

Minutes of Blessed Hugh Catholic Church Faringdon AGM 29th January 2024

Attendance: 32 persons

Chair – Audrey Curnock **Secretary** – Roland Quinney

Audrey welcomed everyone to the Church at 7.30PM

Opening Prayers: Father Claro – Pope Francis Prayer for January 2024 and other from Bishop Philip

1. Fair Trade, the Mustard Seed, Refugees, Earth & Faith Group report – Karen & Sjoerd Vogt

Karen talked about the Fair Trade and the Mustard Seed shop in Faringdon. Her report is below:

Background

Mustard Seed shop selling Fair Trade (FT) goods and Christian books was set up by Churches Together in Faringdon in 1986.

Staffed and managed by volunteers from all the churches.

Blessed Hugh has had a monthly FT stall since it started = nearly 40 years, only one in the town at the moment.

Faringdon became FT town in 2004.

Fairtrade Church

Registered as FT church many years ago but have let it lapse, so need to renew our status.

Two Criteria:

1. Use FT products wherever possible and at least tea, coffee and sugar. Share info about FT products with wider congregation.
2. Integrate FT into life of the church, during FT Fortnight or at other times of year, through events, stalls and worship.

Therefore, we more or less cover the criteria already but need to reinforce it and go beyond the minimum.

Nobody needs to buy their own tea/coffee/sugar for refreshments after Mass. This is all bought from the Mustard Seed. Let Karen know if anything is running out and she will order it and put it in the cupboard.

ACTION: Tell everyone on the tea rota

Also, all toilet rolls and kitchen rolls are bought through the Mustard Seed. They are made from recycled British waste paper and a tree is planted for every 4-pack sold. If you notice these are getting low, let Karen know.

ACTION: Tell cleaners and tea people

Eco/green Church

Mustard Seed no longer stocks Eco cleaning products, but Karen can get refills of washing up liquid and toilet cleaner from Tribe Zero Waste – the shop next to the Mustard Seed.

ACTION: Tell cleaners

Not FT issue, but I would like to have recycling bin as well as general waste bin in kitchen. We all recycle at home, so should at church as well.

We should use the church cutlery, crockery and cups rather than disposables for church functions. Would need washers/dryer-uppers, but quite a sociable activity!

Challenges

- To keep FT in parishioners' minds when they make buying choices, wherever they shop
- To keep up sales at FT stall after Mass despite cost of living crisis
- To find more volunteers from Blessed Hugh to work in the shop
- To make sure ALL refreshments are FT

Opportunities

- **To renew FT church status and to stick firmly to the criteria, encouraging other churches to do the same.**
- **FT14 this year celebrates 30 years of the FT foundation and FT mark. Moved to September (9th – 22nd) to give time to prepare special events. Start thinking now!**
- **To link up with CAFOD events and campaigns which the Parish is now involved in thanks to JP and Paul.**

She thanked everyone who supports Fairtrade and also encouraged parishioners to shop for Fairtrade items in other Supermarkets and shops.

Sjoerd talked about the Earth and Faith group – that it was founded by Faringdon Churches Together group 10 years ago. However, at the present time it is not a functioning group.

He also talked about the Syrian and Ukraine groups that have been housed in the town and nearby villages over the past few years. He also spoke about the new asylum that have moved recently in the town and how the Churches in Faringdon have assisted them.

Note: if anyone is interested Father Claro has written an article on Asylum Seekers in February 2024 edition of The Advertiser – which is on page 44.

2. Treasure's report- Andrew Chell

Andrew mentioned the names of the people who were on the Finance and Planning committee and which positions they held.

Finance & Maintenance Group. Who's who? °

Roland Quinney – Minutes secretary; Health & Safety deputy; Nerissa Gomez- Offertory counting and banking; Audrey Curnock – Buildings; Steve Barlow – Health and Safety; Mary Hughes- Safeguarding Mary Elizabeth Shewry; Sue Coles – Parish Hall; Lorraine Brabin; Emmanuel Boakye; Andrew Chell- Treasurer Finance

Accounts –Sept 1st 2022 - August 31st 2023 ° INCOME ° £ °

Offertory plate- Mass collections 8,636 °

Standing Orders / DD to bank 21,469 °

HMRC Gift Aid reclaims 5,685 °

Miscellaneous (Ins) 763 °

TOTAL 40,157

Christmas / Easter 1,247

Accounts 2022-2023 – Summary ° Income £ °

Offertory 8,636 °

Standing Orders / DD 21,469 °

HMRC- Gift Aid 5,685 °

Hall Rent 3,604 °

Total 39,394 °

Expenditure °

Parish Priest 11,153 °

Fuel 12,134 °

Diocesan Levy + CCLI 6,509 °

Church 1,641 °

Insurance 2,037 °

Building Maintenance 19,626 °

Total 53,100 Surplus/ (Deficit) (13706)

3. Safe Guarding, DBS checks, Eucharistic Ministers report - Mary Hughes

Mary stated that it is very important that the safe guarding is performed correctly within the Church. Anyone who is involved with looking after Children within the church environment must have a DBS check done (other than their actual parents/ guardians). This can be done

online and a document is then issued to the person if approved. She stated that there must be a minimum of 2 people with this approval who escort the children to the church hall for their Gospel session on a Sunday or any other event held within the church property, including the sacramental process.

She stated that for the Eucharistic Ministers who assist on a Sunday they do not require a DBS check.

Also, she mentioned that it would be helpful if more volunteers were available to assist with taking of the holy communion bread to members of the congregation who are too ill or who are unable to attend the church service – she stated that training would be given.

4. Life as a Committee Member – Lorraine Brabin and Mary Elizabeth Shewry

Lorraine explained how the PCC and the Finance and Planning committee worked. She explained that the PCC work along with Father Claro to assist him with his day-to-day role as our Priest.

Mary Elizabeth informed us about the various committees and groups that she had been involved with over her past 10 years at Blessed Hugh.

5. CAFOD and Evening talks report – JP Crilly

As **JP** was not available – report was read by **Mary Elizabeth**

CAFOD- Lent

- Lent appeal- Justice for the Food System • 4 people did the “Big Lent Walk” (sponsored 200km over Lent) • Parish walk from Faringdon to Buckland was well attended • Family Fast Day- 3 rd March - £127 raised • “Save Our Seeds” campaign- open letter was signed by many parishioners. Delivered by CAFOD along with similar letters from thousands of other parishes to Government ministers and representatives of the World Bank • Thanks to everyone who contributed

CAFOD- Harvest appeal

- New initiative for 2023 • Harvest Bazaar held in the church hall • Many thanks to everyone who donated fruit, vegetables, jams, chutneys and baked goods. • Many thanks to those who helped out on the day. • £186 raised on the day • 2 nd collection on Sunday 17th took us to almost £300 in total! • Plus Family Fast Day on 6th October

Aid to the Church in Need charity quiz

- New initiative for 2023 • Charity quiz held on 18th November 2023 • About 20 attendees • 1/3 were not our parishioners • Thanks to Paul, Aude & Vanessa for stepping in as quiz master and catering managers very last minute • £60 taken in cash • Unsure how much was donated via bank transfer to the parish bank account (Andrew Chell may know)

Bake sale held in the church hall once again

- Remaining cakes, biscuits etc. sold after Mass the following day.
- Fewer people donated baked goods than in previous years, but there was still plenty donated
- Unfortunately it was a cold and windy day, so footfall in town was less than in previous years and fewer people came through the doors
- There was, however, a great response from the people of the parish on Sunday
- Particular thanks to Mary Elizabeth Shewry for her tireless help on both days
- £179.07 raised in total
- (Last year £238.50 for comparison)

Evening Talks

These were held in the following months during 2023 with different topics and speakers in the church hall: January, February, April, May, June, September, October and November.

6. Children's Liturgy, First Holy Communion programme – Kathleen Thomas & Clare Cottingham

Kathleen talked about the children's liturgy that is held in the church hall on most Sundays throughout the year. The Children leave the main church after the start of the mass to discuss the Holy Gospel and return to the altar of the church after the Creed has been read just before the Offertry is collected. They are encouraged to say a few words of what the Holy Gospel meant for them.

She also mentioned about the first holy communion programme, what is involved and how it works. That the first communion is given usually in Blessed Hugh and then they attend the official ceremony with Bishop Peter which was held in the Catholic Church in Didcot.

7. Youth Ministry, Representing Ethnic Minorities & Confirmation Programme reports – Helena Bookye and Aude Mechalier

These reports were read out on behalf of both Helena and Aude

Parish youth group – Helena

The parish youth group began in 2021 as a confirmation group with 12 youths. Fr Claro, Nicole Kamugishan and I lead the youth through their confirmation lessons. After they were confirmed, we decided to continue with our meetings to support the youth with their Christian faith. We meet **every other Friday at 5pm to 6:30pm** for our teachings in the church premises and there is always a refreshment at the end of the programme. Currently we have 20 youths and 10 adults in our group. Normally we have more than half the number attending. Last year we were blessed to have Friar John Bosco, a Carmelite from Boars hill who has been coming to support the youth through the teachings of the church.

Last year, we were able to go through.

- Prayer, why should we pray.

- The character study of Joseph
- The mysteries of the rosary
- The youth and the social media
- the importance of the quiet time.
- Bible studies on the Sunday readings and many more

We also had successful youth day through song ministrations.

The feedback we had from the youth on last year's programmes were great and the youth were happy with the teachings and the topics. Most of them have become friends, they are more together than when the group begun.

Our theme for this year is: **Developing an intimate relationship with God.**

Some of the line up topics include:

- Living with a purpose
- The importance of planning
- Putting God first
- Believing in yourself
- Be content,
- Time management,
- Living as a role model and many more.

These topics will be in a form of teachings, debate, character study and bible studies.

It's our prayer to have a day out with the youth during summer.

Our meetings are really fun and it's our prayer that all the youth in the church will be encouraged to attend. Its free and its fun.

Young family group report - Aude

The purpose of the young family group is for families with young children to meet, support each other and help the children to grow in a Catholic environment. The last year has shown a number of activities promoted by the young family group, listed below;

- WhatsApp group where families can contact each other, organise walks & outings, promote near new children cloth sales
- Nativity play. It took place on December 24th and 5 children partook
- Walks and outings. Some of the families met several times during the year for walks
- BBQ. The group tried to organise a BBQ but failed to secure a suitable date

In the year to come, the aims of the group are to;

- Encourage more families to join the group
- Increase the number of children taking part in the Nativity scene
- Set a date for the BBQ
- Increase the number of events for the families.

8. Health and Safety report– Steve Barlow & Roland Quinney

Steve mentioned that the role of the Health and Safety ministry is to support Father Claro in his *Duty of Care* to parishioners, so that they (and the wider community) can worship and attend other functions in the knowledge that they can do this safely.

He mentioned that he was Head Health & Safety Advisor and that Roland was his Deputy. He Stated that if anyone has any concerns that they should report the issues to either of us and we check these out and pass on a report to Father Claro.

Two key activities relate to First Aid and Fire precautions.

First aid: First Aid training took place in February last year. We now have 7 first aiders including Father Claro – list of the names of the first aiders including their telephone numbers are on the 2 noticeboards – in the entrance of the church and on the noticeboard outside the church hall. There are 2 first aid kits – one in the kitchen area of the church hall and the other on top of the safe in the vestry. Both kits have been totally replenished with new items. They are checked by Roland every other month. The Accident book is in the kitchen area of the Church Hall. For 2023 no Accidents were reported in the book.

Fire risk assessment: This is a legal requirement, to protect us in the event of a fire we have a fire alarm system which detects fires and will set off an alarm. Fire alarm system involves routine testing, fire drill, last one was done in November 2022, another planned shortly, waiting for a nice Sunday. During the year have improved the fire escape signage and repaired the emergency lighting system that automatically cuts in, should we have a power cut. The most likely cause of a fire is due to use of candles, and we did suffer a minor fire back in December where a tea-light had been lit without being in one of the glass holders and was sufficiently hot to cause burning of the wooden board. We have since improved matters with the addition of an aluminium cover to protect the wood and am reminding folks not to light tea-lights if they're not in a glass holder.

Steve mentioned that the Fire Extinguishers have had their annual checks done today.

9. Parish Administrator & Maintenance report – Audrey Curnock

Audrey mentioned that she has been the Parish Administrator for a number of years. However, her role in this position will change with the new ministry positions issued by Father Claro. Parishioners will be informed once a decision has been made.

Property & Maintenance ◦ Quinquennial 2016 – very limited actions were undertaken – our future was uncertain no Parish priest for an extended period. ◦ Architect Andrew Townsend Appointed 2022- specialist in Conservation & Historic Buildings ◦

Quinquennial May 2022 ◦ List of Actions & Priorities – the majority have been completed – we had a long list of jobs to catch up with about £13,000 spent in 2022 – 2023. ◦ Late 2022 we turned to The Major Repairs – sorting out the cracks

This report with completion dates is held on the website in a document storage area.

Future plans 29/01/2024 Structural Engineer appointed Clive Hudson Associates ◦ - very careful analysis of the buildings – ◦ Tags were installed in June 2023 to monitor movements – ◦ Works will go out to tender- at least 18 months ◦ Diocese have approved spending up to £50,000 for the repairs, £8,500 fees. ◦ We will need funds in place – 3 possible routes

She mentioned about the cracks in the walls, that a local Architect is involved along with a consultancy who placed monitoring devices into the cracks around the walls, roof and windows around the pulpit area. These are about to be re-assessed over the next couple of weeks to ascertain if any movement has happened. The cracks have been around for about 30 years as they were discovered when the church was originally refurbished then, but they were only plastered over and then painted

Audrey then informed everyone as to what maintenance work has been carried out over the past year. Internal church work has been performed by Tim Hebron who has repaired items such as the toilets, painted and redecorated area that required and sorted out the guttering issues over the vestry. Other work was reroofing performed by an external company to replace tiles.

10. Parish Website, Parish email distribution list, Church microphones & PA, & hearing loop – Neill Taylor

Neill - he stated that he set up the Parish website 24 years ago, at that time the first ever parish website within the diocese. Please email him with any events that are happening so that they can be placed on the website. Items to go in the weekly newsletter should be sent to the editor, Maria Cupit. The parish email distribution list is now subscribed to by most Parish members. Some ex-parishioners still remain subscribed, presumably to keep in touch.

Church microphones and other equipment are fully operating. Neill recently brought the hearing loop back into action, to enable the deaf parishioners with hearing aids to hear the services correctly.

Storage of file share information to hold church documentation is done by a separate Fileshare website.

11. Church Hall Lettings – Sue Cole

Sue – stated that the church and other groups use the church hall on a regular basis, so it is important that she is contacted in advance to see if it is available.

She stated that over the past 2 years the hall has continued to be used by Pilates, bridge club and U3A country dancing, The calendar is online showing all of the booking dates which is very useful. She mentioned that the cost of hiring the hall has been increased and charges are now made to cover the use of gas / electricity especially during winter months. Charges are £11 per hour for parish and registered charities and £17 for all others; an extra £1.20 per hour is added between October and April to cover the fuel costs. Payments are usually done by bank transfer now but if it is by cash this must be given to Andrew Chell as soon as possible.

She stated that no-one should hand wash items – these should be placed into the dishwasher for cleaning as this is for health and safety reasons. Full instructions are near the machine.

She also stated that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned, that the bins are emptied and the floors are thoroughly cleaned after an event has taken place. We do not have a full time cleaner. All tables should be placed back into the cupboard and the chairs neatly stacked.

12. Food bank – Mauren Courtney

Maureen – she stated that she has been involved with the food bank for 10 years now. Originally it was her and Mairead who used to deliver to people requiring essential food and other items. Items are now stored in the Town Council and presently because of the demand approximately an extra £400 to £500 per week is required to be spent on food. Donations can be made to the council offices on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 10 to 12 – tinned items please but must be in date.

In December 166 adults and 126 children were provided with food items from the food bank!

13. Music Ministry & Youth Music Ministry – Sjoerd Vogt & Lyn Williamson

Sjoerd- Music Ministry he explained how things work with the main music ministry. That there has to be a framework of how things have to be done for the main service items and also if it is a special occasion such as Lent or Christmas. Then variations can be added.

He thanked everyone who were involved with the choir and to those who choose the hymns to be sung during the masses. Also thanked Neill for adding the music information in to the newsletter and storing of other documentation in the shared drive.

Lyn - Youth Music Ministry report

In the news today - music (singing and playing and instrument) is a gift for life - uses every part of the brain and improves every aspect of ability throughout life and into old age.

Childrens' music -

Not an official ministry - more an ad hoc addition to Childrens experience in church and with the church community.

Enrich their lives, give some opportunities outside the gift of their parents

Above all, enhance their prayer and praise life.

Regular Group Events

Christmas and Easter Children's help with the music e.g. guitar and ukulele and Kirsten on piano.

New Group Events

Helena Choir - suggestion for monthly children led mass.

Bought Percussion / keyboard

Ad hoc group events

Children's liturgy when I am taking the group

Individual

Instrumental lessons as suggested by Father - piano/ guitar/ ukulele

Parishioner Neil Taylor / Sjoerd / Lyn guitar lessons fizzled out after a few weeks. Likewise, the piano lessons with Lyn.

Problems.

Lessons linked to mass and parents don't / can't always come regularly.

Children aren't in control of when then come to mass.

Children and parents don't understand practice

Some lack instruments

We have the impression that something given freely is taken for granted, and not valued.

But we are willing to persevere-

Claire Cottingham's will offer 2 more children piano lessons

Helena will continue with the choir and we will have percussion very soon (Africans like noise)

I will continue to ad hoc instrumental groups at Christmas Easter and more often depending on what the group think.

14. Churches Together in Faringdon – Paul Padley

Paul - he stated that it is a community and networking forum for all of the churches within Faringdon where they share information and organise different activities.

15. Questions from the floor

These were discussed throughout the evening if they were for a particular person to answer. The Questions that involve the Church and Father Claro have been passed on to him.

16. Father Claro

Father Claro stated in a few minutes what he expects that the future would be for the Church for the future years and the ministries that would be required to fulfil the aims and objectives not only of our parish, but those of the diocese and also for Pope Francis.

End of meeting - Audrey said a prayer and then thanked everyone from attending – meeting finished at 9.35 PM