

## MINUTES

### ST JOSEPH'S COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025

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#### In attendance

Fr Antony Megalan Sellam

Tina Ibe – **Chair**

Helen Pearce

Neville Fernandes

Jennifer Thomas-Williams

Antoine Kodjo

Josepha Flahive

#### Apologies for absence

Lesley Allen

- 1) Fr Antony opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 2) An evaluation of past/current activities.

**Parish Christmas Fayre** - It was suggested that in future the request for home made cakes should not come with a stipulation to list all ingredients for the attention of any allergen sufferer. It was felt that this greatly resulted in a far lower number of items being prepared and brought in for sale in the 2024 Fayre. Presence of the food allergy signs would be sufficient.

It was agreed that the sweets for coins switch in Smartie Tubes should be included in future Christmas Fayres, as this proved profitable in the previous year and encouraged the involvement of the children.

**Coffee Mornings (Sunday / Friday)** – Antoine advised the council members that the Sunday coffee mornings were popular and were running very smoothly, and he took the opportunity to thank the various communities involved. It was agreed that these sessions should cease during Lent in order to allow full parishioner participation in the planned Lenten Reflections.

The Friday Coffee Mornings run by Lisa O'Hara and Simon George proved an instant success. Fr Antony suggested that consideration be given to introducing a faith element in the form of a small discussion, or a brief reflection/film clip. However, it was felt that the group should remain as a community building exercise for the short term with emphasis on encouraging friendships to grow. It was proposed that Fr Antony's suggestion be re-visited after a few months. (Fr A)

A recommendation was made to display a safeguarding poster advising parents/guardians that children attending either coffee morning must not be left unsupervised. (JF)

**Sunday Bible Classes** – Very well planned and enjoyed by the limited number of attendees, both adults and children. The classes will continue, but will resume after Easter.

**Bereavement Counselling** – The parishioner trained in bereavement counselling had been absent from the community since the decision to introduce this service was last discussed. An

approach would be made to this individual to obtain an update on the likelihood of moving this outreach forward. (TI)

**Sick Visits and Mass for the Sick** – Lisa O’Hara regularly arranges visits to the sick and housebound and these are very successful. To expand this service to more who may be in need, Fr Antony advised that he would make contact with community members to encourage them to enquire within their community and identify anyone who would benefit. (Fr A)

**Pilgrimages and Parish Outings** – The recent trip to the Holy Places of South East England was a great success. The cost of the coach was subsidised by the Parish.

The planned trip to Aylesford on 7<sup>th</sup> June has already received enough requests to fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the coach. It was confirmed that the cost of the coach would again be subsidised. The trip will be advertised again through the parish WhatsApp Groups. Parishioners will be given priority. It was agreed that invitations will not be extended to unaccompanied children. (L’OH)

The Pilgrimage to Fatima originally planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June has had to be cancelled as too few people had signed up by the deadline. Anyone who has paid the deposit will be reimbursed. (JF)

**Parish Quiz Night** – The date for this year’s Parish Quiz Night was provisionally set for Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July. Both Lesley Allen and Pat Barber would be asked to organise the evening. Participants will be asked to bring their own refreshments/drinks. (JF)

**Bring and Share** – Although a Bring and Share event has been arranged for both the First Holy Communion and the Confirmation groups and their families, it was felt that a similar event should be arranged to encompass the Parish as a whole. It was agreed that the planning of this event should be re-visited at a later date.

**International Day** - It was proposed that the date of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June (the Feast of Corpus Christi) be set for this celebration, and for it to substitute the usual Sunday Coffee Morning, and for it to be held after the 11:30am Mass. Thought will need to be given to what refreshments to ask to be brought in – light snacks as opposed to any hot meals, etc. and to involve all Basic Christian Community groups. Note – the Sprouts of Faith Post Communion event will be postponed until later in the year. (TI)

**Christian Communities** – Fr Antony endorsed once again the existence of Christian Communities within the parish, and relayed his desire to see the number increase. The fruitfulness and importance of these groups will again be promoted in the Newsletter to encourage the development within those communities not yet represented.

**Movie Nights** – The Movie Nights were previously managed by a parishioner who has sadly departed. However, the Council agreed that an approach should be made to potential volunteers with a view to reintroducing these social gatherings. A name was put forward, and this person will be approached in this respect. (Fr A)

### **3) Dedicated Team for Parish Catering**

The creation of a team of parishioners who would be willing to undertake catering for the Parish was advocated. Fr Antony extolled the joy and blessing that the sharing of food would bring to groups gathering for various meetings/prayer time/specially organised events, etc, and although the creation of such a team would not be easy, the benefits would be great. Promotion of this idea will be relayed in forthcoming newsletters with the hope that a Parish Catering Team will evolve in time.

### **4) The Diamond Club / TTT / SVP**

Council members were read a report on the current position of all three groups.

The admirable mission undertaken by Lesley Allen and the Diamond Club team continues into its 24<sup>th</sup> year, supporting the Parish and the local community. Although funds were recently

exhausted, a bequest of £10,000 was received by a member who sadly died in December 2024. A further NCIL Council grant has been applied for and if successful will be made available from July.

The Third Thursday Time group continues to meet monthly supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Although very small – 3 members – the SVP team assist wherever possible although to a limited number as a result of its size. Working with the Food Bank co-ordinator, assistance can be given by referral to foodbanks in the area. Ideally to grow the team, a dedicated admin person is required.

## **5) Food Bank**

Helen Pearce continues to manage this very successful mission. The Donation Box kept in the porch allows donations to be made at any time. Promotion of the Food Bank is made to members of all Parish WhatsApp groups monthly. Working closely with the Lewisham Donation Hub, Helen is able to identify any specific needs, where referrals can be made and how the Parish can get involved.

## **6) Yearly Plan**

### **a. St Patrick's Day**

A small gathering to celebrate St Patrick's Day will be planned by members of the Irish Community.

### **b. Archbishop's Visit**

The Archbishop will be visiting Holy Cross on 25<sup>th</sup> May, and will celebrate the 11:30am Mass. To allow parishioners to meet the Archbishop, and welcome him to the parish, a small reception will be organised following the Mass. The Community Leaders will be contacted with a view to organising the catering – albeit on a small scale. (TI)

### **c. International Day**

To be held on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Again, involvement by all Christian Communities is needed to make this day as successful as in previous years. Tina Ibe to make contact with all groups. To provide additional space for the celebration, enquiries should be made to see if the erection of a marquee is a viable option (TI / JF)

### **d. Parish Feast Day**

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September. As with the International Day, involvement by all Parishioners is important. Also, a marquee has been suggested. (TI / JF)

### **e. Christmas Fayre**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Full planning to get underway as in previous years. (TI / JF)

## **7) Any Other Business**

It was suggested that the Yearly Plan – key dates in the calendar of our Parish – be displayed for all to see. Fr Antony advised that the plan is on display on the noticeboard – but also at various times the Newsletter will communicate key dates.

## **8) Closing Prayer**

Tina Ibe closed the meeting with a prayer, and conveyed her thanks to all members of St Joseph's Council for their continued support.