



Parish of St John Paul II, Nottingham: Parishioner Forum Meeting- 22nd November 2025

Attendees: Isaac Amieghemen, Julie Blazewicz-Bell, Reg Carter (Chair), Nicky Gudgeon, Theresa Joseph, Philip Martin, Janet Myers, Michelle Swann, Christine Thomas and Celine Toner.

Apologies: Julian Caesar, Moira Hodgkinson, Ann Lynch, Ron Lynch and Fiona Mackenzie.

1. Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer led by Reg.

2. Notes/follow up of the previous meeting held on 13th September 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) ***Defibrillator training-*** Reg reported that he and five other Welcomer team members had received the defibrillator training, provided by Adrian Jones. The training was very good and can be rolled out on request to other ministries that may require it (Contact:- Adrian.jones@emas.nhs.uk).
- b) ***Volunteer appeal-*** Christine advised that her talk at Mass at the Good Shepherd Church about the merits of volunteering would be provided at a date to be arranged in the new year.

3. Parish Pastoral Plan-refresh/update

Consideration was given to the parish pastoral plan, as requested by Fr Philipp. It was noted that the parish's plan will need to be updated to reflect and complement the diocesan pastoral plan which it is understood the Bishop will shortly be issuing. Meanwhile, the following comments were made by the Forum.

Initial responses, to questions raised by Reg, were:

- Forum members, generally, could not recollect having seen the plan before.
- The general view was that it needs updating.
- The plan, as currently written, lacks clarity in what the parish vision is and does not lead easily to formulating a series of plans to bring the vision to fruition.

- A 'Missionary Disciple' was felt to be a disciple of Jesus, who witnesses the Faith and influences others by their personal life, by their interactions with their families and friends, and by specific works and contacts with those beyond the church. It was recognised however that not everyone really understands how to go about this and would, for example, be uncomfortable with a "Jehovah Witnesses style" approach, eg involving cold calling on homes.

Other points discussed were:

- We need to develop a parish community that is demonstrably welcoming to all.
- A critical question is how do we enthuse our parishioners to be missionary disciples?
- We need to pray to the Holy Spirit to guide our actions in this respect.
- The parish has many ministries- are there too many? Do they help to guide people to becoming missionary disciples by giving a pathway to develop their confidence? Not all ministries are geared to this but are rather internally focused. How do we rationalise our ministries to concentrate on those that do provide a pathway to develop their mission to spread the Gospel?
- Parents are seen as being critical to the development of the Faith in their children, but many have a lukewarm relationship with the Church which impacts adversely on their ability to support their children's Faith development- how do we catechise them?
- It is felt we need a plan to catechise our current parishioners to give them the confidence to deepen their Faith and become missionary in outlook.
- We need to review and reframe how the parish engages with young people and their parents. Our sacramental programmes for Baptism, First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation are good but it is clear that parental support is in general sadly lacking to support this work and there needs to be a plan within the overall strategy to address this issue.
- We should be prepared to be flexible and encourage parents, children and others to become involved in the Church at their own pace, as and when they feel ready e.g. by placing the onus on parents to prepare their children for the sacraments.
- We should consider surveying parents and parishioners more generally to find out what they want from the parish, how we can help/support them and make the parish more meaningful for them. The survey could be done anonymously to ensure frank responses. The results of such a survey should be properly analysed and used to inform our priorities and programmes of action. We must not be defensive and should be prepared to accept critical comments as well as positive ones.
- We should consider how each ministry helps to develop missionary disciples and assists adults to develop their faith.

- We need to develop our communication plan. We all use social media and our website and newsletter. Is our message cohesive and effective in reaching the ears of our community, both within and outside of the Church?

In summary:

- As a key starting point, we need to develop a clear, but relatively short vision for our parish that we can share with our parishioners and beyond- the vision will in turn inform our priorities and programmes of action.
- Our overall objective would be to develop the parish as missionary disciples.
- The parish priest needs to be actively involved in framing the vision and “selling it” to the parish and gaining support. Help will be needed from volunteer parishioners to ensure a clear plan is put in place to deliver the strategy in a way which parishioners and the wider community can understand and relate to.
- Our planning should be developed with reference to the diocesan pastoral plan to ensure an appropriate degree of synergy between the two plans.

ACTION: Reg to feedback to Fr Philipp on behalf of the Parishioner Forum.

4. Parish social media & communications policy/calendar

This item was not discussed in Sarah Williamson’s absence. It was noted however that the calendar is available for reference on the new parish website and, in order to save on paperwork, the relevant link is now automatically provided when the agenda for the meeting is circulated.

5. Parish pastoral team - feedback

Reg advised that Fr Philipp was keen to develop and promote the vision for the parish, to update the parish pastoral plan as appropriate, and to develop stronger links within the parish and with our schools. This was considered in more detail during today’s discussion on the parish pastoral plan.

6. Good Shepherd Church- Open Day

It was confirmed that the open day was held on 1st November 2025. The event had been successful, with about 40 people in attendance. Food/refreshments were provided by the parish for the attendees.

7. Parish ministries-standards/checklist

Consideration was given to the updated checklist which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting, reflecting comments made by colleagues following the Parishioner Forum’s previous meeting. It was agreed that the checklist should now be circulated to parish ministry leads. Philip volunteered to do this by email and to encourage the leads to contact him if they needed discussion or clarification about any elements of the checklist; Reg to provided Philip with the ministry leads’ contact details to facilitate this approach. **ACTION:** Reg/Philip.

8. Parish finance issues

Consideration was given to the written response made by Philip on behalf of the parish finance committee, regarding the issues raised at the Forum's previous meeting and which had been circulated with the papers for today's meeting. It was suggested that it would be helpful to advise parishioners how the parish's allocations from the diocese's Enabling Mission Fund had been used to date within the parish, perhaps through a note in the parish newsletter. **ACTION: Philip** to confer with Fr Philipp about this.

9. St Anthony's

Christine advised that the annual autumn fayre at St Anthony's was held on 15th November 2025. Over £900 was raised on the day, and the final total will in due course increase to include income from the remains of the bottle tombola now being held after Sunday Masses. Profits from the event will be shared on a 50/50 basis between the parish and the Core Centre community hub in Calverton.

10. Safeguarding

Julian and Christine reported by way of email, for circulation with the notes of today's meeting viz:

- The parish safeguarding representatives continue to manage safeguarding for the parish and deal in a timely way with concerns/issues on a need-to-know basis, with escalation as necessary.
- It was confirmed that the Christmas bazaar, the parish youth group and parish choir have achieved the necessary volunteer DBS checks.
- The parish safeguarding self-audit for 2025 has been received from the diocese for completion with Fr Philipp and return by 5th January 2026.
- There are 14 DBS checked volunteers and 16 non-DSB volunteers at St Anthony's.
- At Good Shepherd, there are 109 DBS checked volunteers and 28 non-DBS volunteers. Additionally, 19(17%) of DBS renewals are currently outstanding.

11. Any Other Business

a) *Wheelchair users at Mass at Good Shepherd-* Reg advised that a wheelchair user had requested that the parish consider making a specific area available at Mass for wheelchair users and for pushchairs/prams. The Forum supported this suggestion in principle and suggested that the front row of pews could perhaps be adapted for this purpose. **ACTION: Reg** to confer with Fr Philipp about this.

b) *Special needs toilet in the Good Shepherd Church-* Reg reported that a request had been made by a wheelchair user that, to avoid difficulties/embarrassment, the door to the special needs toilet be left unlocked during Mass. The Forum did not however feel able to support this request given the disruption to Mass that had historically occurred when the toilet was previously left

unopen and when ambulant parishioners, including children, routinely used the facility. It was recognised that the parish stewards are always available at each Mass to obtain the toilet key, on request, for parishioners who experience mobility difficulties.

c) Sunday morning coffee- It was noted that very few parishioners from ethnic minority backgrounds attend the coffee morning after the 9.45am Sunday Mass at the Good Shepherd, which is not reflective of the numbers who now attend the Mass. It was agreed that the parish should do its best to encourage greater integration in this respect. In this context, Celine advised that the Good Shepherd Academy is to hold a cultural diversity week in May 2026 and it was suggested that the parish could perhaps link with this in some way- the successful international food event held some years ago at the Good Shepherd Church was mentioned as an example of the type of activity that could perhaps be considered. **ACTION: Reg** to confer with the parish pastoral team about this.

d) Holy Mass music booklets- It was mentioned that the parish had printed a large number of music booklets, supporting the sung Masses for the Good Shepherd Church developed by Robert O'Farrell. It was felt this was an unnecessary expense, as in practice the majority of parishioners are not familiar with the music and are not using the booklets. **ACTION: Fr Philipp** to consider for future arrangements.

e) Confessional (Door of Mercy)- It was reported that the confessional door in the Good Shepherd Church was prone to jamming and that this had resulted in children occasionally being trapped in the confessional. **ACTION: Fr Philipp** to consider what remedial action is necessary.

f) Parish website- It was felt that the new parish website could usefully give a greater profile to St Anthony's. It was suggested that Christine/Nikky should draft some appropriate text and provide updated photographs and send them to Julie Rawding to incorporate in the website. **ACTION: Christine/Nikky**

Some inaccuracies on the website were also noted- for example, the time of the children's liturgy group was said to be incorrect. Colleagues were encouraged to advise Julie Rawding of any amendments that are necessary. **ACTION: All Parishioner Forum members.**

12. Dates of the meetings in 2026

The dates for Forum's meetings in 2026 had been circulated with the agenda, with the next meeting being from 10.00-11.30am on Saturday, 17th January 2026.

ACTION: Philip to book the Joseph Hall for the meetings.

13. Closing Prayer

The meeting was closed with a prayer led by Reg.