



**Sacred Heart**  
Southend-on-Sea  
**St John Fisher**  
Prittlewell

Parish Priest. Fr Graham Smith  
The Presbytery  
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**Minutes of Sacred Heart and St John Fisher AGM held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
26 parishioners plus Fr Graham Smith attended. Theresa Donaghy (as  
Chairperson of the Parish Council) chaired the meeting.**

1. The meeting began at 7.00pm with a prayer.
2. Fr Graham welcomed everyone to the first AGM for several years.
3. Theresa asked if there were any AOB items. No-one came forward with any.
4. Stewards of the Gospel gave an update:
  - Liam went through suggestions that had been presented by the Diocese at previous meetings regarding reorganization of parishes. He explained that he had put forward an idea of a Team Ministry of Westcliff, Southend and Shoebury whereby we would have 2 priests plus a retired priest and a deacon. The Diocese has responded by saying they are interested in that idea. Nothing has yet been decided – we await further information towards the end of the year, but even then nothing will happen immediately. We currently have 10 seminarians in the diocese.
  - We are looking to have some “Evangelisation” leaflets printed to be given out to non or lapsed Catholics who attend Funerals in church.
  - From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October a Cafe Resource “Let It Be Done Unto Me” about Our Lady will be available for 5 weeks at Nazareth House
  - Phyllis said that SJF is working hard to evangelise the community.
  - There was further discussion about reorganization – the possible twinning with Rochford- who would cover Rochford if no resident priest? If Rochford closed the parish would have to be given to another one. In parishes with a large debt, presbyteries may have to be sold off. The hospital chaplaincy was until Sacred Heart and Prittlewell were linked, served from Prittlewell.
5. Update from Fr Graham:
  - The Presbytery at SJF – the Polish priest wanted to live there but there are concerns that the church would become more of a Polish Mission and SJF parishioners might be pushed out. The general feeling was that this would not be fair. Also, no-one wants the current resident at the Presbytery to have to leave.
  - SJF parishioners said that it “was important to have an active priest on site”. Concerns were put forward that people want to see Fr Graham on a Sunday after Mass but he was limited to half an hour. However, Fr Graham feels that everyone who wants to see him manages to do so. He said that they had tried being available at SJF on a Wednesday morning (he and Sue, the Secretary) but, after an initial successful period this wasn’t used much so Sue is back at Sacred Heart. Fr Graham is still available there after Mass. There was a suggestion that this could happen once a month perhaps. This will be looked into. Fr Graham said that he does visit the sick at SJF (as he does Sacred Heart) but he will also try to visit people at home who are not sick.
  - Evangelisation- the Alpha Course will be repeated this September as a precursor to the RCIA course for those wishing to become Catholic. RCIA will be renamed the ABC course – About Becoming a Catholic as this title explains itself better. The course will be advertised particularly in the new Ekco Park housing estate. Fr Graham said that, although the Alpha Course is not

specifically Catholic, the ABC course after Christmas is. It was noted that when Alpha had been done in previous years, the people leading had not used the videos but did the talks themselves.

6. Joint events with the other communities who use our Churches - SJF invited both the Syro Malabar and Polish communities to an event recently – the Syro Malabar community accepted and attended the event but there was no response from the Polish. It was decided that any event being held should ensure that both communities are made aware and invited. It was suggested that we could have a concelebrated Mass (perhaps in the school) – Fr Graham said that the Syro Malabar uses a different rite but it could happen – he will investigate.
7. Finance – Malachy O’Sullivan, Treasurer gave out a printed analysis of the Parish Finances.
  - He was happy to report that the last financial year showed a surplus, having shown a deficit the previous year. He is forecasting a surplus for next year. However, there has been a significant reduction in capital since 2003/2004 – Sacred Heart from £157,000 to £12,500 and SJF from £103,000 to £45,000. He noted that the boilers in the churches are old and could need replacing at any time which would have a serious impact on the finances.
  - In the last few years there has been very little in terms of “legacy gifting” i.e. money left to the church in someone’s will. This needs to be encouraged more.
  - The Maintenance Fund has £8,000+ which is helping with day-to-day maintenance.
  - The property owned by the Parish brings in a good income and we don’t want to have to sell anything but that would be a possibility should we have a big bill come in e.g. for a boiler.
  - The “Quota” is the money we have to give to the Diocese which is 26% of our offertory income. We have to pay this!
  - 10 years ago Malachy forecast our offertory at £61,000 – this year it is at £60,000. So our offertory is at a standstill. We need to speak to the parishioners about what they give to the Church.
  - Papers and magazines – most are unsold, however, for the newspapers we are credited for those unsold. It was suggested we might encourage people to take out a subscription rather than buy at church. This can also have an evangelization effect of the paper/magazine being seen by postal workers etc.
  - The changes to the newsletter have saved us £700.
  - Malachy thanked the Offertory Counters for their efforts each week.
8. Use of Halls for the Homeless –
  - there was a discussion about whether we could use our halls for the homeless for one night in the winter. A local church has had to pull out and could we replace? There are a number of problems with our facilities – no washing facilities (personal or clothing), could only have single sex use, cooking facilities also limited. In fact, recently a charity looked into whether we could be used to provide meals but categorically said we couldn’t because we only have 4 rings on the cooker. Also we have no storage facilities.
  - The first step would be to see who would volunteer. Would need people to set up each night- people to be there overnight, to take over in the morning. Who would be willing to ‘police’ the door as there is often trouble if people try to get in if they are under the influence of alcohol and drugs – Harp and other organizations do not allow people in if they are under the influence.
  - Other organizations currently help the homeless in Southend. Could we help them? They work independently but they might want help.
  - Fr Graham will liaise with Peter Burgess who is involved with this to see how we might help.
  - Fr Graham mentioned “Sacred Heart Angels” who could go out to the homeless rather than have them come to us.
9. AOB – None

10. Fr Graham brought the meeting to a close with a prayer, thanking those who had come along and saying that we would have our AGM again next year.