



PARISH OF ST ANTHONY AND ST MARK

Parish Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday 17th October 2023

Present:

Fr Stephen Reilly
Margaret McGrath
Margaret Anderson
Anne Clark
Alison Roe
Marian Devine
Winnie McAulay
Jillian Duffy

1 Introduction

Father Reilly opened the meeting with a prayer. He thanked everyone for attending today and expressed the view that the work of the Parish Finance Committee is an important part of the stewardship of the Parish as a whole.

2. Action Points and Matters Arising from last meeting

- Father Reilly agreed to the Committee's plans for collecting Parish Asset Data and also to the planned training of three members of the Committee in financial management and reporting issues for the Parish.
- Margaret explained that Fr Coyle has signed off 6 monthly Financial Return for the Parish and Fr Reilly will be responsible for agreeing the second 6 monthly Return. A full annual return will also be completed by Margaret as the Diocese would find this useful and the Financial Report to the Parish will need to be based on the annual figures.

3. Current Financial Situation

Margaret outlined the current balances held within the Parish as well as monies held at the Diocese. She had produced a Monthly Summary Report of Income to date and one of Expenditure to date. Some particular items were discussed, for example, the income from Hall Rental is exceeding the Expenditure on the Hall. We agreed that these figures do not include fuels costs. Margaret had not, to date, been able to identify separate fuel costs for the Halls and it was agreed that the initial action would be to identify all gas (St Anthony's only) and electric meters and match them

with the appropriate location. If this can be achieved, Margaret can interrogate current information from fuel bills and assess the impact on Hall income/expenditure. The Committee agreed it should adopt the use of the Monthly Summary Report as a basis for discussion at future meetings. **Action Point: Margaret to provide Monthly Summary Reports ahead of next meeting to enable full discussion.**
Action Point: Margaret to obtain specific location information for areas covered by gas and electricity meters in the parish.

Father Reilly explained that he had attended a recent Diocesan meeting for all priests. It had been very interesting, for example, recent analysis has shown that while Mass attendance has declined substantially 50% in the last 15 years, income from parishioners has, so far, stayed the same. We need to consider what impact any future large project requirements may have, keeping in mind that the most recent three projects in this parish have been funded from elsewhere.

This led on to a further discussion on known major projects, identifying that the Poor Clares will be moving from their convent in Bothwell to St Anthony's Parish House. The House will require some work to be carried out to suit the needs of the Sisters, but that it had been agreed that the Poor Clares will cover these costs. The parish needs to consider what rental income we should charge for the House. A full discussion took place on the scale of the highest (Commercial rates) to lowest (Diocesan contribution to housing retired priests) expectations, but in particular, what costs the Sisters would be expected to be responsible for, e.g., Council Tax; Utility Bills; Garden Maintenance. As the parish will still own the house, it will have to take responsibility for some costs, e.g., building insurance, building maintenance works. It became clear therefore, that any rental costs we might expect from the Sisters must take into account all of these factors, seeking advice from the Diocese as appropriate and in discussion with the Sisters. **Action Point: Father Reilly to continue discussions with the Diocese and Poor Clares and report back to the Committee.**

The benefits of the four heating zones at St Anthony's were explained by Fr Reilly. He also noted that this enabled us to consider taking a wider view of how the church is used – e.g., if the pews were removed from the side chapel and replaced by soft seating, we would achieve a very flexible area. Groups could use part of the church for meetings and heating could be restricted to that area, saving on fuel costs. The church could become a further benefit to the parish community hosting, e.g Tutoring groups, SVDP meetings etc. **ACTION POINT : Fr Reilly to investigate work required to facilitate this.**

Father Reilly then suggested that the use of a QR Code for those who wished to make offertory payments that way, may be of use. He explained that other parishes have been using this as many people now prefer to use their mobile phones to make payment. He then explained that each parish has a funding page on the Diocese of Motherwell website, and some of our own parishioners do make payment that way. The Diocese then transfers these payments to the Parish. The QR Code can be

printed on the Parish Bulletin and also be displayed on the Church wall at the entry. When it is scanned it takes the user to the Parish page of the funding section of the Diocesan website where payments can be made. The meeting agreed that it would be a good idea, particularly for e.g., visitors who wish to make an offering. There is a facility to Gift Aid payments made on the Diocesan website so a check will be made with Finance at the Diocese if this will be claimed by the Diocese etc. **Action Point: Margaret to discuss Gift Aid with Diocese Finance. Fr Reilly to take forward QR Code on the bulletin and in the Churches.**

Both Fr Reilly and Marian Devine had to then leave the meeting due to other commitments.

4 Changes to Banking Arrangements

Margaret explained that the Diocese is arranging for all parishes in the Diocese to bank with the same bank – The Bank of Scotland. This will mean our accounts with Royal Bank of Scotland will be transferred. The Diocese has decided to transfer all accounts automatically and if parishes then wish to make changes to the number or names of specific accounts they can do so at a later date. Margaret explained that she raised some issues with the Diocese to confirm that all Gift Aid payments will automatically transfer without Parishioners requiring to complete a new Gift Aid form. The Finance manager at the Diocese has been assured that this will be the case, but a new Gift Aid form will be required within 36 months. The Committee agreed that this would not be problematic. Margaret also raised the issue of changes to procedures for banking cash. The Finance Manager could not confirm that Bank of Scotland use a coin counter but that they do have a separate business banking section where we can take cash. She is not clear on whether this section is open all day every day, it may differ in different branches. She did confirm that prior to the transfer in November, will have new pay-in books, cheque books; debit card and e-banking information. **ACTION POINT: A Roe, W McGinlay and M Anderson will visit the Bank of Scotland once confirmation of date of change received. They will ascertain the procedures to follow and obtain specific forms/ coin bags etc.**

5. AOB

A letter has been received from a Parishioner requesting that the Committee consider whether any parish funds available could be used to provide better lighting for the car park at St Mark's – particularly during dark winter months. The Committee discussed this in full and agree to investigate the possibility of installing floodlight style lights on the Church to light the car park. **ACTION POINT: Margaret McGrath to investigate cost of appropriate lights and obtain advice on fitting etc.**

6 Date and time of next meeting

The Committee agreed to meet on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 1.00 pm.

October 2023