

# DIOCESE OF PAISLEY



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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Diocesan Finance Council held at the Diocesan Offices on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

1. Bishop Keenan welcomed everyone to the meeting and Fr Burke led the opening prayer.
2. Present: Bishop John Keenan, Fr Joseph Burke (Vicar General), Fr Stephen Baillie (Treasurer), Fr Oliver Freney, Fr Douglas Macmillan, Fr Maurice Callaghan, Mr Philip McEachen (Finance Manager), Mr John Boyle (Property Manager), Mr Charles Edgar, Mr Charles Morrison, Fr Eoin Patten (Secretary).
3. Apologies: None
4. Approval of Minutes: The minutes were read; they were approved by Mr Edgar and seconded by Fr Freney.
5. Matters Arising: None
6. **Fundraising**

Fr Freney gave an update on the Fundraising. The first parish appeal took place in St Mirin's Cathedral on the weekend of 20/21<sup>st</sup> January 2017. At the appeal a letter from the Bishop was read out outlining the financial reality of the Diocese and the different initiatives that are intended to deal with the deficit. While the actual presentation of the appeal may be tweaked the response has been very positive. So far the Monthly Standing Orders total £737 or £8,844 per annum, Annual Standing Orders totals £511, and cash/cheque donations totals £6,490; these are not exact figures and more donations and Standing Orders are still coming in.

It is hoped to get the help of more young people to help with the distribution of forms and paperwork in the parishes, more copies of the leaflet will be printed to make sure there are plenty for the next appeals, and the pre-paid envelopes for returns are working well. A database of all those who have contributed will be established so that they can be thanked for their help and updates will be given through a newsletter for the parishes. It seems that the Retired Priests Fund and SPRED are doing particularly well just now; perhaps more information is required on the other Friend Groups so that people understand more about what the money helps to provide. It was suggested that Calendars or Diaries, along the lines of the Kiltegan Fathers, could be distributed as something lasting and concrete for people to act as a constant reminder of the need to keep the financial health of the Diocese in mind.

The appeal created great interest and there has been press attention both locally and nationally.

#### **7. Audit 2015**

The 2015 Audit has been completed. Mr McEachen distributed various summaries of the Statement of Financial Activities, Parish Income Expenditure 2015 and 2014, Balance Sheet for year ended 31 December 2015, and Notes for the Financial Statement. He took the Committee through the various figures, wanting to point out that without the £140k gained on listed investments, the deficit for 2015 would have been £347k rather than the £207k stated in the Audit. There was a discussion about the figures generated by the Audit.

The Cemetery was discussed as it is a generates income for the Diocese. The need to develop the ground is obvious, so that the Diocese may speculate to accumulate. The Bishop informed the Committee about new legislation that could affect the Cemetery, that after 25 years used lairs may be re-used. It was agreed that an In-service day should be held on this legislation so that the details and ramifications of it will be clear.

#### **8. Update on Audit 2016/17**

Mr McEachen said the situation for the 2016 Audit is much as it has been in the past, the changes which will come into affect after the implementation of SAGE will kick in later. Microsoft Money will run in conjunction just now with SAGE in parishes, but once SAGE is up and running monthly reports will be generated automatically. The 2016 Audit will be completed by the summer; with the help of SAGE the 2017 Audit should be completed by April 2018.

Parish accountants should continue just now as they have in the past; Mr McEachen will send out a letter updating the clergy about the SAGE changes within the week.

A budget for each parish was discussed and Mr McEachen said it is useful for the parishes to have a figure to aim for each year. The Diocese can help parishes through offering 3% on investments and keeping track of spending. The use of parish investments also helps the parish to budget for future spending.

#### **9. Property Update**

Mr Boyle gave an update on various property issues.

Lochwinnoch – the church building has to be demolished. With the safe removal of asbestos and other costs, the final demolition sum is likely to be six figures. This will mean that the parish of Howwood and Lochwinnoch will be in further debt to the Diocese as they can't cover the costs themselves. The parish debt will be in the region of £2k per head which is unsustainable. It was emphasised once more that the parish has to come up with a credible plan for the way forward.

Barrhead – the lowest tender for the work on the Hall was £211k, which with VAT and other costs, will be £273k. Work has begun on the site, but bats have been discovered.

Newton Mearns – the church needs re-roofed and various other structural problems have to be addressed. The cost is likely to be in the region of £200k which will come from parish investments. Due diligence must be completed and a sub-committee will present plans for the work to be completed.

Erskine – photographs of the rendering on the exterior of St John Bosco's were circulated. The rendering must be replaced as a priority. The cost will be £10k which the parish will

borrow from the Diocese, but this was not considered unmanageable by Mr McEachen. It was agreed to allow the work to go ahead immediately.

Linwood – the new Hall has been completed and blessed by the Bishop. The Vicar General asked about the status of St Conval's Social Club and if the club will use the Hall. Mr Boyle said that the remaining clubs associated with parishes in the Diocese have to be looked at; the policy has been that the clubs should close down by osmosis as most of them are struggling.

Cemetery – the Diocese is waiting on the titles for the land which has been purchased. The money has left the Diocesan Account and is with the lawyers, but unfortunately the farmer's mother died recently.

St Charles' – the roof of the church has to be replaced. £45k has been raised so far, the total is expected to be £120k, but Fr Baillie will seek clarification if this is for the church roof only, or includes the Hall and House as well. The original architect has been approached for help.

St Laurence's – substantial work is going to have to be carried soon out to ensure the building is water tight. Fr Coleman will be approached to get a fabric committee and fundraising drive up and running.

#### 10. **AOCB**

The Bishop asked about the property on the Esplanade in Greenock. The tenants are in. The properties which are being rented out bring in approximately £24k per annum.

Mr McEachen informed the committee that the Bishop's House Fund has been set up.

The Vicar General asked if the Audit details will be online when completed. This was confirmed.

A summary of the minutes of the meeting will be available online and sent to the clergy.

The meeting concluded with a prayer led by Fr Freney.