



## **Diocese of Nottingham: The St John Paul II Nottingham Parish Finance Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

**In attendance:** Philip Martin and Canon Philipp Ziomek (Chairperson).

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received prior to the meeting from John Doherty and Martin Foulds.

It was also noted that Francesca Lynch was no longer an ex-officio member of the committee, given she has now left the employment of the parish.

It was recognised that, in view of the limited number of attendees, today's committee meeting was not quorate under the terms of the diocese's statutes for parish finance committees. It was however agreed that the meeting would proceed on an informal basis, restricted to those issues which required immediate attention.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will now be posted on the parish notice board and website. **ACTION 8/25: Philip** to action accordingly.

#### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

- a) Parish finance update-** It was noted that Sarah Benedek is exploring the possibility of grant aid from 'National Churches Together' and other external bodies towards the cost of repairing the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the church building. An updated cost estimate for the building work has been obtained, which suggests the total costs will now be £599,887. This includes an estimate of £99,981 for VAT. It was noted in this respect that the government has now capped the VAT that can be recovered under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme at £25,000. This means that the parish is now faced with having to find an additional £74,981 over and above that which was originally budgeted for.
- b) Membership of the Committee-** Canon Philipp explained that he was still keen to recruit new members, including at least one female member, to join the committee. To that end, it was agreed that Philip would contact (i) Martin Foulds to see if he can identify someone else from St Anthony's whom we could approach, and (ii) Julie Blazewicz-Bell to see if she is prepared to join the committee given her current volunteer role in the parish banking and finance team. **ACTION 9/25: Philip** to follow up.

#### 4. Parish Annual Return 2024/25

Consideration was given to the parish annual return for 2024/25, which had already been examined and signed off by John Doherty from the external audit perspective.

The return shows that in 2024/25 the parish achieved a net “surplus” of income over expenditure of £90,150: an increase of 35% on 2023/24. This was mainly due to a decrease of £7,718 in our overall expenditure, as well as increased income- including a one-off legacy of £10,000 from a late parishioner’s will, along with £7,511 received from the diocese’s *Enabling Mission Fund*. The surplus enabled the parish to increase the reserves held in its set-off account with the diocese to £327,624 at the year-end. These funds are intended to help towards the costs, currently estimated at just under £600,000, which the parish will incur to repair and replace the defective concrete affecting the mullions and other parts of the external church building. It was agreed that this needs to be specifically highlighted in the synopsis of the annual accounts we are required to produce for our parishioners. **ACTION 10/25: Philip** to produce the synopsis in due course and include an explanation as to how the surplus has been used.

More generally, it was agreed that the annual return had been satisfactorily completed. Canon Philipp, in his capacity as parish priest, and Philip, on behalf of the parish finance committee, therefore signed off the return which will now be submitted to the diocese by its 30th June 2025 deadline. **ACTION 11/25: Canon Philipp** to arrange for the return to be submitted to the diocese.

It was also noted that the return includes details of the small donations Gift Aid claim which the parish makes via the return for loose plate offerings up to a maximum of £8,000 and that from February 2025 we are able to claim under the scheme for St Anthony’s as a separate building where Mass is offered. **ACTION 12/25: Philip** to contact Debra Harley at the diocesan Gift Aid office to ensure this is reflected in the parish’s Gift Aid reimbursement arrangements.

#### 5. Parish finances-update

Philip provided an update on the parish’s current finances:

- There is a credit balance of £38,987.61 in the parish’s current bank account as at 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
- The parish’s separate set-off account is currently in credit to the sum of £326,965.76. It was noted that this was less than the balance available at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 despite two subsequent transfers of £3,950 from the parish’s current account. These transfers have however been offset by (i) a debit transfer of £3,458.27 made by the diocese on 10th April 2025 for the 2.5% “clawback” of the parish bank balance and reserves in the set-off account exceeding £150,000 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and (ii) the payment from the account of an invoice of £9,050.40 for testing the concrete repairs as part of the investigatory work required ahead of the impending project to address the defective concrete affecting the church building.
- The parish has also yet to pay an electricity bill of £9,503.88 for the parish centre which has recently been received from Inter Diocesan Fuel Management Ltd, as reported at the previous meeting of the committee. Notwithstanding our ongoing

concerns about the late receipt of this bill, it was recognised that in line with diocesan advice it will have to be met from the parish's current account. **ACTION 13/25: Canon Philipp** to action accordingly.

## **6. Accounts for 2024/25**

The separate accounts for 2024/25 for (i) the Good Shepherd Friendship Club and (ii) the Parish Tea Dance group, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were received and noted.

## **7. Parish contribution to diocesan central support services 2025/26-update**

Canon Philipp advised that a deanery meeting is to be held on Monday next, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to consider the new arrangements for calculating parish "quota" contributions towards the costs of the diocese's central support services. There remain concerns about the 2.5% diocesan "claw-back" of the balances over £150,000 in the current accounts and set-off accounts held by parishes. It was noted that the income sources for these funds are already subject to the 16% diocesan charge on "assessable income" in our annual accounts and as such are effectively being double counted in the annual quota calculation.

Concerns were again expressed that the diocese's approach to claw back 2.5% on our set-off account balances each year might serve to alienate our parishioners, given the parish's reserves have been built up over time by focussed donations from parishioners towards the cost of the parish's essential building work. It was felt that this income should therefore be accorded "restricted" status and excluded from the diocesan calculation.

It was agreed that Philip will let Canon Philipp have a further copy of his email dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 summarising the parish finance committee's previous consideration of this issue. **ACTION 14/25: Philip** to action, ahead of the deanery meeting.

## **8. Date of the next meeting**

It was confirmed that the committee's next meeting will be from 6.30-8.00pm on Thursday, 18th September 2025 - Philip to liaise with Rosemary Mahoney to ensure the Gilbert Room is available for the meeting. **ACTION 15/25: Philip** to follow up accordingly.