

## Minutes of the Walking Together Team meeting

16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, 7.30pm in Our Lady's hall

**Present:** Paul Hayden (OL) – Chair, Jonathan & Mary Holden (SP), Margaret Dimambro (SP), Anne Elson (SP), Liz Mottram (OL), Mary Grayling (SP), Fr Stephen Day.

**Apologies:** Kate Tennyson, Fr. David Hartley.

Paul opened the meeting with a reflection verse (Jn 21:5-6), some words from Pope Francis and the Synod prayer.

Fr David had sent some thoughts by email to Paul, which Paul shared with the meeting.

Fr David outlined his other commitments to St Josephs and the Deanery, meaning that he did not have the time to invest in the Walking Together group, while valuing the work of the group in continuing to look at the synod process.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September** were taken as read and agreed.

### **Matters arising from 5<sup>th</sup> September meeting, including actions identified at that meeting.**

Discussion arose over the recent meetings of the Collaborative Parish Council (CPC, formerly referred to as the PPC).

**Q: what is the timescale for release of the minutes?**

**A: the CPC has agreed that their draft minutes be circulated to CPC members present for consultation and approval before being uploaded to the Catholic Leamington website and placed in the information folders. This process should be complete by two weeks after the meeting.**

(Reminder: Anna Godwin updates information folder at Our Lady's; minutes could be supplied through Gill A-H)

**Q: is there a mechanism for parishioners to offer comments on the minutes?**

**A: the membership of the CPC is well publicised, and any member may be approached. The Chair, Martin Foley, has already had approaches.**

**Q: is it possible to use the Walking Together meeting as a forum on the modus operandi of the CPC?**

**A: the Constitution has been carefully considered and is published on the website.**

**Q: are the CPC meetings closed to those not sitting on the Council?**

**A: yes.**

**Q: would the Council consider a request for observers to attend meetings, in a similar way to District and County Council meetings?**

**A: this might well stifle discussion of sensitive issues, but the suggestion could be raised with the Chair. There will be an opportunity in June at the AGM for parishioners to have an open forum to engage with the CPC.**

Jonathan reiterated the role of Walking Together as promoting the synodal method in various forums. For instance, perhaps there could be an opportunity for smaller group "spiritual conversations" at the AGM.

Fr Stephen agreed that the difficult problems to be faced and the need to get decisions right needed prayer and discernment. Anne E had distributed notes re Synodal Methods to the CPC.

Fr Stephen reiterated that plans over buildings (repair and use) were not under a veil but were not yet ready for discussion pending reports and cost quotations.

Fr Stephen told the Walking Together Team that he could not maintain a commitment to attendance at these meetings alongside cluster meetings and Deanery Pastoral Forum meetings as well as his core work within the Parishes.

**Item 1 Action:** Jonathan's clarification document on the role of the Walking Together team had been modified in the light of the Team's advice and circulated to the Combined Topics Group.

**Item 2 Action:** contact was made with green form volunteers to alert them to children's liturgy meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September. A children's liturgy group at the 11.15 Mass at St Peter's is coming soon.

**Item 2 Action:** the CPC considered the enlistment of volunteers at their November meeting under an item on buildings and resources. This addressed the point that Anne E was asked to raise with CPC.

**Item 3 Action:** The representation of minority groups was not raised at the CPC meeting, but a "Toolkit" re. Inclusivity will be considered at a future CPC meeting.

## **New Year review: covering the four principal functions of the Walking Together Team**

### **2. Discerning and planning activities listed in the Stage 2 Report where there are no active topic groups**

#### **2.1 Prioritising Young People**

Work with young people has moved on, with the establishment of 2 youth groups ([does that include the one at St Mary Immaculate?](#)). Keep under review.

#### **2.2 Infrastructure** (communications, technology, use of parish spaces)

The Team wondered if areas such as these could be delegated to small think tanks. However, there had been precious few people coming forward to offer their services in these areas over the past two years. One or two had come from the green forms. Regarding the Parish Office, Fr Stephen did not feel that this was a priority area; if people did not have their call to the Parish Office answered, there were other ways of making contact (enquiry form on website, direct contact after Mass).

It was felt that people should still be sought for this kind of work.

In the area of use of buildings, the CPC had asked for an audit of use of St Peter's parish hall. Roger E is currently carrying this out. This, and information from Diocesan agencies, is needed before decisions over the hall can be made.

Discussion of the parish hall ensued. It is currently costing far more to run than the income it generates. Alternative provision could be made for some meetings in the Presbytery, though preservation of community requires communal space.

The need to establish a building committee on commencement of major projects at Our Lady's had already been mooted.

### **3. Discerning and planning how to meet in a synodal way things such as parish financial planning, operation of a pastoral parish council, relationships with other parishes**

The discussion in item 1, above, provided some airing of thoughts on these lines.

### **4. Progress reported by Combined Topics Group – note progress and suggest priorities**

Minutes of the last meeting of the Combined Topics Group (17/10/24) had been circulated.

It was noted that the Group remained active in many areas.

One plan, for a **Lenten study group in the area of deepening faith**, was specifically raised by Fr David in his message; he was keen to know whether it was going ahead and where it would be held. Liz M reported that 2 members of the Combined Groups had offered potential resources, that it was most likely to be held at St Josephs for reasons of internet access, and that it would be addressed as a major item at their next meeting on 30/1/25. The tight time scale was pointed out, but they would endeavour to have something running for Lent if the plans proved viable.

One priority for future consideration was identified – **ecumenism**. It features in certain ways among the actions from the Stage 2 report. **Ecumenism should be raised as a discussion item at the next Walking Together meeting.**

Some of the Team recalled joint Bible study sessions held by Churches Together during Lent. Others described the value of an ecumenical service for the bereaved held at Holy Trinity. Fr Stephen responded positively to a suggestion for a Mass for bereaved families in November. It had been the practice of his previous parish and he would gladly establish it here.

Two recent **first aid** incidents had drawn attention to the lack of accessible first aid kits at St Peter's. Fr Stephen noted this and would seek advice from the Diocese, as it was a health and safety issue. There are two first aid kits at Our Lady's; their contents need checking and updating if needed. Fr Stephen is consulting the diocese about the need for and positioning of accident books. The wider area of first aid provision, accident record keeping and risk assessment should be reviewed.

#### **5. Keeping parishioners informed of developments in the wider Church relating to synodality**

The Final Document of the Synod 2024 was released in English late in the year. It is lengthy at 155 paragraphs. Paul H had accessed and circulated a summary 8-page report based on this document, which he found on the ACTA website. Some of the Team were trying to assess how faithful and balanced a summary it was. No particular discussion of the document ensued. Paul was thanked for providing it.

It was agreed that the Team should keep checking for output, something that Paul H has been engaged in over the past two years. The ACTA document and the full report are already uploaded to the Synod pages of the Catholic Leamington website. In addition, it was suggested that features on aspects of synodality could be written for the Newsletter Extra and published over time.

#### **6. Any other business**

Paul H referred to the November minutes of the CPC, quoting item 6 - Relationship with Walking Together – in full.

“Members thanked the Walking Together group for all its work during the Synodal process. AE advised that once the Walking Together group had completed its consideration of the 100 actions emerging from the working groups, it was likely to be dissolved. Members recognised that the good work of the Walking Together group (and by extension all those involved in the process) and many of the issues emerging from the working groups need to be taken forward by the CPC. Therefore AE, on behalf of the CPC, agreed to ask the Walking Together group, once it has completed its consideration of the 100 actions, **to submit a summary report to the CPC detailing its top ten priorities for the CPC to consider.** The CPC will report back to parishioners at the Spring AGM. In the meantime, **it was agreed that the minutes of the Walking Together group meetings should be sent to the chair of the CPC.**”

The Team might well be able to put forward a summary report though they would not have considered the full list of actions by June 2025. Some progress had already been summarised through a report in News Extra by Liz M in July 2024.

**Action: Martin Foley (Chair of CPC) to be added to the Walking Together minutes circulation list.**

**Next meeting: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm in Our Lady's hall. Mary G to chair.**

8.50pm close.