

Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston Community Open Forum

Record of the second meeting of the Community Open Forum – 19th April 2023

Attendees: 19 parishioners were present

Apologies were received from: Father John and Pat Wallman

Pat Richardson who chaired this meeting of the Forum opened and closed the meeting with a prayer. Several items had been proposed for discussion as follows:

1. Parish Finances

Peter Ede provided a short but comprehensive update concerning the OLOL financial position as follows:

- Offertory income and Gift Aid had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- The cash offertory had declined significantly from pre-pandemic levels.
- OLOL is feeling inflationary pressures particularly on the cost of maintaining, heating, and lighting our properties.
- Without Gift Aid OLOL accounts would barely be in surplus which are, anyway, less than half pre-pandemic levels.
- A Building Fund has been established to prepare for the long-term needs of the Parish.
- It should be borne in mind that we share some of our costs with SJF Cambourne which reduces the burden on OLOL Finances.
- The parish has some funds available to it from the Alive in Faith Initiative

Furthermore, Peter reported to the meeting that the Finance Committee has agreed in principle to invest up to £40,000 in one of the Sawston Hope into Action houses to replace a benevolent investor who has withdrawn. Approval from the Diocesan Finance Committee is awaited imminently.

In summary, Peter characterised the OLOL financial situation as healthy but less strong than it once was due to decreased income and rising costs. Discussion following the presentation wondered about possibly reinstating past fund-raising initiatives such as a Christmas Bazaar, a Summer Fete, or a Parish Outreach project.

The financial data Peter presented to the meeting is attached.

2. Framework for future meetings of the Forum

The Constitution for the Forum which was adopted at the first meeting remains to be implemented in full. In particular, the various offices of the Forum are yet to be filled. It was noted that majority of the people present at this Forum meeting were old if not very old and that the rich diversity of our community was not fully reflected in those present. Whilst we understand the pressures that people are under from commitments at home and at work, we pray that some younger people will come forward to place their particular gifts,

vigour, energy, and creativity, at the disposal of the Parish community. Whilst it was recognised that many people contribute to day-to-day life of our community, for the parish to flourish into the future a demonstration of initiative and ownership by the wider lay community is necessary.

3. Eucharistic Ministers and Readers including preparation for the resumption of Holy Communion under both forms from the Solemnity of Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi this year falls on the 11th of June. It was recognised that it was a decision for individuals to make concerning the reception of Holy Communion under both forms. Discussion of this topic covered several issues – the possible need for an increased number of Eucharistic Ministers, concerns about the commissioning and re-commissioning of Eucharistic Ministers as well as the possibility of ways of receiving the blood of Christ other than directly from the Chalice. The meeting called for the return of the weekly period of silent prayers before the Blessed Sacrament to be reinstated.

4. Children's Liturgy

Preparations are continuing for the return of the Children's Liturgy. Getting in place all the required safeguarding arrangements is challenging as is the risk assessment of the Parish Hall where this activity will take place. The required ratio of 1 adult to 6 children will probably require for more adults to be involved depending upon the number of children attending. It is hoped to hold the first Children's Liturgy in weeks rather than months.

5. The Wednesday Club

The Wednesday Club is a well-established group of mainly retired parishioners who meet on the third Wednesday of each month (except August) for social activities of various kinds – visits to places of interests, theatre visits, or simply for coffee and cake. The Group is thriving but always welcomes new members. Please contact Trish Morgan for more information about the Group. Her contact details are:
mobile – 07837846697 email – patricia.morgan9904@gmail.com

6. Other Matters

During the meeting several other issues arose as follows:

- That a formal approach be made to Father John to ascertain any further practical support may be offered to him as he works tirelessly for our Community.
- The possibility of arranging for more regular visiting priests to lighten Father John's load.
- The arrangement a Parish Lecture series perhaps with a view to better understanding other Faiths as well as our own.
- That IGNITE be asked to put on an event for the young people of the Parish.

Everybody is welcome at the next meeting of the Forum which is on Wednesday 12th July in the Parish Hall