

Portstewart Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes of meeting on 22nd October 2013 in Marian Hall at 7.30 pm.

Attendance: Terry Butcher (Chair), Arlene Duffy, Aaron Doherty, Sean Farren, Fr Austin McGirr, Edel Mooney, Kerry Gottschalk.

Apologies were received from Sally Andrew, Ernestine McKeever and Emer O’Keeffe. Paul McCormick has tendered his resignation from the Council due to personal circumstances. Paul was thanked for his services and steps are now being taken to seek a replacement member.

10.1. The meeting opened with prayers and readings led by Terry Butcher.

10.2. The **minutes** of the September meeting were adopted.

10.3. The Chair reported on the implementation of the **Living Church** plans, in particular that the training of trainers for the Open and Welcoming Community programme has now been completed. Trainers are available to commence training at parish level and participants will be sought for local programmes.

10.4 A **healing service** focusing on addiction, to be understood in its widest sense, is being planned for December and a group is being set up to organise the event consisting of Council and non-Council members.

10.5 A wide-ranging discussion took place on the proposal to hold a **parish ‘congress’**, i.e. an event at which all of the parish’s groups would be represented and which would also be open to all parishioners. The main aims for the event would be taking stock and planning for the future of our parish community. It is proposed that the event take place on a Saturday towards the end of Lent in the Parish Centre. Several suggestions were made regarding the nature of the programme, the use of a facilitator and the possible attendance of Bishop Trainor. A small planning group is to meet to draw up a draft programme for further discussion.

10.6 Sean Farren gave a report on the **‘Dealing with Sectarianism’** workshop held on Saturday 19 October in the Lodge Hotel, Coleraine and organised by the Portstewart Clergy Fraternal. There was an attendance of approximately 40 from the four churches. The workshop was led by the Rev Earl Storey, Church of Ireland, Derry and focused on the nature of sectarianism, its manifestations and how local churches might respond. The event was reported as having been very encouraging in terms of the level of participation. Rev Storey is to circulate a report which will contain suggestions as to what further action might be taken by the churches together to address issues related to sectarianism in the area.

10.6 Terry Butcher reported on plans for the development of **Youth Ministry** within the Pastoral Area. A new framework for the development of Youth Ministry is being prepared by a sub-committee of the

Pastoral Area Council. Our local Star Club will continue to operate and will be part of the youth development scheme.

10.7 In response to questions seeking clarification of the work of the **Pastoral Area Team**, the Chair outlined its composition and its general plans which are focused on ensuring that within its area the aims and objectives of the Living Church programme are developed as fully as possible.

10.8 Sean Farren asked if the Council would welcome an opportunity to visit a Pastoral Council in a Dublin city parish and offered to contact some members of such a council with whom he is acquainted with a view to arranging such a visit before next summer.

10.9 The next meeting of Council will take place on **Tuesday 26 November** at 7.30pm.

10.10 The meeting closed with a prayer led by Fr Austin.