

Minutes for Meeting of St Michael's Parish Pastoral Council,
Sonning Common held on Monday 20th September, 2021

Present: Fr M, DB, KS, SB, ML, BW, TM, FG Apologies: MOD,
Opening prayer – Fr Michael

DB asked the committee to use this meeting to reflect where the parish is following the extraordinary 18 months of the Pandemic and to consider how we progress into the future bringing parishioners back to normality whilst also taking the mission of the Church and the Gospel into the wider community.

It is reported that only 20% of Catholics attend Mass therefore how do we encourage Catholics to come back to the Church and extend our mission to include those who have not yet met God.

Following the appeal in the newsletter with regards to the relaxation of measures to prevent coronavirus there were only 4-5 responses received. These were mixed ranging from one response that requested that all measures were lifted to one response that suggested the respondent was still anxious about the impact of covid 19

ML read out some responses she had received.
Parishioners had asked questions about the singing in Mass and the return of musical accompaniment, the sign of peace and what other ways this could be exchanged other than shaking hands and the return of the bidding prayers.

A discussion was had about the easing of measures. The cleaning has already been changed, so that sanitizing of benches only occurs after the weekend Masses.
In addition, it was decided that certain steps could be taken immediately. These include:
Removing the ribbons from the central aisles and the removal of the one-way system.
Communion will revert to coming down the middle aisle.

Social distancing and track and trace will remain and the benches in front of family benches will remain cordoned off. Parishioners will be asked to continue to wear masks.

It was suggested that there should be a transition period where stewards reverted to welcomers.
Sanitising of the benches will now only take place after the 9.00am Mass.

Communion in the form of the wine will not return at the present time.

It was agreed that all Masses will continue to be streamed as there are parishioners who are unable to come to Mass and it costs next to nothing to do so. Parishioners will however, be encouraged to return to Mass where possible. FrM pointed out that those over 65 are not obliged to come to Mass. The links to the Masses on the newsletter will also be continued. The wording "the obligation to attend Mass has been suspended" will be removed from the newsletter forthwith.

Father Michael reported that there are 5 Baptisms booked at St Michael's and 3 further confirmations.

Diocesan communication.

DB asked How do we ask the questions to non-practicing Catholics.?

We need to consider what we are offering as a parish. FrM suggested that when the Family Masses resume, we may find families returning to Masses.

It was suggested that we hold a series of Open Days, putting up posters around the area and could coordinate this with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the parish.

Db reminded the committee that we had previously had an Open Day and produced 10,000 leaflets that were distributed throughout the surrounding area.

TM reported that relatives of her neighbour had found the Church very welcoming.

ML showed the committee some postcards that Springwater had produced that gave details of the Church and service times.

KS reminded the committee that we had discussed putting a new noticeboard by the hedge so that people could see the Mass times without having to come up to the Church.

FrM reminded the Committee that throughout the pandemic we have been able to keep the Church open and accessible without the need for booking and had not needed to turn anyone away.

It was considered that DB should reach out to parishioners who were on the reading lists and those that helped with the children's liturgy to ask them if they are happy to return to the role. With a view to reinstating the Children's liturgy in the New Year to allow for DBS checks to be done. It was felt that there should be an induction afternoon for the readers and it was agreed that an appeal would also go out in the newsletter asking for new volunteers for both the Children's liturgy and the Readers.

It was noted that DBS checks would probably need to be renewed for parishioners who volunteer at the Church where it is necessary to have a DBS if working with children or vulnerable adults.

FrM and DB will check with DW at school to see what is required. In addition, ML will speak with the diocese safeguarding representative.

It was noted that two new altar servers have started at the 9.00am Mass and other servers are expected to restart shortly.

AOB

The importance of music in the celebration of the Mass was discussed.

It was agreed that further discussion should be had to organise a number of events to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Church of St Michael's (1947) next year.

FrM and KS reported that they had been in touch with parishioners who had gone into care and left the parish to check on their health and wellbeing.

A funeral form will be adapted from the one sent from the diocese to give parishioners the opportunity to express their wishes for their funeral and these forms can then be kept at Church.

Closing prayer FrM

Date of next meeting

Monday 11th October 7.30pm