

Minutes of St Carthage's AGM 11.15am 24 March 2024

23 parishioners attended the St Carthage's AGM, chaired by Constant Mews, and including from the Pastoral Council Claire Renkin, Penny McCann, Sean McManus, Rosemary Sheehan and Michael Pirotta (chair of the Finance Council).

1. Report from the Chair of the Pastoral Council (CM).

After acknowledgement of country, CM presented a report of parish activities over the last year, noting in particular the transition from offering three to two masses on the weekend (Sat at 6pm and Sunday at 10am, no longer holding a service on Sundays at 5pm), and the development of a parish plan. He thanked a wide range of individuals who have made key contributions to the Parish. He also explained the purpose of developing a St Carthage's bookmark, as directed particularly to visitors and newcomers to the parish. The report covered outlined key developments since the 2023 AGM relating to the three of the four portfolios into which parish activities can be grouped and Michael Pirotta, reporting on developments relating to building and refurbishment. These included involvement in the Voice campaign and planning for the Synod on Synodality in Rome.

(1) **social and pastoral outreach:** CM summarised the importance of two key activities. One is support given to the St Vincent de Paul Conference, both financially and in voluntary support, serving the needs of people in distress in the Parkville and inner-city area. The other is the importance of the hospitality group in providing refreshments, and in the importance of welcoming newcomers and visitors to the parish.

(2) **sacramental and liturgical activity:** CM explained the new arrangements with two music groups sharing support for the 10am mass: Roger and Anne Rassool, and friends at the first and last Sundays of the month, with Morag Fraser, Rick Norwood & Juliette Hughes on the other Sundays of the month. CM thanked various people involved in preparing the church for services, readings and post-communion reflections at particular periods (Advent, Lent and Mothers/Fathers Day).

(3) **educational and spiritual development.** CM referred to the range of activities outlined in the Parish strategic plan, supporting a range of activities by individuals within the parish (a meditation group, feminist theology group, women's reading group, zoom discussion of Sunday readings) as well as the need to find some replacement for the Spirituality in the Pub, organized by the late Dennis Green with Richard Olive.

2. Report from Finance Council Chair

MP reported the positive response to calling for support to both a the Maintenance Sinking and Church Development funds (the latter to consider improving audio-visual facilities), as outlined in his accompanying report. The development of paying by card rather than cash has been positive for the parish. As older parishioners pass on, involvement in planned giving is down, even though overall attendance is steady, with some people joining or coming back to the parish. The parish needs to further reach out to new parishioners to support St Carthage's.

3. Report from the parish priest

Joe Caddy thanked various people for their support of various activities going on in the parish, especially mentioning the transition from three to two masses each weekend. He spoke about the continuing number of baptisms, often from people connected to the parish in the past, and a more limited number of weddings. He commended the parish for involvement in various activities,

including preparation of responses to the synodal process, and involvement in a discussion of various parishes in the Western Region, to which the Parkville Parish is officially assigned.

4. Discussion of Reports and Presentation of Draft Strategic Plan (CM).

It was asked why Parkville Parish was attached to the Western Region. JC responded that there was not reason it should be assigned more naturally to the Northern Region.

On the issue of welcoming visitors and newcomers, it was suggested that parishioners be encouraged to greet each other immediately before mass, and possibly (if they wish) introduce themselves to the wider community.

John Drennan responded to a question to explain a proposal that the parish acknowledge the importance of animals as sentient beings within creation (perhaps something to be incorporated into collective prayers of the faithful).

There was discussion of the Maundy Thursday practice of rearranging the seating to emphasize the setting of a meal, as also about the possibility of rearranging seating on other occasions. The altar still needed to have a central place, but perhaps one could experiment with arranging seats in a semi-circle.

The idea of a suggestion box at the back of the church was mooted .

The idea of developing a screen for liturgy/memorial images at funerals was supported, while maintaining respect for church as a building.

CM explained that his three-year term on the Council was expiring on 30 June, but he was willing to stand for another three years. There were two other Pastoral Council members (Ro Sheehan and Jack Rendle) whose terms were expiring then, so expressions of interest were open to individuals willing to stand for the Council from 1 July 2024.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.