Minutes of the Collaborative Pastoral Council (CPC) AGM

1st June 2025

1. Opening prayer

   Led by Fr Stephen.

2. Welcome

   Martin Foley (MF), CPC Chair, extended a warm welcome to all those attending the AGM. He explained that, after introductions from the individual CPC members, vision statements for Our Lady's and St. Peter's would be shared with the AGM to encourage parishioners to think about what type of parishes we want to be. Feedback on the vision statements was strongly encouraged. Thereafter, there would be a brief overview of the financial accounts for Our Lady's and St. Peter's. Once these presentations had concluded, the remainder of the AGM would be devoted to discussion, dialogue and questions. MF direct assembled parishioners to the cards left on their chairs. He invited everyone to use the card to volunteer their skills and experience to serve either Our Lady's or St. Peter's.

3. Introductions from members of the Collaborative Pastoral Council

   Simon Tibke (ST), Anne Elson (AE), Gill Ayers-Hunt (GAH) and Paul Milton (PM) introduced themselves to the assembled parishioners. MF conveyed apologies from Ira Winter. MF also welcomed members of the finance committee, conveying apologies from Jim Insley.

4. Vision for Our Lady's parish

   ST shared the vision statement for Our Lady's. Prior to doing so, he explained that both vision statements had been prepared, at short notice, at the request of Eric Kirwan, Chief Operating Officer, Archdiocese of Birmingham.

5. Vision for St. Peter's parish

   AE shared the vision statement for St. Peter's.

   MF advised that both statements would be post onto the Catholic Leamington website. Feedback was invited.

6. Presentation of 2024 financial accounts

   GAH spoke to the financial accounts for both parishes. These were circulated prior to the meeting.

7. Discussion, questions and comments

Many comments and questions were raised concerning the decision to close St. Peter's Hall with effect from 31.12.25. Several parishioners asked that the decision be reconsidered.

Roger Elson spoke to projected income for St. Peter's Hall during 2025. Year to date income had been £7,130. Projected income for the whole of 2025 was £17,112. With additional fundraising, plus a grant from Warwick District Council for £1,500, total income for the year could be more than £20,000. He questioned the cost of maintaining a closed hall, suggesting that by closing and receiving no rental income for two years the rental income lost could rise to £40,000.

Jonathan Holden suggested he had figures demonstrating that St. Peter's Hall was not loss-making for the period July 2024 to March 2025. Jonathan argued that during this period a surplus of approximately £7,600 had been accrued, equivalent to £10,000 in a full year. He acknowledged the need for fundraising to cover costs of major repairs but argued that as parishioners had raised £100,000 in one year for the boilers in the church, he was confident that parishioners could raise £40,000 to repair and refurbish the parish hall. Jonathan also offered to organise a prize draw for parishioners, inviting them to submit their vision for St. Peter's for a chance to win £500, donated by Jonathan.

Liz Mottram sought further information on the expenses for both parishes. Royce McParland offered to provide further information after the meeting.

Mary Shanahan felt that the St. Peter's vision statement failed to reflect the parish hall's value to the community, to parishioners and the wider public.

Freya East questioned if consideration had been given to having a parish hall that was not directly next to the church, for example in the empty restaurant in Augusta Place.

Jim Murphy spoke to the importance of synodality in our decision making about the future of our parishes. He also spoke to the value of the Pastimes group to the elderly of the parish, and wider community. He observed that the diocesan vision did not appear to embrace the elderly.

Patrick Reddin suggested we learn from the Catholic parishes in Warwick and Tamworth, both of which had parish halls that faced serious financial challenges. These were addressed through changes to the way in which the

buildings were governed and managed.
Pat also enquired as to whether there was an agreed plan for St. Peter's presbytery, church and hall.

Mary Rouse noted that many parishioners of Our Lady's and St. Peter's were unaware of the perilous situation of the possibility of Our Lady's church closing, despite repeated references to the possibility from Fr Stephen. Mary observed that Our Lady's, through promotion of lay leadership and co-responsibility, offers a model for the whole Archdiocese.

Natalie Clarke observed the lack of racial and ethnic diversity at the AGM and sought ideas as to how this might be addressed.

Jeremy Lampitt enquired how the CPC and finance committee members were appointed. Fr Stephen advised that the Parish Priest is authorised to appoint the members of both committees, which are mandated by Canon Law. He further explained that both the CPC and the finance committee are consultative bodies.

Paolo La Barbera reminded those assembled of the need for more regular income in both churches if any of our plans are to come to fruition.

Fr Stephen expressed his thanks to the assembled parishioners for the welcome given to him in both parishes almost 3 years ago. He also expressed thanks to everyone for all the views and questions shared during the AGM. Fr Stephen reminded parishioners of the request for feedback on the vision statements shared by ST and AE. He invited parishioners to continue to talk to him, to members of the CPC and to members of the finance committee as we develop a plan for our parishes. Fr Stephen also reminded parishioners of the cards on their seats, encouraging parishioners to volunteers their skills and experience.

8. Any other business

   None

9. Concluding remarks

   MF thanked everyone for attending the AGM and for the constructive nature of their contributions.

10. Closing prayer and blessing

    Led by Fr Stephen.

Time and date of 2026 AGM to be announced next year.