

*Parish of Saul & Ballee*  
**Minutes from Pastoral Council Meeting**

Date of meeting: **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Time: 7.00pm

Location: Parish Pastoral Centre

**Attendees:** Fr. Paul Alexander, Vivienne McCormick, Jackie Breen, Tommy McCabe, Paul Fitzsimons and Geraldine McVeigh.

**Chair:** Vivienne McCormick / **Vice Chair:** Post vacant / **Secretary:** Geraldine McVeigh

**1. Apologies:** Paul Kelly

**2. Opening Prayer** prepared by Paul Kelly and led by Jackie Breen

The Chairperson welcomed members to the February meeting.

**3. Adoption of Minutes from previous Meeting** – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

The minutes from the above meeting were circulated to all members via email prior to tonight's meeting. All were in agreement and a proposal was made by Tommy McCabe and seconded by Fr. Alexander to adopt the minutes as presented. The minutes were adopted and signed off by the Chairperson, Secretary and Fr. Alexander. A copy will be held on file in the Parochial Office and a copy will be published on the Parish website and displayed on the Church noticeboard.

**- Action: Geraldine to email minutes to Parish secretary for publication on the Parish website.**

**- Action: Copy minutes to go on Church noticeboard.**

**4. Matters Arising**

- **Cemetery Policy Review**

Following our last meeting Vivienne had obtained and sent out to Council members the Cemetery Policies of Loughinisland and Portaferry and Ballygalget Parishes, as well as the policy for Struell Cemetery, to enable us to update our current Cemetery Policy and be more specific about the right of burial. These were discussed and it was thought some of these were very detailed but it was clear we need to include a Right of Burial clause and update the Grave Certificate to include the name of the Purchaser who will be the only person who can say who has right of burial in the grave they have purchased. The problem arises when the purchaser dies – who then has Right of Burial?

Graves are only for parishioners – a parishioner is a person who lives within the parish boundaries or is registered as a parishioner who regularly worships

here and contributes by a recordable means. In response to queries raised it was confirmed that a double grave is no longer allowed as we do not have space and no grave can be purchased in advance. A Court order is required for an exhumation. Vivienne will get a copy of the Grave Certificate and we can look at it at the next meeting.

- **Action: Fr. Alexander to get solicitor to look at right of burial clause.**
- **Action: Vivienne to get copy of Grave Certificate**
- **Action: To go on Agenda for next meeting.**

- **Parish Pastoral Plan 2023**

The last Pastoral Plan was 2020/2021 and we need to draw up a Plan for 2023. In the past this has been done under the headings Open/Welcoming Church, Lay Participation, Faith and Worship, Communication and Clergy.

We were unable to proceed with the previous Pastoral Plan due to lockdown - we need to encourage young people, P5 and upwards to become altar servers. There are 29 for Confirmation on 1<sup>st</sup> March at 11.00am - the teachers are keen to have a Mass – Bishop Treanor had things set up before he left and Fr. Alexander will confirm the young people - Bishop McKeown has only two years until he retires. There will be no new Bishop before the summer so things are on hold at the moment. We had hoped to have a picnic/barbecue on Saul Sunday – this would depend on the weather.

We could try to get Morning Prayer restarted. Eucharistic Adoration is doing well and Fr. Alexander suggested extending it until 9.00pm. We will leave the Family Prayer Ministry until Advent and try and re-introduce it then. There has been an increase in people turning away from Church. In the past Catechism was learned from the Sermons each Sunday when a set topic was preached on, now Sermons are on the Readings or Gospel. It was felt Sacraments could be taken out of schools and parents and children would have to commit to attend classes outside of school. There have been discussions as to how we get young people back to Church – there are courses available but they are very expensive – we need to get programmes going and if young people have faith they will come back. We are very lucky in this Parish with the numbers attending Masses. Fr. Alexander is trying to get young people to do the Readings at Mass – it takes the personal approach to get young people involved. The number of Ministers of the Eucharist is down and Fr. Alexander would like to get young people on board. We need a team to deliver courses in the Parish. Vivienne will speak to Paula McKeown to see what is available but we find the same people attend all the courses offered – the courses are for practising Catholics and we need to evangelise but it will be a slow process – Jackie does hospital visits, home visits can take a lot of time and Fr. Alexander spends time building up a relationship with young couples getting married and people are then much more open when you meet them again - we need people to have a good experience of Church. We need to look at ways to engage with young people who have problems. In the past Fr. Alexander has done Confirmation Retreats with meditation and quiet time and young people responded – he offered this to the schools but there was no interest – this would be beneficial for children in P7 and Year 8 - we would need to get the

schools to buy into it. When children go to secondary school many walk away from their faith when there is no input at home. These are avenues which we can pursue at our next meeting.

- **Action: To go on Agenda for next meeting.**
- **Action: Family Prayer Ministry to go in diary for Advent**

## **5. Any other business**

- **Pastoral Community Forum.**

There is a PCF meeting tomorrow night. Canon Murray will not be there and Jackie is working.

- **Action: No action required**

- **Church Sacristan**

Fr. Alexander is still working on this and will keep us updated.

- **Action: Fr. Alexander will keep us updated**

## **6. Date of next meeting/Prayer Leader**

The date of the next meeting will be **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm. Prayer Leader will be Paul Fitzsimmons.**

**7. Closing Prayer:** Meeting concluded with a closing prayer.