



# Sacred Heart Wimbledon Parish Pastoral Council

**Minutes of PPC Meeting**  
Thursday 5 February 2026 at 8pm

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## **Members in attendance**

The PPC members present were Robert Hitchcock (*Acting Chair, Faith Minister*), Canon David Gibbons (*Parish Priest*), Fr Edwin Raj (*Assistant Priest*), Fr Peter Mudu Frank (*Assistant Priest*), Deacon Julian Burling, Sr Dorothy Perrott, Jeric Chong (*PPC Secretary*), Annette Campbell Black, Teresa Engley, Jose Garibaldi, Graham Kennedy, Jude Mariadoss, Nina Beltran, Peter Taylor and Chris Woodward.

David Hurst and Sarah Norville (Headteacher, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School) attended as observers.

## **1. Welcome and opening prayer**

The PPC met at 8:02pm in the Lounge.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from William Morris (*Chair*) and Henry Gates.

## **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The draft minutes of the previous PPC meeting, held on Thursday 8 January 2026, were accepted as an accurate record (subject to one minor amendment), to be uploaded on the parish website.

## **4. Matters arising**

Sarah Norville, the headteacher of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, was welcomed to the PPC meeting. She thanked the PPC for the welcome. Sarah joined Sacred Heart in September, in her 18th year of headship exclusively in Catholic schools. She was glad to be part of such a vibrant parish and started the year positively.

Sarah welcomes Fr Peter to the school every Wednesday afternoon. It is difficult to bring children to church because of the geography, so having the parish come to them is beneficial. The school is awaiting an inspection from the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) and are expecting them at any minute. Being a CSI inspector herself, she expects the school to be graded Good overall with Outstanding features. She would like to do more to advertise the school and open the doors to more people in the parish. The proportion of Catholic students is now at 50%.

The school are putting as much as they can out there to parents. Sarah is happy to come back and speak at the church again at Education Sunday. There is a huge drainage problem at the school – it is partly covered by the archdiocese, but £9000 need to be raised, so a second collection for the school would be helpful.

Fr Peter reported that it was a wonderful experience to mingle with the children in the school and thanked Sarah for her work.

Peter asked about the 50% Catholic population. Sarah replied that primary-school numbers across Merton are very low, with 15 empty reception classes across the borough. Lots of European families moved back home after Brexit. Sarah's experience at St Mary's Catholic Primary School was that there were two or three Catholics applying for every place. The birth rate is declining. She is seeing a lot more children looking to convert later on, close to secondary-school applications. Catholic families are choosing to send their children to non-Catholic schools. Ofsted sways parental choice, and what Catholic schools do won't show up on Ofsted reports. Sacred Heart is a very diverse school; this is celebrated, but might be off-putting for some parents. Catholic schooling could be a 'flight path' to joining the church.

Canon David remarked that, on the secondary front, the top end of Wimbledon College is almost 100% Catholic, but around 80% in Year 8. Ursuline High School received Ofsted Outstanding, but still has an Ursuline ethos.

Jose asked if parishioners could be involved at school, e.g. at Mass. Sarah replied that it would be lovely to get people more involved. Singing, led by Cathy Roger, is a highlight. Sr Dorothy suggested that different Mass times could facilitate parishioner involvement.

Canon David suggested that the baptism register could be consulted and parents invited to come to a Mass.

David Hurst, a governor of the school, remarked that he plans to train children to be White Badge guides to give tours round the church. He will meet with Canon David in the next few weeks.

Annette suggested that Sarah could attend the new parishioners' social held twice a year; Sarah agreed to come along. The date for the next social has not yet been set.

## 5. Pastoral care (including the Be Well Hub update)

Graham updated the PPC on the parish's Be Well Hub with a much more upbeat message; the initiative is within the parish's gift to make happen, with a few procedural points left. Graham thanked Victoria Wheatley for guiding them through the archdiocese's safeguarding procedure.

Memory Lane Club is likely to be a big focus. Seven people from the club will be trained on Monday, along with Fr Peter and possibly Fr Edwin, as well as David Hurst and Thelma as well. This makes Be Well services more accessible to those who need them. Conversations have occurred at continental breakfast – it would be good to make a Be Well champion available at breakfast in case a conversation needs to happen, but this ought to be discreet. A badge would be helpful.

Moving forwards: in parallel with Memory Lane Club, the volunteers want to run a meeting on a Tuesday, with Anthony Lee and Elizabeth Roger setting up and delivering some of the talks. A programme of other speakers is being lined up, including someone from the council to come and speak on staying fit and healthy. The plan is to start that programme in June in light of room availability, but if a room becomes available in advance it would be beneficial. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

## 6. Called to Bear Fruit

Henry's report on responses to his Some Definite Service questionnaire was shared this afternoon – eight responses from PPC members had been received. **Action:** that PPC members be asked again to fill out the questionnaire, to discuss the responses at the March retreat. A first crack can be taken at the March meeting.

Rob's takeaway was that the analysis is not surprising: there are things going on for mission; the parish is in a good place but there are large gaps that could be filled.

PPC members are encouraged to read through the Called to Bear Fruit report, copies of which were distributed in a previous meeting. The report is also available digitally as a PDF.

Peter asked whether there were any parts of the report on which that to focus particularly. Rob replied that it could be on anything you think we should be doing. Parish renewal is a newer focus, with laity needing to step up. Chris observed that there is a need to translate generalities in the report into concrete things to do at the parish level. Rob remarked that Henry's report and Called to Bear Fruit have much in common.

On small-group meetings, Jude remarked that it looks encouraging from the confirmation group – there are five parents staying back to have a chat. Can David: looking to launch in the autumn.

Jose remarked that the first Called to Bear Fruit document had quite a dismal outlook, but the report is much more hopeful.

Nina is running four Lent sessions on Ambassadors for Christ with Fr Edwin's help. Four of the first videos will be shown: Is Jesus God?, on the Eucharist, on the Church as the mystical body of Christ, and on Mary. These sessions will take place on the Wednesdays in March, and something is to be planned for after Easter. There is a guide from the archdiocese for each session. All are welcome, but young people are encouraged to come along. Dates will be published in Sunday's newsletter.

Canon David's talks on English doctors of the Church will take place on Tuesdays. These will be publicised at the end of Mass and in other parishes.

## **7. Evangelization**

Rob's commented that there is no major update on the Some Definite Service team. The confirmation group is going well.

## **8. Catechesis**

There was nothing to report.

## **9. Adult formation**

There was nothing to report.

## **10. Matters from the Parish Priest**

Canon David reported that the parish is planning to do some minor works on the entrance doors and the joinery, and in the St Ignatius Chapel. We are with small things because VAT can be reclaimed under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme expiring at Easter. We could encourage people to give more generously once some small works have been done.

On major repairs, we are waiting for the quantity surveyor's costing before starting an appeal. This would encompass all the necessary repairs to the church - including cleaning, decorating, lighting, and sound amplification. These would ideally be completed by December 2027 (the 150th anniversary of the Jesuits arriving and the parish's establishment). Archbishop John Wilson has agreed to celebrate Mass on 8 December. A fundraising committee ought to be established quite soon.

Once costing has been obtained, approval will be needed from the Art and Architecture Committee, who will want to scrutinise lighting and amplification. Approval will then be needed from the diocesan finance office, the Planning and Safety Committee, the Archbishop, and the Historic Churches Committee, so we are

still some months off before work can start. It is easier to raise funding if all the work is done in one go; this allows the architect to strategise works, and so is theoretically cheaper in the long run.

#### **11. AOB**

Chris reported that the Upper Hall is being redecorated by a local builder, who is very accommodating. The floor is to be repolished after this is done. He has had a couple of meetings with the Arts Society and Edge Hill Players (who are interested in providing some technical facilities for the hall).

Teresa asked whether a decision had been made about the postponed parish dinner. A new date has not yet decided.

David Hurst remarked that the Merton Citizens Assembly will be held at 6pm on Monday 20 April at Wimbledon College, at which candidates for the local election on Thursday 7 May will be held to account in public. All are welcome. The last assembly was held at St George's Cathedral, when more than 500 people attended. Pre-registration is needed, with details to follow.

#### **12. Closing prayer and date of next meeting**

Canon David said the closing prayer and imparted his blessing.

The PPC adjourned at 9:01pm until Thursday 5 March at 8pm. That meeting will take place in the Youth Room instead of the Lounge.

### **Forthcoming meetings and events**

- **Thursday 5 March 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Youth Room)
- **Saturday 21 March 2026 at 10am** – PPC mini-retreat
- *No PPC meeting in April 2026*
- **Thursday 7 May 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- **Thursday 4 June 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- **Thursday 2 July 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- *No PPC meeting in August 2026*
- **Thursday 3 September 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- **Thursday 1 October 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- **Thursday 5 November 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)
- **Thursday 3 December 2026 at 8pm** – PPC meeting (Lounge)