

# ST EDMUND'S PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL AGM 2017

## Chairman's Report

### **Thank You**

As always, I would like to begin by saying a huge thank you to Fr Charles for shepherding us over the past year. He often reminds us that he is old and the parish is small and who knows when Downside might steal him away from us. So, we are v lucky to have our very own PP here in Bungay. Thank you again, Fr Charles, long may you stay with us and I'm delighted we had the excuse of your Golden Jubilee earlier this year, to express our gratitude for all that you do for this parish.

Thank you also to all the PPC members, some relative newcomers and others long standing. We will be going through the election procedure later but, like Fr C, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all those who have served on the PPC, those who are about to and especially those who are stepping down at this AGM. In particular, thanks to Sue and Peter, both of whom have served for several years, and in a variety of roles. Also my namesake, Helen Kemp, who has been on the PPC for the past four years.

As many of you know, I'm stepping down myself this year so I'd like to thank everyone on the PPC for their patience and support, thank you. It hasn't always been plain sailing but it's actually been a lot of fun much of the time and above all, it's a real privilege to have been involved in so many different aspects of parish life over the past 5 years, including: Diocesan laity meetings, parish evangelisation projects including producing our own Christmas and Easter cards, developing a new parish website, strengthening our links with the school, Family Masses and other youth activities incl Children's Liturgy, FHC and Confirmation, Safeguarding, parish events such as Paschal meals and St Edmund's Day, and a variety of social events and outings ranging from Fr C's Golden Jubilee to coffees after Mass every Sunday (thank you Aida!). All this, in addition to responding to Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment and poverty, responding to the Diocesan fundraising activity, Alive in Faith, and now, most recently, ensuring that the parish is complaint with GDPR, the new EU data privacy legislation. And those are just the projects that the PPC has been involved in...many other activities such as Foodbank, Choir, Flowers, Readers etc. happen without any input from the PPC.

In case you didn't notice, a lot of things happen in this parish! And a lot of people – far too numerous to mention by name – make things happen in this parish. And it's been my privilege to play a small role in this diverse range of activities.

### **What's gone well**

So, what has happened over the past 12 months? Rather than give you a long list, I thought it would be more helpful to identify those areas that I think have gone well and then the areas where I hope my successor will make more progress.

So, things that have gone well – actually, I think most of the areas I've listed have been going well but it is when all of these activities come together in a unified way, in a whole parish environment or event, that's when the magic happens or, put another way, that's when I'm most aware of the Holy Spirit at work in the parish. For me personally, the best parish event last year was our St Edmund's Day celebration where, after our Family Mass, we had a record attendance from across Bungay and Harleston, a real mix of old and young doing a turn, be it reciting a poem or playing an instrument, the school was very much involved and of course, Sonia & James ensured we were all well fed and watered. For me, it is occasions like this, where we pray and play together, that a real sense of community and togetherness is fostered.

### **Room for improvement**

Moving to where we can improve now....I will preface it by saying that we had some great moments with our young people, not least the Confirmation of 15 teenagers last October and more recently FHC, but there is no doubt that we are seeing fewer children and young people generally attending Mass and involved in parish life/events. I know these things often go in waves – we've had a few years where a cohort of 18 – 20 children at CL was quite usual and who will forget the great music performances we had from our teens at the St Patricks party the year before last. But over the last year or so, there's been a definite decline and this is one area that I feel we need to work harder on. Otherwise, we will end up like many other parishes – an ageing parish simply managing the decline. This issue has been discussed by the PPC and, to this end, we plan to enrol the help of the Diocesan Youth Ministry team, Ignite, who have already provided us with some good ideas and offers of practical help so I am optimistic for a positive outcome.

### **The next stage**

Looking to the year ahead, our new Chair will chart her own vision for the parish and both Fr Charles and I have every confidence that parish life will continue to thrive. And no doubt the entire parish will join me in offering our full support the new Chair and the new PPC team as they lead the parish to the next level.

So, thank you all again. I leave the PPC with great optimism – yes, there is plenty of work to do but we will have a great new team to get stuck in and do it!

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Sunday, 08 August 2018