

**Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Pastoral Councils of
Saint Anthony of Padua, Melksham and Saint Edmund, Calne
held on Tuesday 19th November 2019
at Saint Anthony's, Melksham.**

Present: Father Martin Queenan, (Dean), Father Vincent Curtis.
From Saint Anthony's: Mary Rooney, (Chair), Henie Dixon, Anne Doyle, Gay Harris,
Mary Harris, Gervase O'Donohoe, Sharon Pearce, Susan Whyte.
From Saint Edmund's: Elizabeth Hitchens, Kathleen Joyce, Paul Blake (Clerk).

Apologies had been received from: Tricia Davies, Christine Martin, Teresa Quinn, (Saint
Edmund's)

The meeting opened with a prayer at 2.10.p.m.
This was followed by a reading and reflection from the Book of Wisdom.

Mary Rooney took the Chair for the meeting and welcomed everyone, in particular the Dean, Father
Martin.

The meeting had been called to go through the responses of the Deanery Clergy at their meeting of
8th October 2019 to the letter from the Parish Pastoral Council of Saint Edmund's regarding the
establishment of a Deanery 'Wisdom Group' following the open Deanery meetings held on 1st June
2019 and 25th September 2019. The Parish Pastoral Councils of Saint Anthony's and Saint Edmund's
had requested such a meeting with the Dean following their joint meeting on 17th October 2019.
Mary Rooney thanked the Dean for attending.

Father Martin explained that he was not sure what direction the 'Wisdom Group' would take but it
would have to, in reply to the request from the Bishop, prepare for the reduction in the number of
diocesan priests serving the Deanery. In reply to a question Father Martin agreed that the group's
remit was broader and would also encompass the aim set out in the diocesan document 'A Future
Full of Hope' to "develop and deepen the communion of life within the parishes and communities of
our Diocese".

A discussion followed on Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils, and the fact that since they are
not established at present there are difficulties in communication between parishes, across the
Deanery and between the clergy and the laity.

The need to have a clear remit and defined parameters of operation for the 'Wisdom Group' was
discussed. For example the skills needed by its members, its degree of autonomy, and its reporting
obligations. It was noted that one document referred to the group reporting to the Deanery while
another referred to the group reporting to the Bishop.

Father Martin explained that the group would comprise two members from each parish and that
names should be submitted to him by the Deanery Clergy meeting to be held on 10th December and
that the group "won't know exactly what they are doing till they meet". The group should however
be guided by the diocesan documents 'A Future Full of Hope' and 'Parishes in Communion For
Mission'. It was appropriate that the group would be meeting in the diocesan 'Year of Communion'.
It was envisaged that the group would meet for two years but that by the end of the first year a plan
for Deanery parishes with fewer priests would be drafted.

Members present stressed the importance of prayer, within and for this group and that fact that it was envisaged at the open Deanery meeting on 1st June 2019 that membership of the group should comprise parishioners with the gifts of discernment and wisdom.

Reference was made to the fact that in this exercise the Deanery and the Diocese were not alone. Other dioceses in North America had undertaken such a process and likewise within England and Wales. The examples of the work already done in Diocese of Brentwood and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle were mentioned.

It was suggested that the Dean prepare and send a Deanery Pastoral Letter to be read in all parishes within the Deanery in early Advent. Such a letter would explain the formation of the 'Wisdom Group', with a first meeting in January 2020, an appeal for members, and a request for the prayers of all within the Deanery. Father Martin undertook to give due consideration to this suggestion.

Mary Rooney thanked all present for their contributions and to Father Martin for attending.

The meeting closed with a prayer and a blessing at 3.00.p.m.