

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE LIBRARY ON THURSDAY 12 MAY 2016.**

**Present:** Marian England, Helen Kennedy, Henri Clementine, Timothy Gill, Robert Breen (minute secretary).

**Agenda Item 1 – Opening and Welcome.**

Marian chaired the meeting in the absence of an elected chairperson. She welcomed those present and thanked them for attending. In view of the reduced numbers present it was agreed the meeting would focus on the most pressing agenda item “Petition – regarding amalgamation”.

**Agenda Item 2 – Apologies.** Fr Gerard McCormick, Stephanie Stewart, Leilah Ayton, Carl Madsen.

**Agenda Item 3 – Prayer.**

Marian distributed a passage from St John’s Gospel which Henri read. The meeting then considered the reading in silence.

**Agenda Item 4 – Correspondence.**

This item was not considered.

**Agenda Item 5 – Minutes.**

Moved Henri Clementine, seconded Helen Kennedy that the minutes of the April 2016 meeting of the Council be accepted subject to the following amendments:

- under “**Present:**” add “Carl Madsen”; and
- under “The Church as a Sanctuary”, at the end of the fifth sentence add “since more Catholic parishes were not involved”.

CARRIED.

## **5a, Business Arising from the Minutes.**

Since the Council was focusing on the amalgamation issue this item was not considered.

### **Agenda item 6 – Business:**

Election of Chair. Not discussed.

Petition – regarding Amalgamation. Marian described the meeting of the parishes held at St Francis Xavier College on the evening of 3 May and in particular the fact that no particular way ahead had been defined. The emphasis by the Vicar General at the end of the meeting that parishes need to be prepared to move quickly because when a decision is made there will be little time to plan, led the Council to agree it should act quickly to place before the Archbishop the parish's view on the subject and its desires for the future. Timothy drew members' attention to the fact that no proposal regarding amalgamation had been put before the Belconnen parishes and therefore it was not possible to provide comment on such a proposal. Council agreed that in view of the Vicar General's statement and the feeling that something might be forthcoming in the near future, it was important that it make known to the Archbishop the parish's views and wishes regarding amalgamation. To this end it was agreed that Timothy should draft a letter to the Archbishop without delay for consideration by Council members by the weekend with the intent that the agreed letter be read to parishioners at the weekend's four masses. This having been done the letter should then be signed and dispatched to the Archbishop, C,c, to the Vicar General and the MSC Provincial, early in the subsequent week.

(Secretarial Note: This action was duly completed and the letter dispatched as planned. A copy of the draft letter is attached to these minutes.)

2016 Focus – Pastoral Care – Hospitality. This item was not discussed.

### **Closure and Next Meeting.**

Marian closed the meeting with the recital of the silver card text "The Word", Jules Chevalier, 1900.

The **next meeting** of the Council is scheduled for **Thursday 9 June 2016 commencing at 7.30 PM.**

**Robert Breen**  
**Minute Secretary**

**17 May 2016.**

**Attachment:** Draft Letter to Archbishop Prowse dated 16 May 2016.

16<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Your Grace, Archbishop Prowse

Thank you for your letter of 29 March, which has been read to parishioners at Sunday masses and carefully considered by the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). The PPC convened a well-attended meeting of St John's parish specifically to discuss the issues you raised on 28 April. A number of parishioners also attended the Belconnen regional meeting held on 3 May. This letter has also been read out and endorsed by each of the weekend masses at St John's of 14-15 May, so it can be considered representative of the views of our parish family.

As we are yet to receive any specific proposal for different parish arrangements or amalgamations that involve our parish, we simply wish to inform you that our parish recognises the challenges and opportunities faced by the broader Belconnen church and that we believe St John's, in its current form, is very well placed to take forward its mission in the growing sub-region of West Belconnen.

Talk of amalgamation of parishes has raised serious concerns that our MSC charism, which has sustained this integrated parish-school community over the years and has marked it in a unique way, could be diluted or lost altogether.

The meeting held on 28 April demonstrated an extremely high level of support for the parish to remain a standalone MSC parish of St. John's Kippax, that can build on the pervading sense of 'family', 'welcome' and 'justice' we have established here. This was not expressed as a longing to hold onto the past or a naïve ignorance about the challenges our region faces, but a real feeling that we are called to use this thriving and successful MSC parish-school model as a platform for even stronger outreach and evangelism in the rapidly expanding new suburbs of west Belconnen.

Our parish is not resistant to change. We believe that our MSC priests and our very strong lay participation, our solid financial and administrative arrangements, our sacramental programs and children's liturgy, our intrinsic links with St John the Apostle Primary School and passionate outreach to those in need, our outward focus and warm hospitality, our spirituality and reverence, and our overwhelming sense of community will allow us to meet the challenge of serving a growing population in this part of Belconnen.

We would respectfully urge you at this time, when you are considering various models for change in the Belconnen region, to ensure that we can continue to draw strength and inspiration from our MSC charism and our St John's mission to be, here in Kippax, the heart of God.

Yours in Christ,

St John the Apostle Parish Pastoral Council

CC: Vicar-General Fr Tony Percy  
MSC Provincial Fr John Mulrooney