Parish Partnership Meeting

Wednesday 19 June 2019, 8:15, St Anne Line Parish Hall

Present:

Mary Busk (SAL, Steward (joint))

Chris Busk (SAL. Steward(joint))

Fr Neil (SAL)

William Yeung (STOC , Steward)

Michael Eggleton (STOC, Parish Council)

Kit Tranmer (STOC, Parish Council)

Fr Quentin (STOC)

Anne Marie Fox (OLOL, Steward)

Fiona Christison (OLOL, Parish Council)

Fr Patrick (OLOL)

1. Patrick Shiel (SAL, Parish Council ) was unable to attend the meeting. In his absence Mary Busk agreed to chair and Chris Busk agreed to take the minutes

2. The Minutes of the Partnership Meeting of 7th May 2019 were approved without comment.

**Finding Common Ground**

3 A SAL representative introduced the topic of “Finding Common Ground” by referring to activities identified by the SAL Parish Council as ones where there was potential for joint working: for example, sharing the responsibility of attending Diocesan events, like the upcoming marriage course, and a joint group calendar. After the dicussions at the previous meeting, a SAL representative said this seemed to be a good place to start this meeting.

4. As far as concerns the Diocesan meetings, a representative from STOC expressed concern about being able to represent the 3 parishes but agreed to give a summary of the proceedings to feed back to the 3 parishes for those he attended.

5. A representative of STOC that in some areas it would be a wrong move to group together activities across Parishes - one of these areas was the First Communion Programme where there were simply too many persons involved and it needed a parochial approach.

Youth

6. A representative from OLOL suggested a youth officer for the 3 parishes to coordinate youth events and activities. This suggestion was in principle welcomed with the following observations:

(i) in general terms the youth officer would be an enabler not a doer, co-ordinating youth events;

(ii) a youth officer would cost money which would have to be shared by the parishes;

(iii) a youth officer would report to the priests of the parishes, although accountability would need to be looked at further;

(iv) it could be a job share opportunity;

(v) it would be likely that a youth leader for the parishes would not be in place before September 2020.

7. A representative from OLOL suggested that a good first step would be to contact the Diocesan Youth Officer, Fr Dominic, (as he would be best versed in current practice relating to youth work) with a view to inviting him to the next parish partnership meeting. It was agreed that the Steward from OLOL would make this contact as they were hosting the next Partnership meeting. **ACTION: STEWARD OLOL.** A representative from STOC suggested that a member of each parish council should in due course be allocated for the purpose of drawing up a job desription for the youth officer. It was suggested these representatives could also be asked to join the next Parish Partnership meeting.

8. A representative from OLOL repeated a suggestion made at the last Parish Partnership meeting that there ought to be a Committee formed with representation from young people to take the work forward on the Parish Partnership. A representative from SAL questioned what would be the function of this proposed Committee and what precisely it would be doing that the current Parish Partnership Committee was not doing.

Shared Diaries

9. Links between all 3 parishes were already being made through the respective websites. Events and activities were being shared and advertised through newsletters. Sharing of diaries was also seen as being a good idea. It was agreed that the key persons who needed to ensure coordination of a common diary were

(a) Fiona Christison (OLOL)

(b) Geraldine (the Office at STOC); and

(c) Anne Chin (SAL Parish Office)

A representative from SAL said they could coordinate this action. **ACTION: SAL and other Parish contacts.**

Other areas of shared activity

10. A representative from SAL indicated that it was important that the 3 parishes remain parochial for some matters – some matters were more amenable to sharing that others. A representative from OLOL pointed out that we should not lose sight of the fact the was have been allocated 2 priests sometime in the future and we needed a plan of action to deal with that now.

11. A representative of STOC pointed out that it would be helpful for everything each parish did to be available on one document so that a member of the congregation of each parish could easily identify activities to attend in another (eg bereavement groups). An OLOL representative said this would also be helpful to plan future work and look at where Parishes had strengths and could be built on for the Partnership. The Steward from STOC agreed to share the intitial spreadsheet of events and activities he had produced and would give a link to this to other Stewards to ensure the information was accurate and up to date so that it could be shared with the wider group **ACTION STEWARD STOC**

**July Interim Report to the Diocese**

12. A representative for OLOL indicated that the Parishes needed to take ownership of the fact that the parishes will only have 2 priests and get a plan in hand. The parishes need to get back to basics and dwell on the essentials of being 3 existing groups which needed to find a way forward on this. A representative from SAL indicated that this is what we were doing : we were identifying areas where we could start to work together and this may lead to other areas it was not a question of identifying a type of grand 10 year Plan. This was considered as a silly comment by a representative from OLOL

13. A STOC representative pointed out that we can only report on what we are doing. The fundamental fact was that we have to work together to bring our parishes together and it was going to take time. It was also mentioned that there had been informal indications that the Diocese would be content if the report set out some areas where there had been movement.

14. A STOC representative said that the report needed to say we were not of one mind, we were listening to each other, we were looking for areas of common ground, we were going to see what we could find at our own pace. A representative from OLOL said it should also include a summary of our meetings. It was agreed that the SAL Stewards would draft and share for comments. **ACTION SAL STEWARDS**

Parish Partnership Proforma

15. A representative from SAL shared this proforma with the group and indicated that we were unlikely to be in a position to answer all the questions. Going forward required the bringing of the parish with us it was not about the Committee sitting down and deciding things without informing people what we were doing and bringing them with us. That was a true participatory approach. A representative from STOC queried what the problem was: the process had been going on for 3 years with multiple meetings and consultations. There was no reason to be trying to go back over things that had already been considered and decided on. OLOL were wanting enthusiastically to embrace the new reality. A representative from SAL pointed out that the SAL Parish Council had, like STOC said at the last meeting, agreed to the model going forward of ‘3 parishes working side by side cooperatively’. A representative from OLOL pointed out that the parishes needed to count on there being just 2 priests in 3 , 5, or 10 years time. We needed to work now to address that. This would mean doing things very differently.

16. A representative from OLOL suggested that the group attempt to answer the questions even if this was just for a trial run at the issues. A representative from STOC questioned the utility in this. We had discussed earlier in the meeting how we could work together by finding common ground. If tomorrow or in the immediate future that scenario actually happened, we all now knew each other and could come together to talk about it and agree a way forward. A representative from OLOL pointed out that it was better to plan now for the eventuality for there being 2 priests rather than to have to sort out plans if a sudden crisis were to arise. A representative from STOC pointed out that once the parishes get used to working together on things such as diaries and events then this should make it more easy to agree arrangements for fewer priests. A representative from SAL said it made sense to build positive relationships and to work together on matters that had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

17. A OLOL representative said, as he had said at the previous meeting, there needed to be a new group formed of 4 from each Parish to take these matters forward in the way the Diocese intended, they could be known as ‘the twelve apostles’. A representative from SAL said that when one Parish has strong views on the way forward in terms of structure and those views are stridently expressed as being the only way to embrace the vision document, this made it difficult for the other parishes to express different views or to feel they are being listened to. The representative from SAL said this whole discussion brought back memories from the previous meeting when we were told by a representative from OLOL that the members of this Parish Partnership Group were too old to deal effectively with the issues arising from the Vision Document and that a Committee with a more youthful presence needed to be formed. The representative from SAL indicated that such comments made them feel worthless because it implied they were too old to be effective.

18. A representative from OLOL asked who had said that. The representative from SAL indicated that it was that representative. The representative from OLOL expressed in the strongest terms discontent with this comment and the fact the comment had been made in open meeting.

19. The OLOL representative in question indicated first, that this comment about age was not recorded in the minutes of the previous meeting and, second, demanded that the representative from SAL withdraw the statement. A representative from STOC indicated that the comment about age had in fact been made by the OLOL representative in question at the previous meeting. A representative from STOC also said the representative from SAL had only been indicating how they felt and continued to feel. The representative from OLOL said that they considered the comments made by the representative from SAL to be unchristian. In the circumstances the representative from OLOL indicated that they were no longer going to participate in the Partnership meetings and would be writing to tell the Bishop.

**Next meeting**

20. The next meeting would take place in mid September at OLOL. OLOL Steward to arrange dates.**ACTION OLOL STEWARD**