



Parish of St John Paul II, Nottingham: Parishioner Forum Meeting- 12th July 2025

Attendees: Isaac Amieghemen, Julie Blazewicz-Bell, Julian Caesar, Reg Carter (Chair), Graham Lea (representing Christ the King Academy), Theresa Joseph, Ann Lynch, Philip Martin and Janet Myers.

Apologies: Nicky Gudgeon, Moira Hodgkinson, Ron Lynch, Fiona MacKenzie, Christine Thomas and Sarah Williamson.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Reg.

2. Notes/follow up of the previous meeting held on 24th May 2025

The notes from the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

ACTION: Philip to post the notes on the parish website and the noticeboard in the Good Shepherd church narthex.

The following issues were raised:

- a) *Proposed flower festival 2025-*** it was reported that Michelle Swann had advised that the parish flower group was, regrettably, unable to commit to organising the proposed festival this year, owing to individuals' work and family commitments.
- b) *Cantamus Girls' Choir-*** Julian explained that a date for the proposed Jubilee Year concert had been agreed in principle and the parish centre booked, but he had been subsequently advised that the parish centre was not available as it was required for a different purpose. The proposed concert may now therefore slip into Spring 2026 at the earliest. Julian will need to be advised of the dates the parish centre will be available so he can explore this further.
ACTION: Rosemary Mahoney to be asked to link with Julian on this.
- c) *Jubilee Pilgrim Trail-*** a brief update on experience to date with regard to the Trail was provided. The Thursday opening arrangements are to be temporarily suspended from 29th July until the beginning of September 2025. It was confirmed that the Trail had been publicised within churches in the deanery. It was suggested that other non-Catholic churches in the locality might also helpfully be advised of its availability. **Philip** to consider/action.

- d) Altar servers' party-** Julie advised the next altar servers' party is scheduled for 5-6.30pm on Friday, 26th September 2025. This will be followed the next day by the altar servers' Mass at St Barnabas Cathedral.
- e) Petitions for Lourdes-** it was reported that this initiative had been well received by parishioners at both the Good Shepherd and St Anthony's churches. The petitions will be placed at the Grotto by students from Christ the King Academy. It was agreed that the initiative would be repeated in future years. **ACTION: Julie/Philip**
- Bursaries from the parish's St John Paul II Youth Foundation are supporting four young people from Christ the King Academy who will be accompanying the pilgrimage as volunteer helpers. It was confirmed that the bursaries are open to any parish students who attend the diocesan pilgrimage as helpers.
- f) Scottish saints' relics-** Ron Lynch advised subsequently by email that the relics of the Scottish saints were made available for veneration at the Good Shepherd Church on 2nd/3rd July 2025, arranged by the Knights of St Columba. The church was opened after the morning services and then from 2-4pm and 6-7pm on each day. A total of 120 people came to the sessions to venerate the relics. Ron expressed his gratitude to Fr Philipp, Caroline Smith for arranging the holy hours and our sacristans for the support provided.
- g) Education Sunday, 14th September 2025-** Reg reported that Christ the King Academy students will be supporting the liturgy at the 9.45am Mass at the Good Shepherd Church on 14th September 2025. **ACTION: Graham** to confirm the arrangements with the academy staff.
- h) Vocations to the priesthood-** Isaac advised that Fr Neil Peoples, the diocesan vocations director, has agreed to meet with the Friends of Jesus of Nazareth group to help the group develop a plan to promote vocations in the parish. The group is due to meet on 18th July 2025 and will hopefully at that time identify a couple of potential dates for the proposed meeting with Fr Neil.

3. Parish social media & communications policy/calendar

This item was not considered in view of Sarah Williamson's absence. Reg will link with Sarah and arrange for the latest version of the calendar to be sent to Philip to circulate to the Forum. **ACTION: Reg/Sarah/Philip.**

4. Parish pastoral team - feedback

Reg provided feedback from the parish pastoral team, which comprises Fr Philipp, Reg, Sarah Williamson, Adriano Staiano and Christine Reilly (the former head teacher of St Margaret Clitherow Academy) and which last met on 7th July 2025. Its next scheduled meeting is on 1st September 2025.

Items discussed included:

- **Parish website-** The new parish website (accessed through the link: stjohnpaulparish.co.uk) is now operational and is being administered by Rosemary Mahoney, with support from Julie Rawding. The communications team is to produce a document for parish ministry leads about how to post/update information on the website. **ACTION: Communications Team.**

The Parishioner Forum members are encouraged to visit the new website and send any comments to Reg/Rosemary Mahoney/Julie Rawding. **ACTION: All Parishioner Forum members.**

It was noted in this respect that a Google search on the Good Shepherd Church still currently links visitors to the old parish website. **ACTION: Reg** to raise this with Julie Rawding for the linkage to be corrected to the new website.

- **School/parish partnerships-** Tom Baptist, the director of chaplaincy for the Our Lady of Lourdes Multi-Agency Trust, is leading work to arrange a Stations of the Cross service at the Good Shepherd Church involving Years 5-8 pupils from several academies, including Christ the King, Good Shepherd, St Margaret Clitherow, Hucknall Holy Cross and Sacred Heart at Carlton. It was also mentioned that further thought is being given as to how more effective home/school/parish partnerships can be created.
- **Forward planning-** it was suggested that from September 2025 onwards the parish needs to be more proactive in terms of its advanced planning for future events, linking with the parish calendar. **ACTION: All parish ministry leads.**
- **Lady of Fatima procession-** it was noted the Lady of Fatima procession in October this year will be held at Nottingham Cathedral, not Good Shepherd Church.
- **Parish synod-** Reg explained that consideration is being given to the establishment of a parish synod meeting. The Forum supported the proposal in principle, on the understanding that it would need to have clearly defined aims and an appropriate process to support it. Reg will now discuss this further with Tom Baptist and Joe Hopkins and thereafter develop the proposal more fully in liaison with some other parishioners. It was agreed that synod

attendees would need to commit to taking forward any appropriate follow up action points. **ACTION: Reg** to discuss with Tom and Joe in the first instance and then progress this as appropriate.

- ***Parish Youth Choir-*** it was reported that the development of a parish youth choir is being actively considered, with the intention of it performing at Mass at the Good Shepherd on a monthly basis. It was also agreed that it would be helpful, in the context of the further development of our new parish, if the proposed youth choir and the existing parish folk group could occasionally perform at Mass at St Anthony's.
- ***Parish Youth Club-*** the youth club is still operating successfully under the leadership of Peter Hanson, with between 20-25 young people attending each week. The club is hoping to recruit additional volunteer assistants to help it develop further (NB: see the subsequent note under safeguarding item regarding the need for all such volunteers to have DBS clearance).
- ***Alpha-*** the Alpha programme is to restart on 21st September 2025 and will be publicised appropriately within the parish.
- ***RCIA programmes-*** it was confirmed that the second RCIA tranche will commence in October 2025. The first tranche, consisting of 11 people, continues meanwhile. The RCIC programme (for children) is being organised by Christine Reilly and Hannah Icke- Julian reminded Reg that he would need details of the volunteers concerned so that safeguarding clearance can be sought. **ACTION: Reg** to follow up.
- ***Ministry representation-*** Reg mentioned that Fr Philipp had reiterated his expectation that each parish ministry would routinely be represented at the Parish Forum meetings. **ACTION: Reg/Sarah Williamson** to follow up with ministry leads.
- ***Defibrillator training-*** training for parish welcomers et al on the use of the defibrillator located at the Good Shepherd Church has yet to be organised. **ACTION: Reg** to follow up with Rebecca O'Connor or consider alternative arrangements.

5. Good Shepherd- number of Masses

Discussion centred on the paper and related data on Mass attendance which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was recognised that it is entirely Fr Philipp's prerogative as to the number of Masses he feels able to celebrate each weekend. The Forum was however concerned about the considerable workload falling on Fr Philipp and felt that the

current arrangements, involving one priest covering four Masses on each Sunday spread over two churches, were unsustainable in the long term.

It was agreed therefore the Forum would offer Fr Philipp its advice for him to consider as appropriate. To that end, it was suggested that if one or more Masses were not to be discontinued at this time, the number of Masses over Saturday and Sunday could perhaps be managed by a combination of the following options which are not mutually exclusive:

- Some Masses could be replaced, on a rotational basis, by services of the Word delivered by Eucharistic ministers.
- Visiting priests could perhaps be routinely asked to help- the Forum wondered, for example, whether Cathedral based clergy would be able to help in this respect?

It was recognised that this was a very difficult issue given the current shortage of priests and it was agreed that the Forum members would pray to the Holy Spirit for further help and wisdom. **ACTION: All Forum members.**

It was agreed that the Mass attendance data and the views of the Forum should be forwarded to Fr Philipp for his consideration. **ACTION: Philip** to action on behalf of the Forum.

6.St Anthony's

In the absence at the meeting of representatives from St Anthony's, Julian reported on the following issues which Christine Thomas had asked him to draw to the attention of the Forum:

- ***Sunday Mass children's liturgy group at St Anthony's-*** this is going well, albeit there are some constraints in relation to the space available in the sacristy. The group will continue to meet during the school holidays.
- ***Volunteer appeal-*** Fr Philipp had permitted Christine to have homily time at the beginning of June, to talk about the roles and positives of volunteering within the church and to appeal for more volunteers at St Anthony's. This resulted in three new non-DBS volunteers and a possible DBS volunteer coming forward.

In the light of this successful outcome, the Forum suggested that Christine could perhaps be invited to undertake a similar talk at Good Shepherd at a time to be agreed with Fr Philipp, perhaps linking with Julian to combine this with a talk on Safeguarding Sunday. **ACTION: Christine** to consider in liaison with Julian.

7. Safeguarding

Julian reported that Christine had sent him the following updates:

- ***Parish youth group volunteers-*** with regard to the query raised at the last meeting of the Forum about recruiting volunteers to help with the parish youth group, the diocese had confirmed that all volunteers helping at a children's group need to be DBS checked. This is confirmed by reference to the parish safeguarding handbook (a copy of which is available at both churches and which states under section 13.4 "Anyone working or supporting children will always require DBS clearance").
- ***Management of the DBS process-*** the management arrangements are transferring to a new provider- details are awaited. Consequently, during the last two weeks of July there will be a disruption of DBS checks owing to the secure migration of data and full testing of the new system.
- ***Diocesan safeguarding for young people booklet-*** this has recently become available to be given to all altar servers, choir members, helpers etc during the recruitment process and to existing young people aged 11-17 years who are involved in church activities.
- ***St Anthony's volunteer numbers-*** currently there are 18 non-DBS volunteers and 13 DBS volunteers.

Julian provided the following additional information:

- ***Recruitment of parishioners for ministries-*** ministry leads need to ensure that they follow the safeguarding requirements and that all new volunteers complete a DBS1 form. **ACTION: Ministry leads** to note and action accordingly.
- ***Good Shepherd volunteer numbers:*** currently there are 28 non-DBS volunteers and 104 DBS volunteers. Additionally, 15 (14%) of DBS recheck/renewals are currently outstanding.

8. Any Other Business

Nothing additional was raised.

9. Date of the next meeting

The Forum's next meeting is scheduled for 10.00-11.30am on Saturday, 13th September 2025.