

# Minutes of Catholic Parish of Hastings AGM

**Sunday 12 March 2017 at 11:30 am at St Joseph's Hall**

**Note:** All reports referred to are to be found on the CPH website. Hard copies will be available at the Parish Office and in church foyers.

The meeting commenced at 11:38 am.

**Opening Prayer:** Fr Vince opened the meeting with prayer.

**Chair:** The meeting was chaired by Mary-Jo Close, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council.

**Welcome:** Mary-Jo welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Fr Vince, Sandra Connor, Liz Crowley and Faaki Tuanaki were invited to join Mary-Jo and Preston Epplett on stage.

**Apologies:** Hera Ferris (Hera arrived at 12:10 after attending another meeting), Kathy Kavanagh, Des Kavanagh, Rae Schrama, Patricia Bot, Anton Bot, Steven Bot, Eileen von Dadelszen, Mark von Dadelszen, Kevin Jury.

## **Reports:**

**Parish Pastoral Council:** Mary-Jo Close, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, presented her report. See separate report.

**Liturgy Committee:** Jill Frizzell, Chair of the Liturgy Committee, presented her report. See separate report.

**Finance Committee:** Preston Epplett, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented his report. See separate report. Preston introduced Geoff Hansen, Property Manager, and encouraged everyone to look on the website for the numbers (which he presented via overhead projection) as his report was now 17 pages long!

**Pastoral Assistant:** Deb Lucy, Pastoral Assistant, presented her report. See separate report.

**Youth Ministry:** Faaki Tuanaki, Youth Minister, presented her report. See separate report. Faaki repeatedly asked parishioners to continue to pray for our young people. She ended her report with photos from camp via overhead projection.

**St Mary's School:** Principal Liz Crowley made a PowerPoint presentation showing the many and varied activities engaged in by pupils at St Mary's School in the past year. See separate PowerPoint.

**St Joseph's School:** Principal Sandra Connor presented her report. See separate report. Special thanks were offered to Sr Marlene, Sr Mary and Sr Lucille, all of whom have a long association with St Joseph's School.

**St John's College:** Conor Bolton, HOD Religious Education, presented the report from the RE Dept. See separate report.

**Fr Vince:** Fr Vince presented his report. He began with the words: *2017 is a blessing – a time to restrengthen our faith.* See separate report.

**Mary-Jo** thanked Fr Vince for his wonderful and inspiring words and then opened the meeting at 1:00 pm for questions and comments from the floor.

**Mike Martin:** Asked two questions:

Referring to the issue of Fr Nathaniel's visa problem: *What can we do to prevent this from happening again? Does the diocese know that they are driving Fr Vince to an early grave?*

Fr Vince replied that it was not the diocese's decision but they have been fully supportive.

**Lee Russell:** Thanked all the speakers, especially Fr Vince, and addressed three questions to the Finance Committee.

1. Referring to previous difficulties in getting financial information, she asked: *Are your systems upgrading to change that?*

Preston replied that the systems are good but, at the time referred to, the office was in a state of flux and the file was in Palmerston North. He added that, when he found out the urgency of the need, he provided the information requested.

2. *Is there a 5-year plan for the future of the church buildings?*

Preston replied that a committee had been formed which worked for nine months to present a building report to the Bishop. All the church buildings were given a rating from 1 to 10 and all the issues were summarised. That report is yet to be received back from the Bishop; when it is, the hard decisions will be made.

3. *Why are we giving away land and not selling it?*

Preston replied that a request had come from the diocese. St Mary's School had been wanting a hall for about 33 years. There is nowhere within the current boundaries for a hall to be built. The best place for a hall is at the front of the school: placing it elsewhere would incur huge cost. The building committee rated Madonna Maria as a 1 (out of 10) and recommended that the site be cleared.

**Richard Jennings:** Commented that he had asked at the 2016 AGM for a report from the Environment and Social Justice Committee be included this year but again there was no report.

He was also concerned that *"last Christmas in Hastings was a very sad affair"* without much evidence of Christ. He asked our parish to take the lead and put Christmas back where it belongs.

Fr Vince replied that our parish is involved in many things but he was concerned that, Sunday being a family day, the meeting should not go on too long as time was a concern.

Mary-Jo added that the Pastoral Council is currently planning a Ministry Fair for next year, at which reports from many different groups within the parish will be able to be tabled.

**Margaret Sloane:** A parishioner since 1969, Margaret is concerned that there are sick and elderly people not being visited and there should be more pastoral care for them. We need a committee for visiting. It was noted that the Hospital Chaplain's hours have also been cut.

Deb explained the ever-increasing need for more ministers of communion for the growing number of elderly and hospital patients. She herself has been visiting hospitals. She made a heartfelt plea for more volunteers to assist. We also need more Hospital Chaplains. Once the office is up and running again, this will be looked at further. People were also reminded to phone the office if they need visiting.

**Jos van Hooijdonk:** Referring to Richard Jennings' comments about Christmas, he said that we are not the only Christian community in Hastings; we need to show our unity in the town.

Fr Vince replied that we do have ecumenical celebrations such as the blessing of the Christmas wreath, Ash Wednesday service, etc. In the past, leaders of the different churches used to meet: Fr Vince will try to get more ministers of the different denominations to work together.

**Teresa Neilson, DRS St Mary's School:**

1. Asked to be allowed a grieving time if Madonna Maria is to be demolished as so many important events in people's lives had taken place there. There is a need to be sensitive to feelings around this.
2. *What is the plan of CPH to support St Mary's School?* Noting that other schools all have their sacred spaces, *if you take away the physical building, you must have a plan to support us as church.*

Marie Russell was invited to reply. She said that originally there was no desire to demolish Madonna Maria. She assured everyone that there will be a sacred space provided in the hall to be built. It would be ideal to have a chapel but that is not feasible.

**Sarah Carran:** Asked Marie to explain the logistics – the reason for not having a chapel.

Marie replied that it was largely a matter of Health and Safety requirements; that the best place for the hall to be placed was in front (avoiding a cost of \$200,000). We cannot maintain all our buildings owing to the costs of upgrading, earthquake strengthening, etc and in light of the falling number of priests.

**Conor Bolton, HOD RE St John's College:** Further to that point, asked: *Where do we find the money?* We can't carry on as is without it. Churches are closing in numbers everywhere. Parishes in the US are bankrupted by these costs.

**Preston Epplett** added: *Who would buy the land?* There would be no option but to raise school fees even further.

**Heather Davis:** Addressed two questions to Marie Russell:

1. *Could we use some of the stonework, etc, from Madonna Maria?*
2. *When is St Peter Chanel Church going to be renovated?*

Marie replied that, in answer to the first question, it was possible and would be looked at; in answer to the second question, the work is out for tender at present.

**Marie-Jo stopped the questions at 1:30 and invited everyone to mingle and enjoy the light lunch provided.**

**Marie Russell made a vote of thanks to Preston Epplett for his 37 years of faithful and generous service in so many areas and so many roles. She expressed the sincere gratitude of the parish and presented him with gifts and a cake. Preston cut the cake and it was shared by those present.**

**Marie also thanked Preston's wife, Jenny, for her support over so many years.**

The meeting ended at about 1:40 pm and lunch was enjoyed.