has opened up our beautiful church and liturgy to a wider audience. I have noticed too while stewarding that there is a fascination with what is going on in church from passers-by. Now that the doors are wide open to the street a number of people each Sunday look or come in to see what it is all about. I do believe that the doors must continue to stay wide open as much as possible to give a welcome, together with improved signage to draw people into church. Stewarding is an important part of this.

A 7-week online Diocesan Evangelisation Course was made available which was interesting and has given us some ideas of how to move forward in the future.

There were a couple of evangelisation articles in the newsletter during lockdown together with links to some of the best online catholic sites, including Bishop Robert Barron's "Word on Fire" ministry.

The TV screen with its evangelising output was up and running until the lockdown and will start up again very soon.

Events at St. Mary's school provided an evangelisation opportunity with the national publicity surrounding the "Fertile Heart" RSE course which is taught there. If it did one thing the aggressive reaction of opponents showed me and others how great is the attack from secular society upon the catholic faith and the moral truths which we try to pass on to the next generation and how urgent is the work which catholics must undertake in the field of evangelisation. John Cook

Stewards

The stewarding programme underwent a change during lockdown when other members of the congregation undertook to keep the church sanitised and parishioners safe. When we resumed weekday and Sunday masses, a great deal of work was involved and we needed and gained extra stewards. They all worked hard and their diligence has not gone unnoticed. Now we are slowly returning to normal, our daily stewards have returned and resumed their duties. Unfortunately, we have lost a couple, and the parish owes them a debt of thanks for keeping the church open during the years they volunteered and we wish them well. Luckily, three more people have come forward to fill the gaps so we can hopefully continue the good work.

Margaret Cleeve

Parish library

With the easing of restrictions, the library is now open for parishioners to borrow books. For newcomers, the books range from Church history, biographies, prayers and meditation and books on the Sacraments. The best times to visit are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 - 1 pm. There is also a bookcase in the Annexe with duplicates of the main library which can be used if that is more convenient.

Margaret Cleeve

ABC Group - Report to PAC AGM 2021

When the pandemic struck we had been reading through St Matthew's Gospel and had reached chapter six in which Jesus teaches the disciples the Lord's Prayer.

Subsequently the formal activities of the ABC group were constrained by the pandemic. We have continued to meet when we can. Sadly the ensuing church closures meant we were unable to meet at all for some weeks. However once churches were open again we took to meeting on Sunday mornings after the 10.00 Mass. Mindful of the need to vacate the church promptly we decided to meet in High Town at the Coffee Cart. In good weather this proved pleasant enough. Once the winter set in we continued to meet - inspired by the enduring example of the Polish Catholic Church in Nowa Huta, Krakow. Parishioners will recall the communists built a new town (Nowa Huta) and did not see the need for a church. However local people and clergy persisted in celebrating Mass in the open air - even in winter amidst sub zero temperatures. High Town was reasonably clement by comparison.

Ahead of the second lockdown in November 2020 we helped people to send letters to our two local MPs urging the government to let us keep our places of worship open. The whole exercise had the effect of bringing us all closer together as a parish.

In December 2020 our sister in Christ, Martha Guerrero, returned to her native Mexico. She was such a good person of faith and made an immense contribution to the ABC group. Not only was she a regular attender but gave talks on several occasions. We miss her.

We went on meeting after Mass last winter, doing our best to observe the strictures on public meetings. This continues to this day and provides us all with much needed companionship, good humour and a chance to discuss our faith.

To this end the ABC group would like to thank all the baristas of the Coffee Cart in High Town. When guidelines stipulated we meet in groups of four only, they gently nudged us into a series of theological quadrilles. We salute their courage and are very grateful for their stalwart services, kind welcome and excellent coffee.

We plan more talks and get togethers starting in September. The pandemic has taught us a great deal about our faith and the importance of those we share it with. We have reached the end of Matthew 6 and are heartened by Jesus's wise counsel not to worry about tomorrow, 'for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own.'

Choir

Since lockdown the choir has not been able to commit to singing at the 10 o'clock Mass.

On 19th September the choir will return and will sing every other Sunday for the foreseeable future.

Anyone who would like to join the choir are most welcome and can in touch with me, Helen Oliver, on Hereford 271445.

Hopefully by the next AGM there will be more to report.

Gift Aid The number of subscribers, both envelopes and standing orders remains about the same number. It was apparent that a number of people changed from donating by envelope to an SO during lockdown. It will be interesting to see which option they choose as the restrictions ease.

Stephen Cleeve.

Parish AGM Report September 2021

First Holy Communion

The major change to First Holy Communion lessons, was that in 2019 SFX School felt that they were unable to continue providing the children with First Holy Communion lessons. The Archdiocese policy is that instruction should be given by parish based catechists and with the changing curriculum it was decided to hand instruction over to the parish. We therefore had two groups under instruction and the Parish group made their First Holy Communion first. The school group were at a different stage of instruction and so made their First Holy Communion in January

2020 just before the next lockdown. Both groups had a socially distant Mass but we were able to make it a joyous celebration for all concerned.

Due to lockdowns and Covid regulations there was a delay in the start to the 20/21 group which was now open to all eligible children in the parish (both school and parish). As we could not offer face to face lessons the decision was taken to offer lessons via emails in the hope that we would soon be able to meet for face to face lessons. Children registered in March and we soon had 34 on our lists.

The view of the Archdiocese is that families should be involved with preparing their children for First Holy Communion, so in an unforeseen way, sending work home for the children has fallen in with their directives. We were aware that children had been home schooled for a while so although they were familiar with working from home, for some parents this was difficult but we offered support when required.

The children were encouraged to watch on-line Masses especially during the Easter period and were sent links to videos that would help explain the Easter story. Lessons were sent home weekly linked to the book "I Belong" which they had all obtained.

In May we managed to hold a socially distanced and Covid secure Invitation Mass.

In June following changes in guidance we were able to offer small group face to face meetings.

The children were split into 3 groups and each group had two lessons, where we were able to consolidate their previous work. Emailed lessons still continued up to the end of July. We are able to resume lessons for all, from September and due to the large number we shall continue to meet in the church where we can be distanced.

First Confessions will take place on Friday 1st October.

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion will take place on Friday 22nd October.

I anticipate putting a notice in the Newsletter during October and early November with a view to starting next year's course during November and get us back on track for May 2022 First Holy Communion.

It may be that the PAC might like to consider for this year or next, that perhaps we could hire the Bishops Palace for parents and children to meet and socialise (communion breakfast) after Mass as the Parish Hall will not be able to accommodate us due to numbers.

I would like to thank Fr Michael for his continued support and guidance during this difficult time.

I would also like to thank Wendy for her continued help and advice (we may not have been able to meetup but we have had many emails going backwards and forwards).

Lastly I would like to thank all the parents for helping their children learn about their faith and supporting them with their studies.

Brenda Williams

St Francis Xavier's Church PAC AGM 2021

Parish Health and Safety

Dominating our thoughts has been Covid 19.

Although mentioned elsewhere, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fr Michael, all the stewards, cleaners, welcomers, I.T. wizards and others who have put so much time and energy into making sure our Church conforms to the Covid 19 instructions. Cleaning surfaces, supervising social distancing and generally going 'over and above' what is required, has kept us all safe. Without you what has been a difficult 18 months would have been even worse.

Thanks, also go to everyone in the Parish who has embraced the restrictions imposed upon us by the Archdiocese and Government. It is by adhering to these impositions that we have played our part in managing the risks associated with the pandemic. This is especially so, as some of the restrictions, such as wearing face masks and avoiding close contact with others in our community, have felt so alien to many of us.

Currently, (as of 5th Sept. 2021) these restrictions are no longer mandatory but remain Archdiocese recommendations for those attending Mass and for groups meeting indoors. As a community we should do all we can no matter how uncomfortable, to ensure we remain 'Covid secure' and I would

strongly advise the PAC **not** to make any changes just yet to current practices and to support the continued 'wearing of masks', 'maintaining space', 'proper hand hygiene' and QR/signing-in procedures for the foreseeable future.

Paul Williams.
Parish H&S Rep.

St Francis Xavier's Church PAC AGM 2021

200 Club

The 200 club continued to function during the pandemic with monthly draws and the twice yearly star prizes of £100. We also increased membership for 2021 and with 177 members, we now have more parishioners signed up than ever before.

We asked Parishioners to consider the 200 club as a way to support the Parish whilst we were unable to gather for the normal fund raising events. We are glad to say that many people responded by joining the scheme for the first time or purchasing another number.

For those who are not aware, the scheme raises in excess of £1000 a year for church funds and costs £12 per year to join. This entitles members to be included in a monthly draw.

Currently **prizes are 1st£25; 2nd£10; 3rd £5**. We have decided that if the support this coming year (2022) remains at 2021 levels we will **increase the Prizes to 1st £30; 2nd £15; 3rd £10**. The twice yearly prizes of £100, will remain unchanged.

For more details contact

Paul and Brenda Williams via the office or 01432 850414