

St Joseph's Birtley Church Pastoral Council

Notes of the meeting held 18th January 2026 in the Presbytery.

This meeting was to discuss the document 'Terms of Reference for Parish Councils'.

The meeting opened with a prayer led by CT.

Present: Hilda Fraser, Jan Rafalski, Catherine Tumelty, Pauline Pestell, Bernadette Bartlett, Margaret Taylor., Doreen Cantwell, Mick Davison, Michael Jacques, Pauline Lavery (Safeguarding).

Apologies: Fr Martin, Gary Bartlett, Tom Quigley, Shirley Ennis.

PP welcomed Pauline Lavery and Michael Jacques to the CPC. Shirley Ennis has also joined the group but was unable to attend.

PP asked MD to report back from the Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting which had been addressed by Bishop Stephen.

MD said that the Bishop had stressed

- the importance of synodal led councils
- closer working between parishes and partnerships
- co-responsibility between clergy and laity

MD went on to say that the Bishop was meeting the clergy throughout January at Deanery level where he would share information about his thoughts on Diocesan councils at all levels. This information would then be shared by him early February in a pastoral letter which would link back to his Advent pastoral letter.

The Terms of Reference for Pastoral Councils have been confirmed by the bishop.

An open discussion followed with several members contributing their thoughts and feelings about how we can use them in our own parish and the questions we must ask ourselves going forward.

Going forward we will –

Wait for the pastoral letter from the bishop in February and the information pack to follow.

Continue to discuss at CPC and have a Parish meeting to share the information we have received and listen to suggestions for the future.

Ask Fr Martin to feed back from the Deanery meeting with Bishop Stephen.

A.O.B.

TQ had asked MT to notify the CPC that the Diocese has approved the memorial plaque and boulder for the Elisabethville RC Belgian Cemetery.

MT asked about the programme of second collections and confirmed that we needed to add special collections for the First Holy Communions and Lourdes Youth Group.

Disposal of items from the meeting room. MT would facilitate this.

A reminder to those who are on the rota for Saturday Vigil mass introduction to do this about 3 minutes before the beginning of mass to ensure most of the congregation have arrived and allow for a moments silence before mass.

The meeting ended with a prayer led by CT

Prayers for the next meeting. MT

Date of next meeting – 8th February