

Meeting of Parishioners from St Peter in Chains Inverkeithing and St John and St Columba Rosyth to discuss merging our parishes, held Wednesday 13 June 2018 in Church Hall

The meeting was opened by Fr Dow who led us in prayer.

Fr Dow then went through some presentation slides. (*Available on request*)

These took the meeting through the background of the various meetings/documents since 2015.

The Archbishop's slides outlined 2 options. **Option A**, to create a new parish, all parishes being merged are suppressed, but the churches retain their names. **Option B** is to suppress some of the parishes, and are then part of a remaining local parish, which is the "Mother" church in that area.

Strong support in the meeting to support option A.

The new Parish needs a name, and it must have a religious connection (so not west Fife, Or South West Fife). The Archbishop suggested Most Holy Trinity because of the link with Dunfermline Abbey. It is apt as it is three churches forming one parish.

Other suggestions were St David's, but there are already several St David's in the diocese (eg Dalkeith), St Brigid (already St Bride's in Cowdenbeath, other local names like St James, St John or St Peter are in current use. **General support for Most Holy Trinity.**

Question asked about whether people have say in the future direction. Anyone can express and opinion, and can write in an individual capacity to the Archbishop, but the fact remains we don't have enough priests and the Archbishop must put things in place to allow Catholics access to the Sacraments. *Comments were made that we should be happy that our churches are remaining open.*

Fr Dow outlined the geographical areas covered by the new Parish. All agreed it is a huge area to cover.

The Parish Structure

One Parish Priest

2 Deacons Damian Murray, Pat Carrigan

Need to decide where priest will live

Where parish office will be

Need to establish Pastoral Council, and Finance Committee, (current structures will be disbanded where they exist)

Other organisations with their own structures will decide whether any changes are required e.g. St Vincent de Paul.

Question asked about need for people in the separate churches to be more involved. A good deal of help will be needed e.g. property maintenance, ordering liturgical supplies etc.

Mass provision

Currently 5 masses between the 3 proposed churches for merging. This needs to be reduced by at least one Mass, Weekday Masses will need to be worked out. *This will be worked on once decision is finalised.*

Question asked about the number of parishioners served by the new Parish. estimate is 3,000, but not all will attend Mass regularly.

Where does the money go?

There are 2 options in the Archbishops working document.

Option 1 is for all finances to be brought under one bank account in the name of the new Parish.

Option 2 is for there to be a Common Fund set up for the new Parish to cover common costs, with each church retaining the remainder of the funds locally.

e.g Ss John and Columba have a debt, (which is being paid back), under Option 1 the debt would transfer to the new Parish, and under option 2 would remain with Ss John and Columba church.

St Peter in Chains has £70k loaned to the diocese. Under option 1 this would be transferred to the new Parish, under option 2 it would remain with St Peter in Chains.

Overwhelming support for option 2, to keep funds separate.

Question asked about what would happen if the central funds needed a loan, but if was felt anything large enough to need a loan would be linked to one of the churches, so this would not arise.

Mass times etc to be discussed with Our Lady of Lourdes

People concerned about how people with no access to transport would get to Sunday and daily Masses. Discussion about Parishioners being organised to give lifts. Also mention was made of the new parish buying a minibus. The only problem there is getting enough volunteer drivers. *Comment made that people need to get behind the changes and make them work.*

Request that the letter to the Archbishop includes a plea for a speedy reply, rumours, and counter rumours abound. Fr Kevin reminded everyone that unless he or any other priest had announced something from the pulpit whatever else is being said is a lie!

Reflection on the experience in Australia where many small parishes were closed and a new church (and Parish) created. Although initially each community were allocated one of the Masses and they kept their own readers and Eucharistic Ministers over time things did integrate and now it works well as one parish community.

Question as about which Parish Covers Inchcolm Island - *Fr Kevin is 'Abbot of Inchcolm' as it lies within the parish boundaries.*

Question about Polish Masses - currently St Marie's, Kirkcaldy hosts the Mass in Polish for Fife.

We need more people to be Eucharistic Ministers and readers, sacristan, caretakers. There are many tasks that need to be done, but it has not been easy to recruit new people.

Question about who will be the Parish Priest. it is up to the Archbishop to appoint the priests to the new posts, so it could be one of the 2 current Parish Priests or someone new to the area.

It was noted that it will be 7 years before any new priests are in service, although there are new seminarians in training.

There being no other business Fr Dow thanked everyone for their attendance, and thanked the ladies for providing refreshments.