

Renewed Parish Pastor Council

At a meeting in the church hall on Wednesday evening, Fr Michael welcomed parishioners from St Ninian's and our sister parish, St Joseph's, who had expressed an interest in learning more about the renewal of Parish Pastoral Councils.

The meeting was led by Maureen Ruddy from the Diocesan Synod Core Group. Fr Michael felt it was important that the key points from the evening were shared with the wider parish.

In the past, Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meetings often resembled business meetings. Representatives from parish groups or ministries would report on their activities, followed by discussions on church maintenance, financial matters and parish events. Minutes were then displayed on a noticeboard in the church.

As a result, many parishioners were unaware of who the council members were or what their meetings involved. The PPC was sometimes perceived as an elite and rather secretive group, meeting behind closed doors and making decisions on behalf of the parish with little consultation or feedback. Often, this led to decisions that had little impact on moving the parish forward.

A renewed Parish Pastoral Council is very different. It is a **spiritual advisory group**, led by the Holy Spirit, whose primary role is to be **pastoral**.

This means focusing on the care of the whole parish community — reaching out to parishioners, neighbours, and especially to the poor, the vulnerable, the lonely, and those who feel excluded or unheard.

These renewed councils are **synodal**, meaning that council members journey with the whole parish. Guided by the Holy Spirit and rooted in our shared Baptism, they ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in decision-making on matters affecting the parish.

Our vocation as the Baptised People of God is to help the Church fulfil her mission of bringing Christ to the world. In doing so, we become *missionary disciples*, just as Jesus calls us to be.

To live out this calling as a parish community, we need a clear **VISION**. It is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council to work prayerfully to make that vision a reality.

Members of the council will be faith-filled volunteers who commit to meeting approximately four times a year. Through prayer and spiritual conversation, they will focus on how best to move the parish vision forward.

Importantly, outcomes will be shared openly with the whole parish. Others will be encouraged and supported to become involved, so that everyone can share their God-given gifts and talents. Nothing will be secret — all will be transparent.

So, what is our **VISION** for the parish of St Ninian's?

Over the coming weeks, everyone will have the opportunity to share their hopes, ideas and dreams for the parish, contributing directly to shaping this vision.

Following last Wednesday's meeting, a group of volunteers — the **Vision Group** — has agreed to meet on Wednesday 11 February to plan how best to consult with the entire parish.

Once this consultation is complete, the Vision Group will use the feedback received to draw up a Vision Statement, which will then be shared with you all.

Only once the Vision for St Ninian's has been established will the Parish Pastoral Council be formally set up.

The remit for PPC members will be published in next week's newsletter, so that everyone is fully aware of what volunteers are being invited to commit to.

Thank you for listening.