

**Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge
and Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston**

Notes about the Parish Forum & Steering Committee

The Parish Forum, organised and animated by its Steering Committee, is the instrument that our Parish has chosen to enhance the participation of all groups, communities and persons in our large and complex Parish, in the process of decision making. Not just tackling the challenges that we face, but trying to “dream” together our future at the service of all the people around us. It is important that all the groups and the varied communities that form the parish family: OLEM, Sawston, Ditton, Bar Hill, and Cambourne send participants to the Forum to make their needs and projects known.

We hope that gradually there will be greater involvement of everybody in the “building up of Christ’s body” to carry together Jesus’ mission of “bringing the good news to the poor and proclaiming God’s year of favour”.

The Steering Committee

Links to key relevant Diocesan policies¹:

Parish Structures for Lay Participation

<http://www.catholiceastanglia.org/main/files/diocesan_policies/lay_participation.pdf>

Background materials underpinning the Policy on Parish Structures

<http://www.catholiceastanglia.org/main/files/diocesan_policies/pastoral_councils4.pdf>

Policies from Diocesan Pastoral Plan

<http://www.catholiceastanglia.org/main/files/diocesan_policies/pastoral_plan.pdf>²

The Diocesan policy on **Parish Structures for Lay Participation**, includes these key points on consultation, collaboration, parish councils/forum meetings and steering groups:

- It is ... essential that lay people be given every opportunity to play their full part in the life, liturgy and mission of the church in the diocese, deanery, cluster, parish and smaller communities ... (Dioc. Pastoral Plan, p. 36)
- Making decisions together should be the norm for parish life. (§ 1.2)
- No major decisions about the life, worship, mission or property of the parish should be made without adequate opportunities being offered for full and open discussion by the whole parish community. ... The way of consensus should be sought whenever possible, with ordained ministers and lay faithful working together in partnership. (§ 1.4)
- When such a major decision is being proposed, an established Parish Pastoral Council or steering group should facilitate an open meeting of the parish to discuss the matter (§ 1.5)
- An open Parish-in-Council to which all parishioners are invited ... will require a steering group to ensure that recommendations ratified by the parish priest are put into practice. (§ 2.2)

¹ http://www.catholiceastanglia.org/main/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=36

² See also: Sacred Heart, St. Ives’ template for a Parish Pastoral Plan:
<http://www.theseconote.com/olem-olol/StIvesParishPlan-template.htm>

Notes of the Working Party taking a 'Fresh Look' at the Parish Forum Held in the OLEM Parish Centre, 13th April 2011³

Present: Deborah Barfield, Ronald Haynes, Fr. Peter Leeming,
David Livesey, Pat Richardson, Melanie Ward

Apologies: Chris Burton, Neil Emery,

A. Background

We discussed the background and purpose of the Forum, including a review of the Diocesan links and policies noted above, with the emphasis on greater participation of the laity, that consultation and making decisions together should be the norm, and that each parish needs either an elected parish pastoral council or an open pastoral parish-in-council which meets regularly.

The Parish Forum has been an open parish-in-council type meeting, and there was agreement that it was good to continue with that type. Given that, the Diocesan policy indicates the need for a steering group to facilitate meetings and to be sure that things officially agreed are put into practice.

B. Future Meetings

The discussion included thoughts about whether 'Forum' was the best name for these meetings, and about the suitable frequency of meetings. No change of name was agreed, however there was a stress on maintaining the meetings as open, and on arranging some more time for the discussion required for adequate consultation and collaboration.

While we have previously arranged for three or four Forum meetings a year, whatever dates we agree to for the future, we also have the untried option of calling a special Forum meeting whenever needed.

In addition, it was agreed that we should better co-ordinate and ideally better mesh the cycles of meetings along with other key parish meetings, such as those of the Finance Committee. This would, for instance, help each better inform the other, and assure that the discussions and pastoral considerations of the Forum are better channelled into financial discussions and decisions, as well as vice versa. Fr. Peter would take these points to Nick Diss, who chairs the Finance Committee.

C. Constitution & Further Considerations

Diocesan policy also calls on us to create a constitution or a set of standing orders for the Forum / Council, and this is something the group could help the Steering Committee address. Such a draft for the Steering Committee had previously been circulated amongst its members, and that would be circulated to the working party for future discussion⁴.

As part of taking these points forward, it was also agreed that we need to be sure that our discussions and decisions are relevant to the parts of our community centred around Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston, as well as Cambourne, Bar Hill, Fen Ditton, etc..

Along with the call to consultation, collaboration, and the seeking of consensus, as well as making decisions together being the norm for parish life, Fr. Peter pointed out that the Pope has suggested the term corresponsibility, which describes the process envisaged in the policies noted above, with clergy and lay people working together in partnership so that each can play their full part in the life, liturgy and mission of the church in the diocese, deanery, cluster, parish and smaller communities

Next Meeting: A follow-up meeting was agreed for Tuesday 17th May, 7:30pm, same venue.

³ Also online at: <http://www.theseconnote.com/olem-olol/OLEM-OLOL-Forum-FreshLook-NOTES.pdf>

⁴ See: <http://www.theseconnote.com/olem-olol/OLEM-Steering-Committee-Constitution.pdf>