

John the Evangelist Parish, Duncan Terrace, Islington Parish Council Annual Report 2013

April 2014

<p>1. Establishment, Composition and Purpose of Council</p>	<p>The task of the Parish Council is to support the Parish Priest in his pastoral duties and act as a channel of communication between the Parish Priest and the parishioners.</p> <p>The Council is governed by its Constitution agreed in May 2011.</p> <p>The Parish Council at the close of the year 2013 comprised: Tosin Akinboboye , Amos Curtis, Michael Fletcher (Chair), Samantha Kelly, Ilaria Nisoli, Henry Okereafor, Louie Salvoni, May Sexton and Guido Waldman (Secretary).</p> <p>Frank Amat, Morfydd Evans, Sandra Gruescu and Andrew McGuigan resigned in the course of this year. No new councillors were proposed at the Annual General Meeting.</p>
<p>2. Parish Clergy, Staff and Assistants</p>	<p>Our Parish Priest, Fr Howard James, resigned from the parish on 21 July, having been given new duties elsewhere. He has been replaced as parish priest by Mgr Séamus O’Boyle with effect from 22 July. Fr Krzysztof (Chris) Sonek, who has been Assistant Priest, left the parish at the end of August to assume new duties elsewhere. Both these priests left with the deepest thanks of the parishioners, whom they have served so faithfully and well.</p> <p>We were pleased to welcome to the parish not only Mgr O’Boyle but also Fr Martin Plunkett, with Fr Larry Milby also in residence. These three priests serve not only of St John the Evangelist parish but also of Blessed Sacrament parish, Copenhagen Street, N.1., the two parishes being administered separately for the present by clergy resident at St John’s.</p> <p>St John’s Parish staff includes a Secretary to the Parish Priest, a Bookkeeper, a Housekeeper, and a Cleaner, all part-time workers. Parishioners help as volunteers with such tasks as laundry, church cleaning, and flower arranging. They also serve as Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Catechists, Collection Counters, and the young serve as acolytes.</p> <p>Oscar Ignatius has come in once weekly to maintain the parish Accounts.</p> <p>Erol Badena has been appointed as Parish Health & Safety Officer. and George Prosser as Fire Marshal.</p> <p>Music at the liturgies remains in the care of Adrian Gunning, organist and choirmaster, who also arranges well-attended monthly organ recitals over the summer.</p>
<p>3. Communications within parish</p>	<p>The principal means of communication between the Parish Priest, Council and parishioners are through verbal notices at the end of Mass, the Noticeboard in the church lobby, and the weekly Newsletter. The Newsletter may also now be downloaded from the parish website, which is kept regularly updated by our Webmaster, Thomas Machura, who replaced Andrew McGuigan in this role.</p> <p>A <u>parish picnic</u> has become a regular summer event. This year’s took the form of a street party outside the church and in the adjacent public garden on June 30th, as part of the parish anniversary celebration (see below).</p> <p>A <u>History Group</u> under the leadership of Colin Surtees has been producing informative Bulletins exploring the history of St John’s church and parish, as also an Anniversary Illustrated History, which achieved the highest standard of accuracy, comprehensiveness and legibility.</p>
<p>4. Communications within the Diocese and the Local Community</p>	<p>St John’s is affiliated with Churches Together in Islington, and participates in a once-monthly breakfast prayer meeting. Healing services also take place two or three times a year in one or another of the local churches.</p> <p>Although St John’s is no longer in the CARIS network of Islington churches which provides a winter night shelter as well as bereavement counselling, the CARIS trustees still meet at St John’s, a parishioner still being on the CARIS board.</p>

<p>5. Liturgy and music</p>	<p>In connection with the parish anniversary there was a Parish three-day Retreat given by Jason Gordon, Bishop of Barbados, at the beginning of June.</p> <p>The choir was reorganised to meet new liturgical needs, including singing at the Family Masses. A children's choir has been established for the Sunday Family Mass, thanks to Doreen Matthews, and truly came into its own during the Anniversary celebrations.</p> <p>Wednesday evening Masses during Lent and Advent have become a regular feature, as also has the one hour's Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Saturday mornings.</p>
<p>6. Pastoral outreach</p>	<p>A branch of the Legion of Mary was established this year in the parish, and is a welcome addition to our outreach projects. All the more so because our branch of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has had to be suspended for lack of volunteers to run it. The Ascent Group also had to close for the same reason. The number of Eucharistic ministers has been increased, enabling several of them to support the Parish Priest in bringing Holy Communion to the sick and housebound. However, further Ministers need recruiting to replace those who can no longer serve.</p> <p>In the summer there was an afternoon in the church for <u>Readers</u> and for <u>Eucharistic Ministers</u>, to help induct new recruits, who are always needed.</p> <p>A post-Confirmation group, in the 14 to 19 age band, has been established under Frank Amat, with James Donovan, Tosin Akinboboye, and Hemi, for open discussions of ethical and other issues.</p> <p>The <u>RCIA</u> initiative is well established in the parish, under the leadership of David Lester, with the support of Gilbert Vieri, and Deirdre Weir. At the Easter Vigil a large number of Catechumens were formally welcomed into the Church and received the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people</p>	<p>There were frequent Liturgies and Masses for our young parishioners, including the children of St John's primary school. An increasing number of our young people assisted in preparing these services.</p> <p>40 of our young people came forward for confirmation. They received their catechesis from a small team of catechists, supervised by Frank Amat.</p> <p>A large number of our very young parishioners received their First Holy Communion. Their catechesis was delivered by a small team of catechists supervised by Alison Riley.</p> <p>The <u>parish Youth Club</u> has enjoyed a good year, with a second evening's opening to cater specifically for our girl members. Outdoor sports had to be stopped while the school playground floodlights were repaired, but indoor sports, including unarmed combat, were initiated under an experienced tutor. Kitchen equipment and play equipment was replaced as needed. The highly trained and dedicated staff remain the club's primary asset. Financing the club remains a constant problem but this year has seen the club sufficiently well funded, including by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund, to engage in some strategic planning. However there remains an urgent need for volunteers from the parish both to join the Management Committee and to help with the youngsters.</p>
<p>8. The elderly, the housebound and the homeless</p>	<p>The Sunday Club, run by parish volunteers, continues to offer support to any local people who enjoy a little companionship and a simple meal.</p> <p>The parish clergy make a priority of visiting parishioners in their home when they cannot get to church. They are assisted by a number of Eucharistic Ministers bringing Holy Communion to the housebound.</p> <p>Louie Salvoni's charity, Shelter in the Storm, continues to provide a full round-the-year shelter project in the neighbourhood. A few volunteers from St John's help here.</p> <p>Day trips to the seaside for the elderly, this year to Clacton, have become a regular summer event, always well subscribed.</p>

<p>9. Parish Anniversary</p>	<p>The parish celebrated the 170th anniversary of its foundation in June. As a result of the most meticulous preparations entrusted to three sub-committees - a <u>Communications Committee</u> chaired by Fr Chris; a <u>Liturgy Committee</u> chaired by Fr Howard; and a <u>Social Committee</u> chaired by Sandra - the event was a total success. On June 30th there was an anniversary Mass celebrated by Archbishop Vincent Nicholls, followed by a street party in the street and garden outside the church. There was also a beautiful display of artwork, much of it produced by St John's School, and a very professional History of the Parish, the editorial team led by Fr Chris and Jane King, full of photographs and testimonies to the progress of the parish since 1843. Copies of this remain on sale. New chalices were also presented to the parish.</p>
<p>10. Parish buildings</p>	<p>The statue of our patron saint, John the Evangelist, has been relocated to the wall to the left of the altar, and was blessed by Archbishop Nicholls at his visit on June 30th.</p> <p>The church restoration project continues steadily. Work on the Baptistry will be complete once the flooring has been restored: this has taken more time and expense than anticipated as it has been necessary to reuse as many as possible of the original floor tiles.</p> <p>The <u>Fr George Haines Centre</u>, is in constant use for parish outreach projects, including the Sunday Club, Stay and Play, a German Playgroup, a Karate Club and the St John's Youth Centre. Hiring out the Centre for social occasions could yield the parish some extra income, but the decision has been deferred until it has in its turn benefited from some necessary restoration. The Youth Centre has seen to providing some new equipment for the kitchen, which also now has a new refrigerator. Health and Safety aspects are under the care of Erol Badena, and a Fire Marshall, George Prosser, has been appointed. Wheelchair access from the school playground will be organised once funding is in place.</p> <p>While the church remains open to visitors and worshippers throughout the day every day, there are security issues that need addressing as items of equipment, even quite large ones, go missing. The question of the proliferation of keys, and the use of coded keypads, needs to be further addressed. It is vital that the clergy's living quarters be kept as secure as possible, in a building to which many people have lawful access.</p>
<p>11. Finance and fundraising</p>	<p>Loans from the diocese, and from Trusts, have enabled the continuation of the church restoration project. Each phase of the project is only costed and initiated after loans for the previous one have been repaid. Funds have derived from raffles, lotteries, competitions, cake sales, dinners (many of them with a Caribbean flavour cooked by Fr Howard), and Sponsored Walks. The last sponsored walk raised £13,000 on its own.</p> <p>The Finance and Fundraising Sub-Committees have proved very efficient in maximising existing revenue, and Planned Giving has not only enabled some strategic planning but also recovered substantial sums from the Inland Revenue in Gift Aid. Increasing the number of parishioners committed to the Planned Giving scheme should increase the Gift Aid recovery.</p> <p>A separate report from the Finance and Fundraising Sub-Committees is attached to the Annual Report 2013.</p>
	<p>_____ Mgr Séamus O'Boyle, Parish Priest</p> <p>_____ Michael Fletcher, Chairman of Parish Council</p> <p>_____ Guido Waldman, Secretary of Parish Council</p> <p style="text-align: right;">April 2014</p>